

# JOTTINGS

The AIC / MHA Alumnae Newsletter | SUMMER 2023



## Letter from the Board

The Alumnae Board is excited to announce the 2023 Alumnae Reunion.

The reunion is scheduled for September 23 and 24, 2023.

We are all called, in our own unique way, to reconnect and honor the lifelong lessons we learned during our time on the Hill. Our hope is that this reunion will give you the opportunity to reminisce about the past, reconnect with old friends, and rekindle the bonds that were formed during your time here.

We invite you to come back, whether it's your first time since graduation or an annual journey, to feel the love and connection of our alumnae family. Our community has grown and evolved over the years, but the spirit of the Academy lives on in each of us.

The Sisters at the Monastery welcome us home, to the Hill, and they can't wait to share this special occasion with us. Our community has grown and evolved over the years, but the spirit of our campus remains the same.

We look forward to seeing you all back on the Hill.

Sincerely,  
The Academy Alumnae Board

Please take this moment to update any and all information by visiting [www.thedome.org/update-your-info/](http://www.thedome.org/update-your-info/), so that we can assure you are receiving the most up to date information as it becomes available. If you are unable to use the provided link, please email [memoriesoftheacademy@gmail.com](mailto:memoriesoftheacademy@gmail.com).

## Did You Know?

Ever wonder where your favorite Sister is? What are they up to? What are their interests? What led them to join the Monastery? Great news, friends! You can find your Sister by doing the following:

- 1) Go to the [thedome.org](http://thedome.org)
- 2) Click on "About Us"
- 3) Go to "Find a Sister"
- 4) Click on her picture and Voila! Up pops a short bio and update!

## Alumnae Board

**Kristi Bonilla**  
President, Class of 1990

**Amy Lawson**  
Vice President, Class of 1993

**Mary Ellen Espy McCoy**  
Secretary, Class of 1992

**Sister Pat McGuire**  
Class of 1960

**Sister Anna O'Connor**  
Class of 1969

**Falisha Pierce**  
Class of 1990

**Veronica Marcos**  
Class of 1990

**Sonya Lackey**  
Class of 1989

**Jennifer Gazda DeHenes**  
Class of 1992

**Elaine Robertson**  
Class of 1980

**Tina Dalton**  
Class of 1982

**Elaine Baumgart**  
Class of 1959

**Susie Schafer**  
Faculty 1986-1999

**Lynn Belli**  
Faculty 1986-2000



## Academy Alumnae Reunion Weekend 2023 Agenda

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

#### Informal Gatherings

Each class is invited to create their own arrangements for Friday evening.

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

#### Registration Meet & Greet

The Events Center  
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM EST

#### Tours of Monastery

1:00 PM & 2:00 PM EST

#### Informal Gathering & Pitch-In Cookout

Madonna Lake  
Outdoor Classroom  
4:00 PM - 8:00 PM EST  
*Please bring a dish to pass  
and lawn chairs.*

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

#### Continental Breakfast

Alumnae Center  
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM EST

#### Mass at the Monastery

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM EST

#### Dinner, Alumnae Meeting & Auction

The Events Center  
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM EST

Dear Alumnae,

I hope that this issue of "Jottings" finds you well!

You may remember from earlier messages that the sisters are in the midst of major planning for the future use of our various buildings and grounds. This summer, our consultants will present a variety of recommendations to the community. Then, we will spend some time discussing these ideas in order to determine priorities for the coming years. Please pray for us as we continue this important process.

One of the biggest changes happening on the hill this spring has been the decision to begin transitioning away from having our own licensed nursing facility within the monastery. Hildegard Health Center has served us well for 18 years, but as healthcare costs increase and the number of sisters requiring nursing care decreases, we have made the decision to begin moving our sisters in need of nursing care to Scenic Hills at the Monastery.

In 2019, Scenic Hills at the Monastery opened a brand new facility on land leased from the monastery. Several sisters are now residing at Scenic Hills, and we anticipate moving the rest of the sisters currently in Hildegard Health Center to Scenic Hills yet this year. Because the facility is located on our grounds, we can visit daily and provide prayer and companionship for our sisters there. Plus, our sisters' presence provides a ministry to the other residents! While a necessary move, it has also been difficult. Please pray for all of us in this time of transition.

In the last weeks and months, I have had the joy of seeing some of you returning to visit "on the hill." It is always a joy to see you, visit with you, and meet your families, too. Know that you are always welcome to return to campus and walk the grounds, visit the church, and inquire about some of your teachers. I look forward to welcoming many of you this fall for the annual reunion.

Know that you are always in our prayers. Please don't hesitate to reach out when you or your loved ones need prayer.

*A Anita Louise Lowe, OSB*

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB  
Prioress

# Alumnae Updates

If you have a personal update you'd like to share with your former alumnae, you can visit [thedome.org/life-update/](http://thedome.org/life-update/) and fill out the online form.

## Ann Umland

### CLASS OF 1983

I have been married almost 29 years and have three grown children. I am a lunch lady & bus aide for the local school district.

## Clairette Bacallao Lopes

### CLASS OF 1983

I live in Raleigh, North Carolina, and work in the Finance Department of the Diocese of Raleigh. I have three children, two of whom are working in the Northeast and my youngest is in college.

## Doris A. Begle

### CLASS OF 1975

I am retired.

## Lisa Peretin

### CLASS OF 1987

I am an Art & Music teacher in a Catholic elementary school. I've been married 32 years with 2 daughters and 2 grandchildren.

## Martha Trevino

### CLASS OF 1987

I live in Monterrey, Mexico. I attended the Alumnae Reunion in 2022. I am married with 2 daughters.

# May They Rest In Peace

## ALUMNAE

Mary Lee (Schnell) Allen, 1945

Doris (Mundy) Chrism, 1954

Sister Mary Emma Jochum, 1958

Sister Mary Victor Kercher, 1943

Sister Mary Jane Kiesel, 1959

Sister Dolorita Libs, 1941

Sister Mary Carmen Spayd, 1943

Rosalie (Hall) Stone, 1950

Marilyn (Debuisseret) Swango, 1960

Doris (Olinger) Tretter, 1950

## FACULTY & STAFF

Sister Mary Austin Blank



## Come away to the monastery for a retreat.

Come experience one of our spiritual programs and retreats. View our upcoming retreats and register for them by visiting [thedome.org](http://thedome.org) or by calling 812.367.1411, ext. 7345 or 2842.





# An Unexpected Return to the Grotto

**Dictated by  
Vero Marcos**

**Transcribed by  
Trish Krampe**

I came to the Academy for the second semester of our junior year in 1989 and returned for our Senior year of 1990.

In the beginning, I was confused about my last minute school change and lack of certainty for my future at this new school. I was terribly homesick, but the welcome I received from the Sisters, international students, and American students made me feel most welcome to a huge new home!

I was welcomed by so many, but the ones that come to mind are Amy Conrey, Shannon Mattingly, Raffella Romano, Jenny Pierson, Allison Grey, Kristen Gruber, Bina Haque, Falisha Ball, Clare Cook, Bridget Graham,

Rhonda Farmer, Sandy Steve, Julie Fabb, Trish Krampe, and of course Kristi Pnacek.

Spending weekends with my new friends was full of adventures. We traveled all over Southern Indiana and part of Kentucky. I spent time with my roomie Hitomi Okumura at our “American parents” home. We learned how to water ski in Santa Claus, Indiana, and all about the Kentucky Derby while in Louisville. I went to my first American concert with Rory Gillingham. It was New Kids on the Block and it was a blast! I was able to explore SW Indiana and learn about its history with Amy Conrey.



I was so honored when I was eventually asked to be a big sister to a new, incoming girl.

I was raised in a non-practicing Catholic home. I learned about my faith, spirituality, religion, and love for new cultures and world views at Marian Heights Academy.

I learned of the 13 colonies from Mr. Lawrence, World Religions from Sister Cathryn, love of the arts from Sister Francesca, and Home Economics from Sister Anna.

To this day, I use the lessons that I learned at Marian Heights Academy in my daily professional life. My deep faith and spirituality have provided a natural path for me to help others as a psychologist and by teaching others how to bring faith and spirituality into their daily lives as a guide for people at the El Camino de Santiago (The Saint James Way) in Spain. I also enjoy teaching in many subjects, especially those that pertain to self-awareness, self-love, meditation, physical and mental health, and wellbeing.

One of the greatest lessons my father taught me as he was leaving me at MHA was to learn English. "English will open the doors of the world to you." My father was right. I have patients, clients, and friends from all over the world and our common denominator has been the English language. I wouldn't be where I am today without my father's patience and persistence that I received an excellent education.

In 2010, I had planned to return for our 20th class reunion. A family emergency at the last minute prevented my return. Looking back at those pictures, I wish I could have been there!



Thirty-two years after our graduation, I was able to return. Lolita Herrera and I drove from Louisville to the "Hill" on Friday, September 23, 2022.

As soon as we approached the campus, I asked Lolita to drop me at the bottom of the hill. The quiet magnetism beckoned me to walk and breathe in the energy, peace, and joy of that place. It was a life renewing experience.

I do believe I spent 2 hours in the Grotto before Lolita came to find me and remind me there was a dinner in Jasper we were invited to. We enjoyed a beer in the art studio (a Sister Betty's Blond if I remember correctly) now a brewery and then went to meet our alumnae sisters in Jasper.

We arrived at the Schnitzlebank restaurant in Jasper. We had been in contact with Kristi Pnacek Bonilla the whole afternoon. She directed us to the bar room. I remember walking through a set of swinging doors into the bar. There, along the back wall between 3 large tables, were MHA/AIC alumnae. My eyes locked with my classmates and the reunion began all over again for everyone. There was so much hugging, laughing, and bonding that it's a night I'll never forget. Our night continued after hours at the hotel. We all laughed and giggled late into the night.

The Saturday afternoon activities, such as the tour by Sister Jane Ann and the evening cookout, were fantastic. The cookout provided a new way for us to meet and get to know Alumnae from other classes and eras.

Sunday morning mass and lunch brought me right back to the memories of the formal dinners we used to have in the dining room.

**"To this day,  
I use the lessons  
that I learned at  
Marian Heights  
Academy in my daily  
professional life."**

During that Sunday lunch, I was incredibly honored to have been asked to act as a liaison for the board and the Mexican students. It has been a lot of fun making plans for this fall and I am excited to see everyone again!

I am honored to have had the opportunity to go to this school. I am amazed and blessed to have met these fantastic people — once my childhood classmates, now my amazingly talented and beautiful adult friends — who have all come through their own personal storms to build a successful professional and private lives for themselves. I start each day with gratitude for learning the life lessons taught at Marian Heights and for the friendships I had 32 years ago that have been renewed and strengthened thanks to our annual reunions.



# Volunteer Opportunities

Multiple opportunities to help the Sisters are available. They are always looking for support and help with the following:

## GARDENING

Keep the monastery grounds clean and pristine by tilling, planting, weeding, mulching, harvesting and tree trimming.

## MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING

There are opportunities for painting, pressure washing, moving furniture, washing cars, cleaning and more.

## THE BAKERY

Be part of the inner circle of the Monastery Baked Goods by making, dusting, sorting, or packaging our products for sale to the public. They're busiest October through December.

## CHRISTKINDLMARKT

During this annual mid-November festival, you can volunteer to sell Monastery Baked Goods, or be a greeter or helper in the Monastery Gift Shop or Event Hall throughout Christkindlmarkt weekend.

To learn more or to volunteer, email us at [volunteers@thedome.org](mailto:volunteers@thedome.org) or call **812.367.1411, ext. 2821**.



## Stay with us.

Find rest and healing, renewal and peace for your body, mind, and spirit at the Benedictine Hospitality Center. Whether you're here for a retreat directed or on a spiritual retreat of your own, our Hospitality Center provides cozy, comfortable accommodations right here at the monastery. For rates and availability, call **812.367.1411, ext. 7309** or email [hospitality@thedome.org](mailto:hospitality@thedome.org).

# Register Today for the 2023 Alumnae Reunion

September 23 - 24, 2023

Online registration: [thedome.org/reunion2023](http://thedome.org/reunion2023)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Class of \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Alumnae registration and dinners ..... \$50

Adult guest at dinner on Sunday ..... \$15

Children 10 and under at dinner on Sunday ..... \$10

**Please complete the registration form even if paying in-person. This will provide us with more accurate numbers when confirming with the caterers.**

## Please check all that apply:

- ☐ I will attend the Saturday picnic dinner.  
(Please bring a side dish to share.)
- ☐ I will bring \_\_\_\_\_ adult guests for dinner.
- ☐ I will bring \_\_\_\_\_ children for dinner.
- ☐ I will attend the Sunday dinner.
- ☐ I will bring \_\_\_\_\_ adult guests for dinner.
- ☐ I will bring \_\_\_\_\_ children for dinner.
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ # of meat meals
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ # of vegetarian meals

**Total amount enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail in registration:** send this form & your check to:  
Sisters of St. Benedict  
802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532

☐ **Pay in-person upon arrival:** cash or check only



## EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION

To be entered into a special drawing,  
register before **August 4, 2023!**

**Registration Deadline: September 8, 2022**

## 2023 Alumnae Reunion September 23 - 24, 2023

- Register early, the deadline is September 8
- **Don't forget cash or your checkbook** for Raffle Tickets
- Guided tours of the academic building on Saturday at 1:00 PM & 2:00 PM
- Reserve a hotel room before they're gone

## Hotels with Room Block & Special Rates:

### Holiday Inn Express

2000 Hospitality Drive  
Jasper, IN 47546  
(812) 482-3344 \*\*  
MHA/AIC Reunion \*

### Comfort Inn

123 Scenic Hills Court  
Ferdinand, IN 47532  
(812) 817-0484  
MHA/AIC Reunion \*

### Hampton Inn

355 3rd Ave  
Jasper, IN 47546  
(812) 481-1888  
MHA/AIC Reunion \*

### Comfort Inn

1970 Hospitality Drive  
Jasper, IN 47546  
(812) 556-2888  
MHA/AIC Reunion \*

\* Reservation Code for our discount.

\*\* Must call the Holiday Inn Express directly.





# JOTTINGS

AIC/MHA Alumnae Association

802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239

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# 2023 ALUMNAE REUNION

## September 23 - 24, 2023

We're excited to announce that our annual Alumnae Reunion will be held September 23-24. Join us for a weekend full of fun activities and reunite with friends.

You can fill out and mail in the registration form found inside this issue of "Jottings" or save time and paper by registering online at [thedome.org/reunion2023](https://thedome.org/reunion2023).

### Deadline to register is September 8.

#### EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION

To be entered into a special drawing, register before **August 4, 2023!**

