"Regina knows everybody."

That was a comment about Sister Regina Kehoe from someone who knows her well. And, indeed, it is one angle on the multifaceted woman who is Regina (and was Thomas Regina). In the interview for this profile, I repeated this to her; she agreed, and said, “I’ve had so many opportunities to meet people. I’ve had a wonderful life.”

And from that typical upbeat response, we discussed her life as an Ursuline. She has been a strong presence in the province. Currently, Regina is in the counseling department at The Ursuline School as well as in the advancement department. "Connections with alumnae are special. I have loved coming to school; it is a happy place."

That was true through her different assignments. She has been principal at The Academy of Mount St. Ursula, as well as the Ursuline School. In her role as principal of the secondary school at The Ursuline School from 1962 to 1967, she recalls with appreciation the smooth transition that Mother Francis provided. An early parents’ event at the school temporarily put her on the spot when the father of a student asked how his daughter was doing. Since Regina didn’t yet know the student, she paused, then brightly responded, “Well, I haven’t heard anything bad about her.”

As Provincial of the Eastern Province from 1973 to 1979, she had the responsibility of leading the sisters and the ministries in which they served. The contacts with so many sisters—about 300 at that time—brought, as she says, awareness of “the working of God’s grace,” an awareness beyond her experience teaching and role as principal.

After serving in province leadership, her world expanded again when she worked in the Office of Evangelization in the Archdiocese of New York from 1979 to 1982. She was invited to be the Assistant Coordinator for Pope John Paul II’s visit to New York in 1979. When working with Bishop Edwin O’Brien in planning, the Pope’s visit opened up broader horizons of the church and its people.

In talking with Regina, it’s noteworthy how often she expresses assignments as “opportunities.” When I asked about her early contacts with Ursulines, she warms to the account of her days in elementary school at Our Lady of Mercy School in the Bronx, her early affection for her Ursuline teachers there, and how she and her friends, who loved to work with the sisters, waited to walk with the sisters from the convent to the school.

Her remembrances stir warm—and sometimes funny—memories. As she says, “Different assignments brought their pressures and pleasures.” She has “thank you’s to the Lord” for being entrusted with these “sacred” tasks. That is why in her prayer, she simply states, “especially for those I may have hurt.”

This thumbnail sketch of Regina’s life as an Ursuline may explain the warm, attentive, and cheerful way she unforgettable interacts with people. That’s why she knows everybody.
March 2nd. A perfect day.

Looking forward to a day of retreat, I approached the Whitestone Bridge at a leisurely pace, intending to breeze through the E-ZPass lane and on to Long Island. However, the orange bar was standing its ground, dangerously close to my windshield. The attendant told me my E-ZPass wasn’t working, and I needed to pay $7.50.

A minor inconvenience of life in NY. But as I continued on my journey, its symbolism took on global proportions. I began to reflect on the recent events worldwide, nationally, and locally. How often whether politically, socially, economically, or spiritually we are stopped in our tracks. Just when things are going along smoothly, the orange bar appears. We are paralyzed. And before we can move on, we are dependent on the help of others to get us moving again, as I was dependent on the bridge officer.

These past few months we have been eye witnesses to the ravages of death and destruction. Newtown, Sandy, and more storms – all unexpected, changed life as we knew it. We experienced tolls of major proportions – the loss of young lives, homes, jobs, and a feeling of security. And the saga continues. In the wake of Newtown, we are still arguing about guns. In the wake of Sandy, families are still trying to go home, rebuilding and waiting for relief funds. The rest of us puzzle through the larger question, why? These bizarre storms and weather systems raise the question, “What does this have to do with climate change?” Newtown raises the questions of adequate care for the mentally ill, weapons control, and senseless violence. It all stops us in our tracks. Somehow, our E-ZPass is not working. We have to ask, “What is my part in all this?” “How can I live differently? How can I contribute in an effective way to answering such enormous problems?”

We saw part of the answer in Newtown and in places like the Rockaways, Staten Island, the Jersey Shore, and Connecticut shore towns, where neighbors rushed to help neighbors without thought of their own losses, and people from all over the world expressed sympathy and support.

We sometimes forget when the orange bar is down that God’s grace is still there. In the midst of it all, redeeming grace was, and is, present. As palpable as was the destruction, so was the generosity and compassion of others that helped those most directly affected to move forward. Fortitude, that great strength of soul that meets danger and adversity, embraced those whose lives were shaken to the core. How often during Sandy one would hear from those affected, “It could have been worse. I am just so grateful for…” In Newtown, too, the parents of lost children express gratitude to all who mourned and continue to mourn with them. And to this day, volunteers are reaching out, are there to encourage and support, to be the gateway to a “perfect” day. Sometimes, when the orange bar brings us to an unexpected halt, it gives us pause to reflect on how God is calling us to move forward together as we journey through life.

Postscript: March 14th. Another perfect day? The election today of Francis as Pope was as unexpected as the announcement in February of Benedict’s resignation. The news of both happenings was another kind of stopping us in our tracks. Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, was not on the short list as the Cardinals began the conclave. While the media, historians, and theologians have already pronounced his alignment with the current teachings of the Church, his early interactions and symbolic gestures signal a change in style and pastoral approach – moves welcomed by many within and outside the Church.

Let us respond to his first request – to pray for him.
For many years, Ursulines addressed issues of justice, peace, and care of the earth. Mission days and, more recently, Serviam projects educated the young about inequities. Social activists in the Church and Vatican II encouraged a closer look at racial injustice, poverty, and the oppression of women.

After the General Chapter of the Roman Union in 2001, an international commission of the Ursulines was formed: the Commission of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, or JPIC. After the tragedy of September 11, a number of provinces worldwide advocated to raise student awareness and action on local and international levels.

Province representatives meet in Rome every few years to identify projects worthy of worldwide focus. In 2003, water was the major theme. Botswana and Senegal were selected as locations to assist in providing access to water since in those countries, women and children frequently trek miles to carry water to their homes.

More recently, the international crisis of trafficking (enslaving men, women, and children for labor and prostitution) has been selected for action. JPIC advocates for state and federal laws against trafficking, developing a code for official personnel to identify traffickers, and freeing individuals and ensuring their safety.

In the Eastern Province, JPIC also participates with local and regional advocacy groups. These include ICCR (Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility), a group focused on wise, faith-based investment strategies; CRI (Crisis Rescue International), a group addressing trafficking; ROAR (Religious Organizations along the River), a group examining Hudson River ecology concerns, Indian Point, and PCB contamination. Presently, the province is learning about the ecological issues posed by controversial hydraulic fracturing or fracking to obtain biofuels like oil and natural gas that lie under vast underground water supplies.

More about JPIC can be found at: www.ursulines-ur.org. See “Our Ministries.”

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, I went to Staten Island where I met Eamon, a man of Arab descent. His small damaged home was scheduled for demolition by the City of New York. Yet he had set up a neighborhood distribution site for food, clothing, water, and cleaning supplies in front of his home. After I told the story to Ching Yi Chen, an Ursuline in Taiwan, one of the teachers at her school sent $100. When I brought the donation, Eamon was so pleased that a woman from so far away would give such a gift for him to rebuild his home of 20 years. - Terry Epprodge, O.S.U.

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the 2012 Christmas Ornament fundraiser. Your gifts raised over $100,000 for the retired Ursulines.
“In Support of the American Dream” well describes The Adult Learning Center of Ursuline Social Outreach in New Rochelle. It was the fitting sub-title of its 16th Annual Angela Awards Dinner on March 7, 2013. His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, was invited to receive the Angela Award, his genial and commanding presence to be a distinct privilege for the dinner. Then Pope Benedict XVI resigned, a conclave was called, and Cardinal Dolan left for Rome. The spirit of the gala went on. And thanks to the presence and humor of Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of New York, who stepped in, the occasion didn’t miss a beat.

At The Adult Learning Center men and women who are new arrivals to the U.S. can learn the English language and work skills, and prepare for the citizenship process. The Center serves several hundred students a year.

The Adult Learning Center itself has undergone transitions in the past two years. Sister Eileen Fane, whose vision and determination built this remarkable place, retired. Louis Calvelli is the present Executive Director.

Former Board member and Interim Executive Director Jack Conroy describes the workings of the place from an up-close view. “Teachers and student arrive around 9 A.M. for the morning session. By 9:30 infants and toddlers are in their respective nurseries, and their mothers are in class.” The opportunity for child care enables mothers to learn English, a distinctive aspect of the Center. Evening sessions continue the learning opportunities for working men and women.

Jack has particular admiration for the volunteer teachers, often faced with a class of students speaking a variety of languages: Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, and so on. “Such diversity is characteristic of our students,” he adds. “But that is the wonder of our teachers who are all volunteers, many of them here for a number of years. They are inspired by the motivation and commitment of their students, and that feeling infects all of us who work here.”

The Gala is the major fund-raiser for the Center. As the promotional material notes: “Every dollar counts and is used wisely.”

For more information about the Adult Learning Center please visit: www.ursulineoutreach.org

Correction: In the Ursuline Provincialate 2011-2013 Annual Report Mrs. Marie Walze is listed as the donor “in memory of Louise and George Casey.” The correct donor is Margaret C. (Peg) Casey Walz, SAS 1956, “in memory of her parents Louise and George Casey.”
JUBILARIANS 2013

Each year brings the celebration of the jubilee of Ursulines on the anniversary of their religious profession, for their faithfulness in dedication to God and in fulfilling the work of service to others entrusted to them by the church. They are honored on the day they made vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the Eastern Province of Ursulines of the Roman Union.

The accompanying photos are of Ursulines who celebrate Jubilees in 2013. A description of their ministries is found at www.osueast.org

Notes from a Vatican Observer

Rome, March 13, 2013

I was amazed by the crowd of people under a sea of umbrellas in St. Peter’s Square. When there had been no election at the first vote, I went for some hot chocolate. I returned to the piazza around 6:45. When I was about to leave, I saw the white smoke. The crowds responded and the bells began to ring, I quickly called the Generalate.

I could hear a nearby CBS reporter ask the camera person, “Should we take pictures of the people looking up at the balcony in anticipation?”

When Pope Francis I came out, he asked for prayer for Benedict and for himself. I was translating some of the Italian for the CBS reporter. When people chanted “Francesco,” the toddler in his father’s arms next to me joined in. The reporter questioned my response to the event. I responded in the overused expression, “Awesome” and that I was very hopeful. When she asked if I hoped that women would assume a greater role in the Church, I responded, “Of course…” Then I joined the sea of people headed for buses. A group of Mexicans at the bus stop were thrilled with the election of a Latin American Pope. They spoke of the great work he has done in Argentina.

Here in the house there are several tertians from Latin America, and they are very happy. May the choice of the name Francis truly be a sign of a new beginning in our Church.

Mary Alice Duggan, O.S.U. of the Eastern Province, currently in service at the Generalate.
Sr. Mary Clare Curry, O.S.U.
April 28, 1920 – September 6, 2012
Sister Mary Clare Curry, born Dorothea, died peacefully at Andrus on Hudson.

Mary Clare entered the Ursulines in 1939 and made her first vows in 1941. In the 1950s and 60s, her ministry of teaching included Blessed Sacrament in New Rochelle; the Academy of Mount St. Ursula, St. Philip Neri, Our Lady of Mercy, and St. Jerome’s in the Bronx; and Notre Dame in Malone. From 1966 to 1971, she taught at St. Joseph’s in Middletown. Mary Clare became librarian at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula in 1976, a position she held until 1991. She did community service until retiring in 2008.

Sr. Mary Patricia Meiklejohn, O.S.U.
December 24, 1929 – November 15, 2012
Sister Mary Patricia Meiklejohn, formerly known as Sister Mary William, died at Sound Shore Medical Center in New Rochelle.

Mary Pat entered the Ursulines in 1956. She made her vows in 1959. Her years of service were given to teaching in Blessed Sacrament and The Ursuline School in New Rochelle as well as other parochial schools in the Bronx and Middletown, NY. She served as Assistant Superior at the Marian Residence in New Rochelle from 1991 to 1994.

Mary Pat held a B.S. from the University of New Hampshire and an M.A. from Manhattan College. She loved the outdoors and camping.

Sr. Michelle Guerin, O.S.U.
January 17, 1916 – March 2, 2012
Sister Michelle Guerin died at Andrus on Hudson at the age of 97. A woman of cheerful spirit and multiple interests such as writing poetry, she lived a life of service in teaching. She held a BS in education and an MA in English from Fordham University.

Michelle entered the Ursuline Order in 1937 and made her final vows in 1943. After she taught in the Bronx, she went to Mexico City as principal and English language coordinator at Merici Academy and then taught at the University of the Americas until 1973. When she returned to the U.S., she worked for Catholic Charities, taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and did parish ministry.

In 1990 Michelle retired but remained active in prison ministry in the North Country of New York. When she moved to St. Teresa’s community in New Rochelle in 2002, she volunteered at the Adult Learning Center.

Sr. Florence Marie Kretz, O.S.U.
March 13, 1915 – March 10, 2013
Sister Florence Marie Kretz died peacefully at Andrus on Hudson. She was 97 years old.

Florence Marie, besides being a teacher in elementary schools during her life, was remarkable for her unfailing gentleness in words and actions, ever ready to help, no matter the task. She entered the Ursulines on July 25, 1932; she made her first vows on January 25, 1935. She began her ministry of teaching at Mount St. Ursula in 1936. Over her lifetime, she also taught at Our Lady of Mercy, Ursuline Academy (Grand Concourse), St Angela Merici, and St. Jerome, all in the Bronx, and at Blessed Sacrament in New Rochelle. She was superior at St. Jerome Convent from 1949 to 1953. She held a BS in education from Fordham University and an MS in religion from Providence College. In 1980 she retired, describing her service as a ministry of prayer; yet she continued active service by being a mathematics tutor, a Eucharistic Minister, and file clerk in the province offices.

Sr. Madeline Welch, O.S.U.
June 14, 1941 – January 8, 2013
Sister Madeline Welch, former provincial of the Ursulines of the Eastern Province USA, civil lawyer and canon lawyer, died peacefully at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx.

Legal service was her ministry from the time she received a law degree from Fordham University in 1974.

Madeline was generous to those seeking legal advice. From 1974 to 1984, she was an attorney with the Legal Aid Society. She served as superior of the St. Teresa Community in New Rochelle (1984-1987). She earned a
degree in Canon Law in 1989. From 1989 to 1991, she was director of legal services to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and the National Association of Treasurers of Religious Institutes (NATRI).

She was provincial of the Ursulines of the Eastern Province (1991-1997). She then went to Wilmington, DE, where she was deputy director for the Ministry of Caring and served the Community Legal Aid Society for the next ten years. From there, she became superior of the Ursuline Generalate in Rome.

Madeline, who entered the Ursulines in 1962 and made her final vows in 1970, loved the history of the Ursuline Order. She located and distributed art and music by and about Ursulines. She also delighted in preparing special events, prayer services, and meals for feast days and other occasions.

Sr. Anne Therese Dillen, educator and artist, has a new website featuring her watercolors and pastels. Visit www.annetdillen.com for purchases, new commissions or individual teaching.

In February, The Greenwich Art Society presented “As They Were” a one-person exhibition of Sr. Terry Eppridge’s character portraits. In March, thirteen of her paintings are being shown at the Rye (NY) Free Reading Room Library.

On March 20, Sr. Jeannie Humphries successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation at Fordham University on Exploring Students’ Questions: Reading Motivations and Processes during Comprehension of Narrative Text.

In October, Sr. Irene Mahoney, was featured in the National Catholic Reporter. The article, “Irene Mahoney: Ursuline has lived the writer’s life,” summarizes a fascinating life in which, as Irene says, “everything fit.” To read the full story go to http://ncronline.org and type in Irene Mahoney into the search box.

Mary brought high energy to her ministry of education. She taught at Blessed Sacrament School and The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, St. Joseph’s Academy in Malone, NY, and Ursuline Academy in Bethesda, MD. Mary served as superior of the community in Wilmington, DE, from 1965 to 1968. She returned to teaching in Malone. In retirement, she did pastoral work in the Malone area.
PROVINCE MISSION STATEMENT

We, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States, are women religious in an international community, united by the vision and spirit of our foundress, St. Angela Merici.

Impelled by deep personal love for Jesus Christ, Angela sought in a life of prayer and action to bring people from all segments of society to a deeper love of God and one another.

We follow Angela in the service of this twofold love. While we continue to proclaim the Gospel in our traditional work of education, we welcome the call of the Spirit to new ministries.

In response to the needs of our times, we commit ourselves, in both our life and our work, to solidarity with the poor; to the pursuit of justice for all, especially women; and to collaboration with the laity.

As a community that values both tradition and progress, we move into the future with courage and with trust in God.