

# Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province Winter/Spring 2008

## In This Issue

### *In Other(s') Words*

We offer you here two short stories, mostly about others, about the people we serve and serve with.

Sr. Jeanne Cashman, founder and director of Sojourners' Place, a shelter for the homeless in Wilmington, tells us a Sojourners' "success story." And Sr. Eileen Fane, who founded and directs The Adult Learning Center in New Rochelle, which teaches English as a second language to immigrants, traces for us the journey of one of the Center's graduates.

You'll also find an excerpt from a letter to us by Sr. Kathleen Finnerty, newly named Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

While some of us are engaged in the work of education in Ursuline schools and in different forms and different locations, an especially varied "News and Notes" calls attention to the work of other Ursulines. We are authors, scholars, musicians, artists; we work in parish and prison ministry, alcoholism counseling, advocacy work on behalf of the poor. And lest you forget that we are an international order, we offer a brief notice of the General Chapter of the Ursulines of the Roman Union with delegates from provinces all over the world, held from September 8 - October 21 at our Generalate in Rome.

So, readers of Bylines, please know that your interest in and support of our elderly and infirm and of our ministries is of great value, not only to us but to those we serve, even in other provinces and parts of the world, but especially here in the Eastern Province of the United States.

Nancy Malone, OSU, Editor



**CHRISTMAS AT  
THE PROVINCE CENTER**

## NEWS FROM SOJOURNERS' PLACE

by Jeanne Cashman, OSU

**M**ost of the people we've seen at Sojourners' Place over the 16 years of our existence were born in poverty and have simply become the first of their families to end up on the streets. We often say among ourselves that we "habilitate" people here; there's no "re" for some folks who have never known independent lives before. Others have different stories altogether; this is one of them.

Dave came to Sojourners' Place from the psychiatric facility in which he'd been treated for a nervous breakdown. Not quite three years earlier he had been the international representative for a Fortune 500 company – a big job with the matching big paycheck. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame with a Master's Degree from Georgetown University, Dave had just about everything anyone could want in life. Then he made ONE mistake – a mistake which cost him his wife and daughter and eventually his home and his job as well.

Sinking into a deep depression, Dave turned to alcohol and ended up on the streets; his life was saved the first time by the policeman who arrested him for vagrancy on the city streets. Eventually, he ended up having treatment in the mental health system of the state.

When he came to Sojourners' Place, Dave still showed signs of the depression for which he was being treated, but gradually responded to the caring guidance of his case manager and other staff and residents. Soon enough, however, the moment I'd dreaded since we *(continued on p. 2)*

admitted him finally came; Dave put together a spectacular resumé with only one problem, a very noticeable blank of two years. When you've moved from McDonald's to the local car wash, etc., time between jobs is pretty much a given, but when you've had the career Dave had, it takes a lot of explaining to fill in that much time.

This is how we know there is a GOD: early enough in the job search, Dave was sent to help one of our donors computerize his small business. After two weeks at it, he came back on Friday evening waving the papers which made him a partner in the man's small

business. Now, six years later, due in large part to Dave's acumen, he and his partner have expanded the business into three separate entities which they manage jointly. He is happily remarried, reconnected to his daughter, and playing an active role in the community. AND he donates both time and funding to Sojourners' Place where he says he reclaimed his life.

*An article in CityLife/Wilmington Journal titled "Famous Faces," mentions Jeanne as "one of the city's most memorable residents."*

## AN URSULINE SERVES NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*by Sr. Kathleen Finnerty, OSU*

In March of 2006, as Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Diocese of Wilmington, DE, I traveled to New Orleans to attend a conference. It was excellent, but I never suspected that it would drastically change my life. I saw first-hand the damage and destruction inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. I also met and heard some Catholic School educators tell their stories of rebuilding.

Later, I read an ad on the National Catholic Education Association Web site that the Archdiocese of New Orleans was searching for a new Superintendent of Schools. I had no intention of leaving Wilmington, but for weeks I could not shake the impressions of my brief New Orleans visit or the search for someone to join in the rebuilding effort. "Am I crazy to be thinking about this?" I was encouraged to enter the process to see if it were really a call of the Spirit.

In August 2007 I began my new ministry as Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, convinced that it is indeed a work of the Spirit. I am also convinced that God has a sense of humor since I hate heat!

Ursulines have been part of New Orleans since Ursuline Academy opened in 1727, and the Academy is the oldest continuously operating Catholic school in the United States. I work with the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools, a wonderful group of dedicated, talented, and creative women and men.

All the staff have "Katrina stories" to share. One jokes that when asked for his home phone he's stumped, since he is still rebuilding. Another lost everything under twelve feet of water; for her, there is nothing to rebuild. Others talk of their evacuation and the kindness of strangers.

These are the extraordinary women and men who were determined to reopen the Catholic schools as soon as possible. In contrast, the public officials announced that their schools would not open for the year. Katrina hit on August 29, 2005, and some of our Catholic schools opened in October. As they began to open, approximately 1,500 public school children were accepted into the Catholic schools. Two years



*Sr. Kathleen Finnerty (left), with Dr. Judy Mulla, Deputy Superintendent, showing the architect's rendering of the new Archbishop Hannan High School. It is being built to replace a building completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.*

later, 800 of those students remain in our schools.

St. Louis Cathedral School was the first to open to children of the emergency responders (firemen, policemen, EMS workers) who were being housed temporarily on the cruise ships and the battleship anchored in

*(Cont. on p. 5)*

### *Ursuline Bylines*

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# A POTENTIAL LEADER

by Eileen Fane, OSU

## News and Notes

When Ana Silva was introduced to a program evaluator visiting The Adult Learning Center recently, she was asked if she had continued her education after she stopped studying here. Ana's response was, "My children are my priority right now. But I hope to begin working toward my GED in the near future." If you have ever taught English as a Second Language, you realize that was a mouthful. Her choice of vocabulary and her pronunciation were excellent. Her self-possession was striking.



Born and raised in the town of Colima, Mexico, Ana Silva had completed the ninth grade at Cuatchmoc Elementary School. When she was 18, with her 20-month old son Jonathan, she joined her husband, Domingo, who had arrived in the United States in March of 1998. Settling

in New Rochelle, Domingo learned sheet rocking and painting and is presently employed in this work

When she arrived here, Ana spoke and read only Spanish. She began studying English at the Adult Learning Center in September of 1999 and graduated in December 2002. Although she has not taken any more formal classes, she continues to read and write English on her own.

Now her husband Domingo is studying at the Center. Ana is presently working part-time as a building superintendent in New Rochelle and she works as a volunteer in the children's room in the Adult Learning Center. Her son Jonathan, now ten years old, is in the fifth grade at Trinity Elementary School, Christopher in the first grade there, and four-year-old Edwin in Pre-K at Barnard School.

Ana has worked to become part of the community and does what she can to help others become familiar with and active in civic affairs. She says that she wants to see that new immigrants do not make the mistakes she did, and helps them with the problems that most of them have. She advises other Hispanic people to learn English and to become involved in the community.

Ana is considered a Learning Center success: at home in our culture; aware of her own capabilities and of the opportunities of Southern Westchester; a potential leader.

*And we know that Ana's story also illustrates why Eileen received the "Nuestra Madrina" (Our Godmother) Award from the Hispanic Women Leaders of Westchester.*

*Our congratulations to the following Ursulines who have been honored since the last Bylines.*

For her seven books on the history and spirituality of women religious, **Sr. Irene Mahoney** received The Lifetime Achievement Award from the Seventh Triennial Conference of the History of Women Religious held at Notre Dame University in June.

Fordham University's Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education granted **Sr. Patricia Schifini** a *Sapientia et Doctrina* Award for her ministry in religious education. And the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York honored **Sr. Mary Shea** with a Terrence Cardinal Cooke Award, given to Directors and Coordinators of parish religious education.

Amidst other events celebrating **Sr. Eileen Finnerty's** eleven years of service at St. Ann's Parish in Ossining, NY, May 16 was named "Eileen Finnerty Day in Ossining" by the mayor of that city.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Documents Concerning Reception and Implementation*, edited by **Sr. Alice Gallin**, was favorably reviewed in the journal *American Catholic Studies*. And her article on "Called to Action: The Historian as Participant" appeared in the journal *U S Catholic Historian*. Alice has lived that title as teacher and author, and in her years of service at the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). The booklet published by Alice's 65th Reunion class at CNR this past summer noted that Alice has received 22 honorary degrees!

**Sr. Bridget Puzon** was invited to serve on the National Advisory Council to the Washington Internship Institute, an organization offering undergraduates innovative internship programs in the nation's capital. WII also offers the Faculty Fellows Internship Program for faculty members who wish to apply their knowledge and skills in their own or a related field during one semester in Washington. The Faculty Fellows program is offered in cooperation with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, where Bridget was journal editor for twelve years.

## WOMEN ENCOUNTERING GOD IN THE ORDINARY EVENTS OF LIFE

On October 13, 2007, a day of reflection and renewal for women at different life stages was held at the Province Center. This day grew out of the desire of the committee, who in the spirit of St. Angela Merici, wanted to offer a day of reflection for lay women presented by lay women. The retreat day, focusing on women encountering God in the ordinary events of their lives, included prayer, presentations, and conversations. We were delighted when sixty women responded to our invitation and joined us on a glorious autumn day.

Since women have traditionally gathered to talk and listen to each other, sharing their experience, the retreat provided an opportunity to do that in a focused way. The theme found expression in the Gospel story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well where she came to draw water. In that everyday chore, she came face-to-face with one who talked with her about the meaning of her life. The day began with quiet contemplation through a power-point presentation, prepared by Phyllis Pregiato, of images of women throughout the world drawing water.

Prayer began with a rendering of the Gospel story in dialogue between Jesus and the woman, and then two women presented their encounters with God in the everyday. Maureen Crowley first spoke of finding God in the everyday care of her children; Susan Conte, OSU spoke of encountering God in her service as a teacher and counselor. Then the group broke into small conversation groups or individuals took the



Retreat leaders left to right: Maureen Crowley, Bridget Puzon, Jane Finnerty, Ellie Shea, Eileen Niedzwiecki and Alice Marie Giordano.

occasion to reflect privately.

After lunch, the program followed a similar format, with two presentations. Their themes were an expression of the second part of the Gospel story: "The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to tell the people." Eileen Sammon and Patrice McDermott spoke of their motivation and efforts to bring about a more just society and of their service to the poor and marginalized.

Throughout the day, Eileen Niedzwiecki facilitated the small group and large group sharing.

The day ended with all reflecting on their experience of the day's insights. It was generally agreed that future activities similar to this day would provide a continued enriching of their spiritual lives. (Contact: The Province Center: Spirituality.)

## NEWS AND NOTES *continued*

In July, Sr. Nancy Malone spoke to the Toledo Ursulines about her book, *Walking a Literary Labyrinth: A Spirituality of Reading*.

Last summer, Sr. Mary Virginia Orna led a study group of 18 chemists and others interested in science to Russia and Finland. Returning from a ten-day lecture tour in Italy in late September, Mary Virginia gave a talk on "The Shroud of Turin and Other Mysteries: Uncovering Traces of the Past Through Science." It was sponsored by the Ursuline Institute at the College of New Rochelle on October 11, 2007.

Sr. Laura Reynolds earned NY State certification as a "Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

Counselor" in May. Laura works in the detoxification unit at Sound Shore Hospital in New Rochelle.

After Sr. Maureen Welch was installed as superior of the Ursuline community in Wilmington in August, previous superior Sr. Mildred Hapt left for a term of study at the Catholic Theological Union's Hesburgh Sabbatical Program in Chicago.

And Sr. Marian Bohem, who has been a member of the Ursuline Interprovincial Community in Chicago, where she has been doing prison work, returned East in December. We enjoyed her company briefly last winter when she came East to address the graduates of the "Certification in Ministry and Human Services

# "MANY THE GIFTS, ONE THE SPIRIT"

The Sexennial General Chapter of the Ursulines of the Roman Union, with delegates from 32 provinces in the Americas, Africa, England, Eastern and Western Europe, Australia, and Asia, met in Rome from September 8 to October 21, 2007. Our Prioress General, Mother Colette Lignon, the members of the General Council, Secretary, and Treasurer were, of course, also in attendance. Since the Chapter elected a new Prioress General, Mother Cecilia Wang, and Council, it was an especially important one.

As our provincial, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly was an *ex officio* delegate, accompanied by Sisters Martha Counihan and Jeanne Giebelhouse, who were elected by the Eastern province. Sr. Mary Alice Duggan attended as a translator and Sr. Kathleen Kuczkowski as translator and staff assistant; both sisters have previously served at the Generalate. Upon arrival, all were welcomed by Sr. Madeline Welch, a member of the Wilmington community until March of 2007 when she moved to Rome as the superior of the nuns who reside at the Generalate.



*Mother Cecilia Wang from Taiwan, newly elected Mother General of the Ursulines of the Roman Union.*

## **(NEW ORLEANS** *cont. from p. 2)*

the Port of New Orleans. Neither religion or ability to pay tuition were issues.

Waiting a year to reopen schools was never an option for the New Orleans Catholic School community. Of the 104 pre-Katrina schools, 86 have reopened. Creative solutions were proposed. All-boys' high school, Archbishop Rummel, was not severely damaged by the flood, so the Rummel boys attended class in the morning, and in the afternoon the Principal of Ursuline Academy and the Assistant Principal of Archbishop Hannan ran the "Rummel Transition School" for displaced high school students. Three historically African-American high schools, St. Mary's Academy, St. Augustine High School, and Xavier Prep, formed the MAX School--MAX an acronym of the initial letter of each school. During the Mardi Gras parade, the combined MAX bands stretched out for three blocks.

Twenty-eight inner city parishes were destroyed by the storm. The schools within these parishes were grouped into six Central Catholic Schools. Serving the poorest students in the city, these schools currently enroll 1,800 students. Buildings least damaged by the storm were chosen to house the Central Catholic Schools. For repairing these "least damaged" buildings, the price tag is \$11 million. FEMA funding and federal "Restart" and Foreign Grant Programs have been a blessing as we work to replace all that was lost or damaged by wind, flood, and mold.

Not a day goes by without an offer of physical, material, or financial help. In the outpouring of people from around the country who want to help in a variety of ways, we are rebuilding our city and strengthening our dedication to the children seeking Catholic education. The road to recovery is long and arduous. The words of St. Angela, "Have hope and firm faith in God, for he will help you in everything," come alive for me daily.

## **News and Notes continued**

Program," at Fishkill Correctional Facility in New York. Before she left for Chicago, Marian was involved in this program at Sing Sing and instrumental in establishing similar programs in five other prisons in New York State.

**Sr. Beth Dowd's** choral group Songcatchers celebrated its tenth anniversary in a concert at the College of New Rochelle in October. Congratulations to Beth and all her faithful singers!

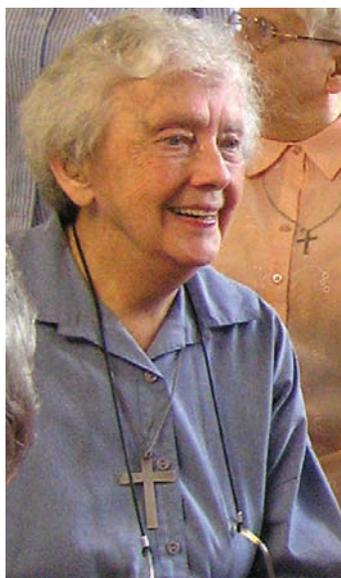
In her almost nine years as a loan officer of the Leviticus 25:23 Alternative Fund, Inc., **Sr. Patricia Russell** has underwritten \$14 million in loans providing for the development of affordable housing and community facilities. Since May, Pat has been working at the Province Center in cooperation with those involved in the leasing of the former Ursuline Convent building at Bedford Park and the development of the property behind it. Known as the Serviam Gardens project, the latter is intended to provide affordable housing for Seniors.

## CATHERINE MARIE JORDAN

Sister Catherine Marie Jordan, born in 1919 and known to many by her baptismal name, Bernadette, was, in her retirement, a faithful letter-writer to her friends and the prize-winning saleswoman of the May calendar, the annual Ursuline fund raiser. Also in her retirement she dedicated herself to catechetical work with special needs children.

Catherine Marie was the consummate educator. Her ministry in education as principal followed four

years of teaching at Blessed Sacrament School in New Rochelle, where in 1944 she became principal of the school. Later she would serve as principal at



*Sr. Catherine Marie Jordan*

St. Angela Merici School, St. Joseph's Academy in Malone, NY, Ursuline Academy in Dedham, MA, and St. Philip Neri. Besides administering these schools, she guided new teachers into their early years as teachers; she was a "first principal" to generations of Ursulines. She believed in them, and they rose to her expectations.

In 1968 at a time when Civil Rights was high on the national agenda she chose to live and teach in Harlem with two other sisters. Skills and

experience would have been enough, but these sisters brought enthusiasm and dedication, as well as being good neighbors, until they left in 1972.

Perhaps it was her wisdom in her interactions with teachers, students, and parents that stood out wherever she worked. Or it could have been her capacious spirit, her warmth or her humor, her smarts or her creativity. She certainly had more ideas than even she could keep up with, necessitating a book of ideas to be used at some future time. Best of all, she was a good friend.

Retirement to Andrus in 2007 slowed her down, and it was there that she died. Her funeral brought together, in loving remembrance of her, men and women from all the phases of her life, sad in her loss and joyful that she now has eternal joy.

## ELIZABETH MONAGHAN

Elizabeth Monaghan will be fondly remembered by generations of students as Mother Francis Borgia. Whether she was leading the students in studies or song at Mount St. Ursula or running Mission Day at The Ursuline School, she brought enthusiasm and energy with her. She began teaching in elementary school at Ursuline Academy in Wilmington, then went on to St. Jerome's and St. Philip Neri in the Bronx.

In 1961 she did graduate studies in music at the Pius XII Institute in Florence, Italy. Music was central to her life, and from 1968 until her retirement in 2002, she was at various times director of music, instructor in music, and organist at the College of New Rochelle. She also could be called major cheer leader for the basketball team and for students at the college in general.



*Sr. Elizabeth Monaghan*

Throughout her life, her charm and cheerfulness marked all her interactions, whether with students or their families, her sister Ursulines, or all the people in her orbit. Those included the musicians and performers who volunteered their time and talents to her very successful fund-raising concert "From Bach to Bernstein," which Elizabeth produced for the benefit of retired Ursulines.

In her last days her visitors at Andrus could not help but notice, especially during the holidays, the array of cards, letters, flowers, and plants that lined the long window sill in her room, a visible testimony to her gift for faithful friendship.

Elizabeth died in 2007 at ninety-three years of age. Her funeral at Holy Family Chapel at the College of New Rochelle, with staff and faculty with whom she had worked, friends from her various musical and educational activities, and the sisters of the province there to sing in celebration of her life.

## REMEMBERING URSULINE FRIENDS

**Sr. Clare (Francis Xavier) Bell**, who has spent 54 years in Thailand and is presently Director of a Center for Spirituality in Hua Hin, returned here for several months to visit with Ursulines, friends, and relatives. During her stay, she explored retirement programs for sisters and lay associate programs both here and in Canada. She intends to adapt them for use in Thailand.

“Face to Face: Two Approaches,” a painting exhibit by **Sr. Anne Dillen** and Connie Fried, was on view at the Iona College Arts Center, from October to December.

**Sr. Marilyn Muldoon**, Administrator at St. Catherine Academy, Connecticut’s only Catholic school for children with special needs, celebrated the groundbreaking for the school’s new home on Sunday, June 11, at 6 p.m. at Holy Cross Parish, in Fairfield, CT. Saint Catherine’s serves the needs of children and adolescents with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

**Sr. Geraldine Kennedy** has been appointed by Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano to be a “member of the Westchester County Council for Seniors, representing the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.”

## JUBILARIANS 2008

*Please join us in gratitude for the many years of faithful service given by the following Ursuline sisters*

Profession	Name	Community
<b>75 YEARS</b>		
02/11/1933	Angela Chauvin	Andrus
<b>70 YEARS</b>		
01/25/1938	Marie Paul Denesha	Andrus
01/25/1938	Elizabeth O’Brien (M. St. John)	St. Teresa’s
08/24/1938	Pierre Drury	Andrus
<b>60 YEARS</b>		
01/16/1948	Jeanne Brennan	St. Teresa’s
01/16/1948	Ann Duggan (Sr. Cornelius)	Bedford Park
01/16/1948	Mary Hallahan (Sr. Charles)	Malone
01/16/1948	Maura MacKessy	Andrus
01/16/1948	Joan McIver (M. Emmanuel)	Andrus
01/16/1948	Agnes Neville (M. Bernadette)	Andrus
01/16/1948	Claire O’Mara (M. Michael)	Andrus
01/16/1948	Mary Ellen Smith	St. Teresa’s
01/16/1948	Gloria Marie Sullivan (M. Eileen)	Bedford Park
02/06/1948	Winifred Danwitz	Andrus
07/16/1948	Alice Gallin	St. Teresa’s
07/16/1948	Eileen M. Kelleher (M. James)	St. Teresa’s
07/16/1948	Margaret McCafferty (M. Bernard)	Wilmington
<b>50 YEARS</b>		
01/16/1958	Anne Walsh	St. Teresa’s

## FORBIDDEN BROADWAY RAFFLE WINNERS!

Margot and Richard Petrow were the winners of this spring’s Forbidden Broadway London Theater Trip for Two raffle.



They returned from Europe after a week of theater-going in London and visiting with old friends whom they met decades ago when they lived there. They also managed to make a short add-on trip to Paris. This Theater Trip for Two was, they report, the only thing they have ever won in their lifetime.

Mr. Petrow is connected to the Ursulines through one of the strongest of ties – friendship. He met Sr. Irene Mahoney in the early 1970s when they were both researching and writing books in the New York Public Library. They have maintained that friendship ever since.

## JUBILARIANS 2007

Sisters **Marie Therese Buggé** and **Maryellen Keefe** celebrated their Golden Jubilees of entrance into the Ursulines – Marie Therese on July 14 at Andrus on Hudson, and Maryellen on August 6 at St. Frances de Chantal Church in Throgs Neck, NY. We are thankful for their years with us.

**Visit the Ursuline Web Site:**  
[www.osueast.org](http://www.osueast.org)

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# Bylines

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*Three of four Christmas trees at the Province Center  
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donors displayed.*



## **THANK YOU**

**W**ith this issue of *Bylines*, combining fall and winter news, Nancy Malone completes her service as editor of this newsletter. Nancy brought her many talents to the task of gathering and communicating Ursuline news to our many friends, and she hands the newsletter on to a new editor. With hearty thanks, we recognize her contribution not only over the past three years, but as the founding editor in 1987 until 1990. Other editors continued the work she began: Barbara Heaney, 1990 to 1992; Teresa Weed, 1992, joined in 1995 by assistant editor Mary Boyan, who together edited *Bylines* until 2004. Thanks to all over this twenty-year history of *Bylines*.



## **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.