



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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The mission of the American Monastic Newsletter is to be an instrument of communication and information for Benedictine monasteries of North America and members of the American Benedictine Academy.

More Features Added to ABA Convention

In the months since the schedule for the 2016 ABA convention was printed in the February issue of this newsletter, several additions have been made that will enhance the meeting even more. The Friday evening presentation “What the Living Do” was billed as a reflection by poet and journalist Judith Valente. Now, a second noted oblate and poet, Kathleen Norris, will be joining her in that presentation. As laywomen who have had to make their peace with a fear of death and the loss of loved ones, Kathleen and Judith will look at death through a monastic prism and through the insights of their own and others’ poetry to arrive at a place of understanding.

The schedule also listed a panel to address the topic of “The Paschal Mystery in the Life and Death of Monasteries.” Four panelists have now agreed to share their experiences. Father Denis Quinkert was a monk of Blue Cloud Monastery in South Dakota where he served as abbot from 1986 to 1991 and again from 2009 until its closure in 2012. Monks chose to transfer to various monasteries and he is now a member of St. Meinrad’s Archabbey in Indiana.

Sister Ruth Feeny was a member of St. Bede’s Monastery in Eau Claire, Wisc., where she was subprioress from 1992 until 2008. The sisters from that monastery transitioned back to their founding monastery, St. Benedict’s in St. Joseph, Minn. Sister Melissa Anna Letts’ Red Plains community in Piedmont, Okla., made the decision to enter into a lengthy discernment process to find a monastery to which their members could transfer as a group. They are now members of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kan., where Sister Melissa is director of pastoral care for the Dooley Center nursing care facility and an artist.

The fourth panelist brings yet another perspective to the conversation. Jenny Fenner was a long-time oblate of Red Plains. When a monastery is closed, oblates face a difficult situation caused by matters over which they have no control. The way that the Oklahoma oblate group has maintained and adapted their life through the transition is another important part of the story.

Special interest conversations this year will include a forum for oblates in addition to the other section meetings, and a place for any other group conversations.

REGISTRATION FORM INSIDE ON PAGE 5-6

President's Message

Gratitude

“What does gratitude have to do with ‘keeping death daily before our eyes?’” you might be asking. I’ll get there.

When I accepted nomination for ABA vice-president in the spring of 2012, my community had just announced the closure of our high school for young women after 148 years in operation; for twenty-three of those I had been a faculty member whose greatest delight in teaching was introducing new generations to the wisdom and sanity of the Benedictine tradition. I was about to be out of that job, and perhaps more painfully, an important part of my identity. I had lots of time and didn’t really think I’d get elected, anyway.

Though of course I still live, eat, and pray in the same monastery I did four years ago (stability, anyone?), my personal horarium is very different now. When morning prayer ends at 7:00 a.m., I leave for my job at Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago. I return about twelve hours later. Last fall

my nephew Seth moved into Misericordia Home, a phenomenally life-giving residential community for developmentally disabled children and adults that happens to be down the street from where I live. Since the rest of his family still lives in Arlington, Virginia, I spend a good chunk of every weekend with Seth.

This is all to say that our upcoming gathering is happening because of the wisdom and efforts of many people. The board you elected in 2015 has been perceptive, diligent, and dedicated. I am deeply indebted to them: Sisters Julia Upton RSM, Antoinette Purcell OSB, and Marianne Burkhard OSB, Rev. Greg Peters and Judith Valente. Sister Elizabeth Carrillo OSB, executive secretary, and Sister Judith Sutera OSB, as *American Monastic Newsletter* editor and “institutional memory,” have been consistently supportive and patient. The speakers and presenters who will be broadening our vision in July are doing so out of commitment to the tradition and/or topic, certainly not because of any financial gain that will be coming their way. And I’m especially grateful to those of you who have registered for the convention, and those who will register (there’s still time!); you will provide the conversation and context for which we come together.

Just as ABA conventions don’t happen without a community, no individual or family or congregation or institution can navigate the paschal mystery in isolation. We are able to face deaths, of all kinds, because of our faith in resurrection. To believe in something so audacious takes community, too. I remain convinced that the Rule of Benedict and the monastic trajectory have valuable lessons to teach on this topic. As we embark on the experience of ABA 2016, let us, indeed, “prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life” (RB 72:11 and 12).

Amen. Thanks be to God. And you.

Susan Quaintance, OSB
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The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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The American Monastic Newsletter is published three times per year and it, as well as other ABA information, may be read online at:

www.americanbenedictine.org

CANON LAW COLUMN

Relationship of Benedictines to Diocesan Bishop

Every monastery is located within a diocese. The relationship of the members of the monastery, especially those in leadership, with the diocesan bishop is an important one and should be nurtured. Some bishops have much experience with religious institutes, and some bishops are members of religious institutes themselves. Even our current Holy Father is a member of a religious institute, the Society of Jesus. However, some other bishops have had very little connection with religious. Either way, it is important to reach out to the diocesan bishop (as well as to the diocesan vicar for religious, if there is one) so that you know him and he knows you and your community. Share with the bishop the types of ministries in which your members are involved, as well as the types of activities that occur on a regular basis at your monastery. Show interest in the bishop and his concerns. Also be aware of what is going on in your diocese and try to be involved in a constructive manner.

Among monasteries there are different types of relationships with the universal church and with the local diocesan church. There are monasteries of pontifical right and of diocesan right. Canon 589 states: “An institute of consecrated life is of pontifical right if it has been established by the Apostolic See, or approved by it by means of a formal decree. An institute is of diocesan right if it has been established by the diocesan bishop and has not obtained a decree of approval from the Apostolic See.”

Among monasteries of pontifical right, there are some for whom the diocesan bishop is entrusted with special vigilance over them, as stated in canon 615. This is because some monasteries are not associated with other monasteries such that they do not have a superior outside of their own local superior. This column will address only monasteries of pontifical right who are members of a monastic congregation and thus do not come under the “special vigilance” of the bishop within canon 615. Most women’s monasteries in the U.S. are members of monastic congregations, some of which are denominated as “federations.”

Even monasteries of pontifical right which are members of monastic congregations have a certain relationship with the diocese and the diocesan bishop. There are several canons in the Code of Canon Law that describe the relationship between the diocesan bishop and religious in his diocese. There is also an important Vatican document, which is expected to be soon revised and updated, that encourages good relationships between bishops and religious: *Mutuae relationes*. There may also be particular law of a diocese which addresses the relationship of the bishop and the religious in that diocese.

First the relevant canons, at least some of them: Canon 586 recognizes the “true autonomy of life, especially of governance” for each institute. It states further that “[l]ocal ordinaries have the responsibility of preserving and safeguarding this autonomy.” One commentator has said that “[i]t cannot be emphasized enough that this is a matter of formal recognition and not of an administrative concession by the ecclesiastical authority.” (*Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 2:1500, Midwest Theological Forum, Chicago: 2004).

Canons 678-683 speak of the role of religious in the particular church, i.e., the diocese. Canon 678 is the pre-eminent canon of this series of canons. The first and the third sections of canon 678 will be addressed here. Canon 678§1 states: “Religious are subject to the power of bishops whom they are bound to follow with devoted submission and reverence in those matters which regard the *care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate.*” (emphasis added). It is in these three areas only that the bishop has jurisdiction to direct religious, and, specifically, the bishop is not to be involved in the internal governance of a religious institute (see canon 586 referred to above). Canon 678§3 states: “In organizing the works of the apostolate of religious, diocesan bishops and religious superiors must proceed through mutual consultation.” This is the clearest canonical reference to the cooperation that must occur between the diocesan bishop and the religious superiors of religious in his diocese. One commentator clearly elucidates the nature of the relationship between diocesan bishops and religious superiors:

[I]t is necessary that a profound understanding between the bishops and superiors always exist:

(continued from page 3)

the bishops should be ecclesially sensitive to the nature of the religious life and its discipline, and the religious superiors should try to see the apostolate as necessary to the religious life and pertinent to the very nature of the institute. The religious superiors ought to be conscious of the responsibility they have in this sector, and approach the diocesan bishop through dialogue with him.” (*Exegetical Commentary*, p. 1818)

Canon 680 directs that there be cooperation between members of religious institutes and diocesan priests for apostolic work, under the direction of the diocesan bishop. One commentator writes a helpful description of this cooperation by contrasting it with other realities. “Cooperation is contrasted to rivalry or to indifference, either of which is ultimately destructive in the apostolate of the Church. It implies mutual understanding and respect which alone will make effective coordination of efforts possible.” (*A Handbook on Canons 573-746*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1985, p. 211).

An important limitation regarding the supervision of the apostolate within the diocese is found at the end of this canon. It states that this cooperation and direction concerning the apostolate is to be “with due regard for the character and purpose of individual institutes.” In other words, the bishop cannot direct religious in his diocese to engage in apostolic works that are not in keeping with the character and purpose of the religious community. This seems to be a reference back to canons 578 and 586 referenced above.

Prior to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, in 1978 a document entitled *Mutuae relationes*, co-authored by two dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the one governing religious institutes and the other governing bishops, issued directives for mutual relations between religious and bishops. *Mutuae relationes* clearly influenced the writing of some of the above referenced canons, especially canons 678§3 and 680.

In late 2013, at an assembly of the Union of International Superiors General (UISG), the Holy Father called for a revised and updated version of this important document concerning the expected rapport, communication and cooperation between religious and bishops. He has entrusted the revision of this document to the Vatican Congregation

for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL).

Whether speaking of canons or of Vatican documents as they relate to the relationship between the diocesan bishop and the religious in his diocese, it is clear that there is a human dimension to this relationship that cannot be overlooked. There must be a genuine human interest shown by religious in their diocesan bishop and vice versa. Only if there is authentic care and concern for one another can the relationship spoken of in the canons and in *Mutuae relationes* be made real. The more we as monastics can interface with the diocesan bishop, his delegates and the diocesan clergy, the better we will be able to establish relationships of cooperation among us. As indicated, there is a special responsibility of monastic superiors to take seriously the need to develop and nurture a good relationship and clear lines of communication with the diocesan bishop, and vice versa.

If you have a question or idea for a future column, feel free to contact Sister Lynn.

Lynn McKenzie, OSB
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The 31st Annual Monastic Institute
Monastic Profession: Baptism, Kenosis, and
Growing Into Christ
July 3-7, 2016 Collegeville, Minnesota

This year’s Institute is focused on the meaning of monastic profession in our time. Monastic profession will be situated in its historical origins and then be developed through the lens of our baptism into the paschal mystery of Christ. Obedience, conversatio, and stability will be explored in turn, using language of kenosis given in Philippians 2.

Because we live in a post-Auschwitz, post-Watergate, and consumerist and individualist society, each of these elements have to be understood in a fresh and provocative manner. We will strive to engage participants, professed religious and oblates in a variety of ways, for the sake of active processing and learning.

Register now at:
www.csbsju.edu/sot/monasticinstitute

American Benedictine Academy Convention July 21-23, 2016

Benedict Inn
1402 Southern Avenue
Beech Grove, Indiana

Registration Form

Date _____

Name for badge _____

Monastery (name and city) _____

Personal Information

Full Name _____ OSB _____ Oblate _____ Other _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Gender: () Female () Male

Registration Fee

Before June 1, 2016

\$150.00 ABA member

\$175.00 Non-member

After June 1, 2016

\$175.00 ABA member

\$200.00 Non-member

Day rate: \$100 for single day attendance and meals on that day ____ Fri. and/or ____ Sat.

Registration Total _____

Room and Board (room for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and meals from Thursday supper through Sunday breakfast). Please check room preference below:

Standard room with common bathroom: \$200 single ____ \$150 per person double ____

Private room with bath: \$235.00 single ____ \$175 per person double ____

NOTE: Space is limited and will be first come, first served.

I would also like housing on the additional nights of _____ at the published rate for the type of room in which I am staying.

I would like to share a double room with _____

Room & Board Total _____

5 TOTAL OF ALL ITEMS ABOVE _____

Assistance at Liturgies: Please volunteer. Check all that you are willing to do.

- Reader at prayers and/or Eucharist
- Prayer leader
- Cantor at prayers and/or Eucharist
- Play musical instrument - Type of instrument_____

Please indicate if you have any dietary or mobility needs and be specific about your requirements.

Transportation

Airport is Indianapolis International Airport which is approximately 15 miles from the monastery. Please make your own arrangements for transportation from airport.

IMPORTANT: When putting address in GPS or instructing a driver, be sure to indicate that the address is in Beech Grove as there is also a Southern Avenue in Indianapolis.

Other Housing Options

There are several motels at exits 103 (Southport Rd), 101 (County Line Rd) and 99 (Greenwood) on I-65 south of downtown Indianapolis, within 10-20 minutes of the monastery.

Please make check payable to “**Sisters of St. Benedict**” and mail with your registration form to:

Sister Antoinette Purcell
Our Lady of Grace Monastery
1402 Southern Avenue
Beech Grove, IN 46107



NEWS

There have been several leadership elections in recent months, including the following:

- Prioress Maricarmen Brocamontes, OSB - Monasterio Pan de Vida (Torreon, Mexico)
- Prioress Nicole Kunze, OSB - Annuciation Monastery (Bismarck, N.D.)
- Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB - Mount Angel Abbey (Mt. Angel, Ore.)
- Re-elected to continue in their service:
- Prioress Elizabeth Brown, OSB - St. Lucy's Monastery (Glendora, Cal.)
- Prioress Sandra Brunenn, OSB - St. Mary Monastery (Rock Island, Ill.)
- Prioress Roberta Bailey, OSB - Holy Name Monastery, St. Leo, Fla.

Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Ind., was the site of a gathering of Benedictine women under the age of 56 held April 21-24. The title of this year's meeting was "New Wineskins." The group heard a presentation by Sister Aileen Bankemper, OSB of St. Walburg Monastery (Covington, Ky.), on Benedictine collaboration/labora. Sister Michelle Sinkhorn, OSB from the Monastery Immaculate Conception (Ferdinand, Ind.), provided an update on the grant that funds technological upgrades for communities, and Sister Suzanne Fitzmaurice, OSB of Mount St. Scholastica (Atchison, Kan.), shared a wide variety of ways to use technology to foster relationships across the nation and around the world.

More than 80 sisters from all North American federations/congregations were in attendance. Presidents of the Federations of St. Scholastica, St. Gertrude, St. Benedict, and the prioress of the Missionary Benedictines were also in attendance. This meeting, held every --- years is a way for sisters to --- . Members of the planning committee, chaired by Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, were Sisters Sophia Becker (Clyde), Elizabeth Carrillo (Atchison), Leah Ann Sison (Norfolk), and Hannah Vanorny (Bismarck).

Fifteen Cistercian abbots and abbesses of the U.S. region held their annual meeting at Bethsemani Abbey in Kentucky in February. In addition to business meetings and a tour of the nearby Shaker Village Historical Site, they elected two representatives to attend the 2017 general chapter, Sister Alice from Wrentham, Mass, and Father James from Berryville, Va.

Monastic communities wishing to renovate or build a chapel, or desiring to develop their ritual celebration of liturgy are invited to "Architecture for Liturgy I," given by Daniel McCarthy, OSB, 16-20 January 2017, Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, Kansas. Daniel served as the liturgical consultant for the new church of Stanbrook Abbey in the UK. Information at: <http://architectureforliturgy.org/liturgy-week-1/>.

Convention Art Exhibit Reminder

The Visual Arts Section of the ABA invites Benedictine artists to submit 1 to 4 pieces of art for the ABA Art Show at the convention in Beech Grove. We are adding a digital art gallery in addition to actual display pieces. Artists may submit 1 to 3 digital images. Since the theme for the convention is "Keep Death Daily Before Your Eyes," consider making selections which include art work reflective of the theme (such as funeral palls, urns, memorial cards, etc.) although all art work will be accepted.

Criteria: original work in any medium (fiber, ceramic, woodworking, stain glass, photography, etc.) must be ready for hanging or display on a pedestal. Clearly label each piece with your name and name and location of your community. Bring to convention or ship in a returnable container with pre-paid return shipping included. Do not ship anything with glass. Send art to arrive at convention site by noon July 21, 2016 (address to attention of Sister Antoinette Purcell, 1402 Southern Avenue, Beech Grove, IN 46107). Host is not responsible for returning shipments. Shippers will need to make arrangements for return shipping (Gregory Evans at 571-225-7745 or greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com). Digital submissions in JPEG format should be emailed to greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com by June 20, 2016. To contact Gregory Evans with questions or concerns: Phone (571) 225-7745, e-mail greg.oblsb@gmail.com.

ABA Board Nominees

At the convention in July, the members in attendance will elect a vice-president who will succeed to the presidency in 2018 and four at-large board members. At least one board member must be an oblate.

Current members of the board are: President Susan Quaintance, OSB (Saint Scholastica, Chicago), Vice-President Julie Upton, RSM (oblate of Mount Saviour, Pine City, N.Y.), Executive Secretary Elizabeth Carrillo, OSB (Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison) and at-large members: Marianne Burkhard, OSB (St. Mary, Rock Island, Ill.), Greg Peters (oblate of St. Andrew's, Valyermo, Cal.), and Judith Valente, (oblate of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kan.), all of whom are eligible for re-election, and Antoinette Purcell, OSB (Our Lady of Grace, Beech Grove, Ind.) who is not eligible for re-election to the board but may become president.

A number of candidates for the board have been nominated by members of the Academy. Below are brief biographies, photos and their aspirations for ABA. Only current ABA members attending the biennial business meeting at Beech Grove may vote, and they are asked to prayerfully consider the candidates listed here before the election.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT (2018 President)



Greg Peters

I have spent the last 20+ years studying monasticism and advocating for its re-introduction into Protestant and Evangelical churches, most recently as a professor of medieval and spiritual theology at Biola University in La Mirada, Cal., and as an oblate and retreat leader at St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, Cal. After 15 years of ordained ministry in the Baptist tradition, I became an Anglican in 1995 and was ordained a priest, serving in five different churches since 1999. A member of ABA for a number of years and a current board member, I was the recipient of a monastic studies grant in 2010. I am married with two children and am the author of *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Baker Academic, 2015).

As a Protestant who desires to see monasticism re-introduced into the Evangelical Church tradition,

I am certain that the ABA can take a role in helping to accomplish this task. I would like to continue serving on the ABA board to assist the Academy in its ongoing work and help to extend its reach into the larger Protestant and Evangelical tradition, to bring the richness of monastic history and spirituality to a largely untapped audience.



Antoinette Purcell, OSB

I have been a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove since 1964. I have a master's degrees in pastoral studies and education with endorsement in administration.

Ongoing education includes a certificate in spiritual direction, sabbatical program on contemplation and spirituality, and participation in the Benedictine renewal program in Rome. Currently, I serve as director of oblates, spiritual director, speaker, retreat leader and group facilitator. I served as president of NAABOD from 2005-2011 and held leadership positions with Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, Center for Ministry Development, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and for parishes and schools in the archdiocese.

I have served on the ABA board since 2012. I believe the ABA makes a contribution to the furthering of Benedictine monastic interests by being a conduit for connections among those interested in monasticism, and the ongoing development and sharing of resources. I would be honored to serve the organization if chosen.

AT-LARGE MEMBER OF THE BOARD

Changes in the term of the board members are to be proposed at the meeting. They are explained elsewhere in this issue.

Renée Branigan, OSB

I am a member of Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, N.D. I received my B.A. in oral communications from Mt. Marty College, an M.A. in speech and theater from the University of North Dakota; and an M.A. in Christian spirituality from Creighton University. I have taught for over 40 years in grade school and high school but primarily at the university level. While teaching, I was also very active in various publications: my community's



newsletters (ongoing), the ABA *Proceedings*, longtime managing editor of *The American Monastic Newsletter*, and I am in my 34th year as editorial assistant for *The American Benedictine Review*. I presently serve my community as secretary and director of Foundation, Vocations, Volunteers and Formation.

I have attended every ABA meeting since joining in 1980. In 2014, I received the Egregia award from the Academy for my contributions to it. The ABA has always been a blessing in my life. Every time I go, I meet people who share my life values and I rejoice in the expansion of the ABA these many years in its variety of membership and gifts. Every meeting is an encounter with richness of people and ideas!

Marianne Burkhard OSB

Born in Zurich, Switzerland, I earned a Ph.D. in German literature, then came to the U.S. and taught German at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign until I felt called to the Benedictine life. I am a member of St. Mary Monastery in Rock Island, Ill. After earning a licentiate in canon law, I have now served for over 20 years as a judge in the marriage tribunal of the Diocese of Peoria. I have attended ABA conventions since 1990. Since then I have also researched old German books about Benedictine life that the sisters brought from Germany and Switzerland and I am also working on translating the fourth book of Sister Aquinata Boeckmann's work on RB.

Thinking of the ABA I remember Michael Casey's term "generativity." I see the ABA as an important place where Benedictines and oblates together exchange ideas and experiences as their contribution to the "expression and transmission" of the Benedictine spirit to the next generation and a wider world. I would be happy to offer my talents and experience as board member for a second term.



began studies for a Ph.D. in Christian Spirituality at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California in 2011. I am now completing my dissertation on the printmaker Fritz Eichenberg as a case study in the relationship between spirituality and creativity. I have also studied and been active in Buddhist-Christian dialogue, serving one term on the board of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

I gave a presentation on the relationship of Buddhist-Christian dialogue to peace efforts at the ABA conference at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minn., in 2012. I hope to contribute to the study and promotion of Benedictine monasticism. I am interested in considering ways that such monastic resources as the ABA and *American Benedictine Review* can reach broader audiences.

Gregory Evans

I was the second oldest of eleven children, a lifelong Catholic, and am retired after 35 years at the Federal Aviation Administration. With hobbies of pottery, photography, knitting, gardening, music, and other arts and crafts, I volunteer for the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia in their gift shop and assist with their social and liturgical functions. I have been an oblate there since 2004, am a member of the schola and offer programs in their pastoral center, as well as visiting and helping with the needs of the elderly sisters. Stewarding the earth is also important to me. At the death of a sister, I plant a tree in her memory. I also purchase plants, trees and hardscape, and help with maintenance of the Place of Peace (POP) located on the 120 acre monastery grounds.

I have been a member of ABA since 2009 and have been the Visual Art Section convenor since 2013. I would like to serve as a board member to increase my knowledge about ABA and to be an example for oblates in hopes that more oblates will join and be active participants in the rich offerings of ABA.



Greg Peters

An incumbent board member in his first term, Greg Peters was also nominated for an at-large board seat and is eligible for re-election if he is not elected president. See biography above.

Luke Devine, OSB

I entered Saint Martin's Abbey in Lacey, Washington in 2001, made simple vows in 2003 and solemn vows in 2006. I earned a master's degree in theological studies from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry in 2008 and





Phoebe Schwartze, OSB

I grew up and lived in South Dakota most of my life before entering Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, N.D. at the age of 36 in 1995. Most of my professional

background before entering was involved in working with adults with developmental disabilities. Since coming to the monastery, I have worked as administrator for our independent living facility for the elderly for 6 ½ years and as a DRE and liturgist for a nearby parish for 7 ½ years. For the last 3 years I have been working at the monastery as director of our spirituality center, liturgist, oblate director and part-time cook. I am also responsible for our museum. I have a master's degree in public history with an emphasis in archival work.

I have been a member of the ABA for 6 years, so I am new to this organization. I have long admired the work of the ABA. The Academy fosters Benedictine scholarship and values and this is very important to me. I would be honored to help with this work as we continue to move into the future, sharing our Benedictine heritage.

Judith Valente

An Illinois resident and an oblate of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, I am the author of *Atchison Blue* and *The Art of Pausing: Meditations for the Overworked and Overwhelmed*. I work as the senior correspondent at WGLT Radio, the NPR affiliate in central Illinois. I am a contributing correspondent for "Religion & Ethics Newsweekly" on PBS-TV and the Midwest correspondent for *America* magazine. I worked previously for *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* and have published two collections of poetry (my first love in writing!). In my free time, I lead spiritual retreats for busy professionals. I am currently at work on a manuscript (looking for a publisher) on monastic wisdom for the working person.



It has been a privilege to serve on the ABA board these past two years and meet others who want to live Benedictine values in daily life. I was deeply honored to help plan this year's convention, and look forward to being of service in any way I can to the ABA .

Proposal for Consideration at Business Meeting

As it currently stands the ABA Constitution and By-Laws, Article V, Section 1.B reads: "Electees to the Board hold office for two (2) years from the date of their election or until the next elections."

The current Executive Board of the American Benedictine Academy proposes the following changes to Article V, Section 1.B: "Electees to the Board hold office for four (4) years from the date of their election or until the election closest to the four year anniversary of their original appointment to the Board.

Rationale

As it currently stands, all board members are elected every two years with no one board member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms. This creates a quick and rapid succession of board members. In fact, it could be the case that the entire board, with the exception of the president and executive secretary, are new, leaving the Academy with little experienced leadership. As new board members are adjusting to the workings of the Academy, they are being asked to provide governance at a level for which they have little experience. By extending the tenure of elected board members, and staggering the terms (i.e., two board members elected every two years), the necessary time to learn about the Academy and give it solid leadership is more of a reality. As well, there would be at least two experienced members on the board at all times.

As the ABA continues to change and adapt to the realities of monastic (and oblate) life in the twenty-first century, there will be an even greater need for the board to provide vision and long-term stability to the Academy. The current board believes that two years is too little time for one group of board members to engage in intentional listening, praying, designing and implementing necessary changes in the Academy. Increasing the length of a board member's term provides, we believe, for greater viability for the future of the Academy.

This change will be voted upon at the July convention. If this change is approved, the first two nominees elected to the board will be elected for four year terms and the next two for two years so that two will be elected at each biennial meeting thereafter.

DON'T FORGET THAT ALL MEMBERSHIPS PAID THROUGH 2015 WERE DUE FOR RENEWAL JAN 1.

MEMBERS RECEIVE A DISCOUNT ON THEIR CONVENTION REGISTRATION.

The following are the current members of the American Benedictine Academy with dues paid through 2016.

Allen, ObiSB, Gerry, Bellevue, NE
Anderson, Linda, St. Paul, MN
Barrett, ObiSB, Karin, St. Paul, MN
Berger, OSB, Mary Jane, St. Joseph, MN
Bevens, ObiSB, Donna, Vancouver, WA
Biermaier, OSB, Ann Marie, St. Joseph, MN
Biggs, Rev. John A., Pahump, NV
Bingham, OSB, Penny, Yankton, SD
Blake, Tom, Kansas City, MO
Bogue, Edith, Duluth, MN
Boucaud, OSB, Michaela Marie, Ft. Smith, AR
Branigan, OSB, Renee, Richardton, ND
Bratrsovsky, OSB, Mary, Lisle, IL
Burkhard, OSB, Marianne, Rock Island, IL
Bush, ObiSB, Jacqueline, St. Paul, MN
Burley, OSB, Joanna, Bristow, VA
Carlson, Helen, Richfield, MN
Carrillo, OSB, Elizabeth, Atchison, KS
Carruth, OSB, Shawn, Moorhead, MN
Christensen, Katherine, Berea, KY
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