



CrossRoads: Bulletin of the Passionist Alumni Association

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IN THIS ISSUE

- The reunion was a home run
- We had suggestions (PLUS: Who is on the Alumni Council?)
- Regional meetings
- What is a brother? By Patrick Hanson
- Your bios and stories
- Special reunion planned for Bellarmine alumni
- Finding people we miss
- A century of deceased Passionists

Reunion 2019 was a home run!



Passionist Alumni Reunion Report

[Click here](#) to enjoy Paul Schulte's PowerPoint presentation of the survey results. Click on the link above. (Note: It will download better on a PC or laptop. A phone might not accept it.)

Across the board, the reunion attendees said the event drilled a 400-foot home run.

For candid photos of the reunion, [click here](#).

What did we rate the highest? We valued above all each other's company and building warm friendships. That's why most of us showed up in the first place. Strangers walking in at any moment during the three powerful days would have been surprised by the intense conversations within huddled groups in every nook and cranny of St. Paul's retreat center. They would be privy to gut-busting stories—some sixty years old—covering tales about soaring career trajectories to strange high school pranks. Philosophically, we covered questions from “What did you want to be when you grew up?” to “What is the meaning of life?” Once upon a time, every single one of us had signed up to sample monastic life in robes, rituals, and formation. In the end, we happened to forge life paths divergent beyond belief. Most divergent of all, certainly, was the time warp between tossing a basketball to a person in the 1900s and sitting across from that same person, say, fifty years later—a kind of mystic time travel, something that “wasn't supposed to happen” but it did.

The reunion team nailed all-star scores for planning, execution, and scheduling. It's hard to image a venue better suited to a reunion than St. Paul's. The assembly rooms screamed for social interaction—a cross between sports bars and the living rooms back home. Freshly-made sandwiches lay on curtained tables only inches from plentiful thirst-quenchers. Colleagues and spouses embraced newcomers--grabbing bags, offering directions and support. The bedrooms contained ceiling fans that altered Detroit summer nights into temperate climes. Comfortable seats and audio-visual fanciness welcomed us in the breakout rooms. The chapel trapped every sound and made it clear; its triangular design of multi-shaded brown brick and white light embraced us through lecture, prayer, and song. For private conversations and solitary meditation, the grounds served up paths and beauty. In sum, whatever has been good for a state-of-the-art Passionist retreat translated in spades for a Passionist Alumni Reunion.

We made a donation of \$4,501 to the Passionists. Our contributions to a fund to support alumni needing to meet reunion expenses exceeded the requests by attendees. As a result, we were able to donate the unused portion to the Detroit community. We received appreciative notes from Fr. Joe Moons and Fr. Phil Paxton.

“Something for everybody” is not an exaggerated statement. During free time, we took off in many directions, as the survey demonstrates. Some events stood out, of course, like touring the adjacent monastery, visiting the beloved Fr. Randal, and taking in Detroit venues like the Motown Museum. Most of us hung with our friends from formation days—a plus and a minus of a circumstance because, if there is one disappointment from the weekend, it was hard to get to know people deeply enough from other classes and eras. The Alumni Council will work on the challenge for the next reunion, for sure.

Soon the Alumni Council will provide ways for us all to contact fellow alumni members. If you are eager to contact certain people right now, please contact Don Noltemeyer who will help you make a connection. dfnoltemeyer@gmail.com
A surprising result of the survey—or maybe not so surprising—is that, as a group, we attained respectable levels of education. The Passionists did a good job in their recruiting. Our college and post-graduate education levels are higher than US averages.



2019 Reunion, Detroit, Michigan.

We Had Suggestions

by Paul Schulte and Don Noltemeyer



Database Gurus Paul Schulte and Don Noltemeyer.

During Paul Schulte's breakout session on Saturday of the reunion, serious brainstorming took place. What follows are ideas discussed and entered into future agendas of the Alumni Council.

Develop an electronic bio-book.

Suggestions were made to create web pages that tell stories. These could include short vignettes on nearly everyone, longer feature profiles of some individuals, updates on important life events of alumni, as well as death reports and obituaries. Meanwhile, such topics are being solicited by Bob Duffield and Jim Grab (See "Your Bios and Stories" in this bulletin).

Bring us together more effectively...

Through media. Creative ideas were proposed that should help bring alumni together across the miles. We endorsed the continued use of communication media like Facebook, independent and official websites, and the CrossRoads bulletin. Personal blogs came up. Some hoped the topics covered would include life updates, discussions on religion and theology, respectful politics, vocations, the future of the Holy Cross Province, and how charism has been lived out as a result of the CP experience.

Through in-person regional meetings.

Formally or informally, regional meetings already occur in Chicago, St. Louis, and Louisville. It was hoped the meetings would expand elsewhere, e.g., in the Western, South Eastern, and Northeastern parts of the U.S. It would be worth exploring how to map these regions and identify leadership for each. All agreed that effective leadership was a must for long-term success. At the very least, news about regional alumni meetings ought to be published regularly—times and locations announced in bulletins and the website (See "Regional Meetings" in this bulletin).

Through in-person trips and tours.

Inside and outside Holy Cross Province, the Passionist world can offer us adventures. We discussed Passionist-led trips to California retreat houses, Eastern Province high profile locations, missions in Haiti and other international locations like India and Africa, as well as the Generalate in Rome—Casa de Passionisti at Piazza Ss. Giovanni e Paolo.

Through in-person retreats.

Alumni want to be alerted to parish retreats in areas near them. We also suggested retreats designed for ourselves, e.g., a "classic retreat" led by a Passionist inside a Passionist facility; also contemporary alumnidesigned retreats.

Awareness of unique Passionist ministries.

We want to see news about interesting ministries that Passionists are involved in today. Mentioned were Joe Mitchell's Earth and Spirit center in Louisville, Cedric Pisenga's TV and electronic ministries, as well as Cristo Rey High School in Birmingham.

Helping the Passionists.

We wondered how we might directly help the Passionists. We asked how we might match our professional skills to Passionist needs. In what ways could we support vocations? Is there a Passionist-related foundation we can develop and/or support?

Regional Gatherings

CHICAGO AREA. Fr. John Schork, CP, Angela Kwasinski, and Phil Jackson invited alumni to a holiday brunch to gratefully recognize and celebrate Chicagoland Passionist Alumni in our life. It's simple food and drink at the popular Lola's Diner, 920 Busse Highway (near Busse Highway and Dee Road), Park Ridge, IL 60068.



Lola's Diner
Park Ridge, IL

ST. LOUIS AREA. Ray Alonzo (Raymond of Creve Coeur) and the ArchAngels gathered for their annual Christmas Dinner on Monday, December 9th, 7 pm at the Creve Coeur, Missouri, Hoolihans restaurant. They have been having this little soirée for many years. The crew at Hoolihan's takes good care of them. It's a festive evening with the wives in holiday glitter and the guys in Christmas sweaters that used to fit. They tipped a glass to their brothers Craig Franklin, Mike Schweizer and Father Randal. "May God's light shine upon their faces. We love you guys."



Houlihan's
Creve Coeur, MO

The ragtag ArchAngels meet on the second Monday of every other month at Sybergs in Creve Coeur at 7 pm. "Not sure why...."

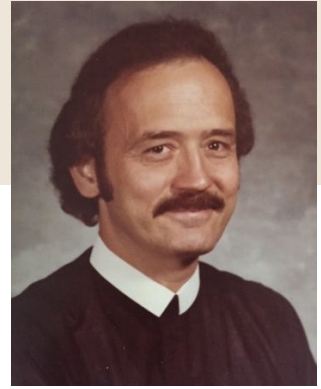
LOUISVILLE AREA. Whether you are an alumnus who lives in the Louisville area, an out-of-towner visiting family and friends, or just driving by on I-64 or I-65 on a Monday morning, you are invited to join your fellow alumni for breakfast. The group meets every Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. at Frisch's Restaurant on Shelbyville Road. In addition to the regulars, you never know when visiting Passionists such as Fr. Joe Moons, Fr. John Schork or others may join the group. Good friends, wide-ranging conversations, and a great way to start your week!



Frisch's Restaurant on
Shelbyville Road,
Louisville, KY

What is a Brother?

by Patrick Hanson



Patrick Hanson in the 1970s.

“What is a brother?” For 22 years I was frequently asked that question, followed by “why not a priest” or “you are so good you should be ordained.” Having to define and, at times, defend one’s life choice can be trying. I always hoped one day that women would be ordained; that way, new voices—from Sisters in religious communities, for example—would have to defend why they did not choose ordination.

I don’t even know why I wanted to be a brother. I never went to a Catholic School. Most of my friends in South Minneapolis were Lutheran. I had never met a brother in my life.

While in college I sent an inquiry to the Passionists about the brothers, never having heard of the Passionists. In what seemed like a few days, Fr. Mel Spehn contacted me and said he would be driving through Southern Minnesota and could stop by and I said “Sure.”

Later I remember flying to St. Louis to meet him again. He drove me to Warrenton.

In the fall, I started postulancy in Detroit, having just graduated from college at the age of 24 (Vietnam War years). Detroit had a full house, so I shared a room with a novice. Previously at Warrenton I had noticed a picture of St. Paul of the Cross with the Congregation’s discipline lying on the table. I asked one of the professed students, who was there for the summer, what ‘discipline’ was and got some kind of vague answer. I later learned when Fridays came in Detroit that I had to leave my roommate alone in the room so he could use the discipline.

That practice was gone when I returned the second time, thank God.

I stayed for about six months working with brother Regis sewing habits, working in the kitchen, and doing community laundry while the clerics recreated and studied. After Christmas, I left with no intention of returning.

But the Spirit had other plans. I proceeded to enroll in St. Thomas College for a Masters in Secondary Education, then eventually returned to the Community. That was 1967.

At this point, still a postulant, I was sent to Warrenton to teach. I remember arriving and Kenneth O’Malley showed me to my room in the monastery. When he opened the door, it was obvious that the room had become a storeroom and he was a bit embarrassed.

That being my first year of teaching and with little supervision, it was difficult, but on the whole a good experience. My time at Warrenton brings to mind Brothers Tim, Kevin, Norbert and Tom. We all had key roles and kept the institution running. My room was on the second floor of the monastery across from the boiler room so, while working in my room at night, I could see students sneaking into the walk-in refrigerator for sodas. It was entertaining as I prepared classes.

What is a Brother? *continued*

by Patrick Hanson

Another memory of Warrenton was the last vestige of the Black Robe Farms which was home to the Black Angus cattle that Brothers Bob Baalman and Norbert Friedel used to raise, along with pigs, as well as crops. Both of these men were born in Calhoun County, Illinois, on farms. They happened to be neighbors growing up. I know many of seminarians helped out on the farm at various times.

The next step of course was to go, finally, to the novitiate in Detroit where I became part of the class of novices that I had taught at the Prep. Joe Moons and Joe Mitchell had been two of my students. In the time since I left Detroit the first time, the novitiate had changed a lot in terms of brothers and clerics sharing more of the community chores. I said to Michael Joseph things had really changed the second time around. He informed me that I had changed a lot also, which was true.

My first time in Detroit, Brother John Gebauer was the retreat house cook and had a layman, Steve, who lived in the monastery, to help him. During the week he buffed the floors in the halls and rooms of the retreat house and made beds. Things have changed a bit since those days in the staffing of the retreat centers.

I share these thoughts with you so you can better understand where I come from in terms of being a religious brother. My focus in joining the Passionists was community. Over the years, I invested a lot of energy in building and nurturing community while doing a variety of ministries.

Your Bios and Stories

Calling All Passionist Alumni,

Jim Grad, class of 1970 and Bob Duffield, class of 1971, are planning to electronically house all sorts of Passionist formation memorabilia that include

- Biographies (we have 151 and counting)
- Prep News newspapers
- Photographs from the Prep and our reunions starting in 2002
- Obituaries
- Memorabilia like the "Going His Way" prep manual
- Personal stories/recollections, etc.
- Other items of interest

While it may take some time to get the website up and running, we are currently calling for any and all items that you would like to see included.

Please send to either Jim Grad (jim_grad@yahoo.com) or Bob Duffield (bdlinwood1@cox.net) in either hard copy or electronic format. Both of us are able to address any questions you may have. We will keep you apprised of this project's progress and developments here in the Passionist Alumni Bulletin.

Please contact Jim or Bob for their mailing addresses to send hard copy items.

Your Bios and Stories *continued*

As a way of possibly helping to get your creative juices flowing, we are including this [**Dropbox weblink**](#) created by Mike Kruger, entitled MGC Site Album, with various folders with pictures and other items collected from the eight alumni reunions since 2002. This site has A LOT of stuff and we'd like to build off of it, to house an extensive collection of Passionist formation memorabilia, as well as photos from the reunions.

Special Reunion Planned for Bellarmine Alumni

Formation alumni from Bellarmine will hold their 50th reunion the weekend of May 29, 2020. For info, check with one of the following committee members: Paul Schulte, Mike Owens, or Scott Woodward.

Finding People We Miss

Our database contains a pretty long list of alumni that we have never been able to find. We will soon post the names on the alumni website.

Meanwhile, please let us know if there are people you hope to locate from your formation days so we can work together to find them.

If you are already in touch with folks who have not joined the alumni list, please ask them if they'd like to be contacted by us, then let us know.

Send an email directly to Don Noltemeyer at [**dfnoltemeyer@gmail.com**](mailto:dfnoltemeyer@gmail.com).

A Century of Deceased Passionists

Throughout our lives, we have met Passionists. Most of us did so when we were very young, inspired by them to consider living a life like theirs. Holy Cross Province has kept an ongoing record of those who have passed--up to the present.

To access the complete list, [click here](#).



Your Privacy

Confidentiality and Privacy—We, the Passionist Alumni Council, value the privacy and confidentiality of all Alumni personal contact information provided to the Passionist Alumni Association. Your personal contact information will not be shared with any third parties outside of the Passionist Alumni Association. For the purposes of communicating with each Alumni member, the Passionist Alumni Council is utilizing a web-based communications platform called “Flocknote”. All Passionist Alumni personal contact information utilized by Flocknote to communicate with you is safeguarded using secure data practices and policies.

See flocknote.com/privacy for further information.