

# THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN National News

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## PURVIS APPOINTED UNITED NATIONS LIAISON

Deacon David Purvis, S.F.O. of Lansing Michigan, Chairman of the National Commission on Peace and Justice, has been asked by national council to act as liaison to the Franciscan Preparatory Commission that is trying to work out a way that all Franciscan families can be represented at the United Nations. The Preparatory Commission is also seeking a way to fund a stable presence at that body.

On February 3, 1989, the United Nations granted the Franciscans a Non-Government Organization status with its Department of Public Information. Hopefully, this will be the first step toward association with the UN's Economic and Social Council. Franciscans now have access to certain United Nations information and events. It will also permit them to interact with

other United Nations groups on issues of environment, peace, and concern for the poor.

The National Secular Fraternity Council has said that it will study carefully the extent to which the organization will become involved before making any further commitment on this issue.

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time now, but no one can remember ever having heard her complain. She is always thanking God for His many blessings. Joseph calls her "the ideal Franciscan."

He also recommends Dorothy Federici and her husband, Paul, for Franciscan honors. Dorothy suffered a brain hemorrhage 27 years ago. She has been physically impaired since then. Dorothy has been confined to her home most of the time for all those years, but she has accepted this heavy cross in a true Christian manner. A real heroic lady! while Paul worked a full-time job, did the cooking and housework, and helped Dorothy raise the children, always looking after Dorothy and helping her in every way possible.

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## SFO HEROES

Saints Stanislaus and Adebart Fraternity in Oak Ridge, N.J. has three great members who have lived lives that their minister, Joseph Hammel, feels exemplifies the Secular Franciscan Spirit.

Margaret Courtney has put in a rough few years recently since her husband died. Margaret had to have both legs amputated, after which she lost her home. She has been in a nursing home for some

The National News salutes these three model Franciscans and would like to receive news of how others are living out their vocations. If you have a brother or sister who inspires you, please let us know about them.

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It is with much excitement and even more trepidation that I have accepted the post of editor of this, our national newsletter, but I have learned from past experience that one must take the initiative before God will provide the power so we can do what's necessary. My experience has proved to me that God frequently sends the power and know-how through other people.

I shall need lots of help to accomplish the goals as explained to me by our National Minister, Jim Lynch. Our hope is to start out with a small newsletter and gradually enlarge it until we have a national magazine. I'm sure you can all understand that the only way we can do that is to have lots of helpful brothers and sisters sending in news, articles, and other interesting items. I can guarantee that you would have no interest in a newsletter all about my fraternity down here in North Carolina. I'll need lots of input.

We shall publish quarterly and send a copy to all fraternity presidents.

Please send me copies of your newsletters, and anything else you think would be interesting. Please do not send poems, stories, and other items that you have copied from other publications without telling me. If you quote a few words from another source, please give credit to your sources. I'm afraid I may not recognize the quote and that could give us a lot of grief, or at least cause me embarrassment.

Jim asked that I introduce myself. I am just a little old lady who has taught in public schools and the local community

college. My undergraduate degree was in biology and chemistry, but my Masters is in communications. I have worked as a newspaper correspondent in Santiago, Chile, and as a reporter for a Norfolk, Va. newspaper. I also served as managing editor of Focus Magazine. As a free-lance writer, I have edited several books and now edit my provincial newsletter as well as a couple of other newsletters. Many of you have heard from me as chairman of the national family commission.

I am very anxious to hear from you. Please let me know what type articles and stories you like. I can hardly wait to get to know you every one!

In the meantime, please pray that I will get the help and inspiration from the Holy Spirit that I'll need to make this a fruitful undertaking. Thanks.

Love and prayers,

Gloria Shriver, S.F.O.

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## THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Various bulletins and newsletters have been mentioning our new constitution. WE DO NOT YET HAVE A NEW CONSTITUTION. In the fall of 1987, we received the second draft which was a proposal. At the 1988 general chapter, there were many changes and additions. As of now, we have not been informed that the third draft is acceptable to the Sacred Congregation. Until it is and until an approved English translation is available, the Rule, the National Statutes, and, except where it disagrees with Vatican II, the 1957 constitution are in effect.

# SARAH OF ST. CASIMIR PROVINCE

Tomorrow, May 14, 1989, fifteen Secular Franciscans will be professed in Kennebunk, Maine. My prayers go out to them as I am almost overcome with the realization of what our wonderful God can do. Because I believe it to be one of the most inspiring stories of recent history in our Order, I would like to try to show you what the power of God, working through one frail, soft-spoken little Secular Franciscan can do. Maybe then, some day when you are discouraged with our Order or even the Church, you can think of the story of Sarah Ledoux and know for sure that God can use us to accomplish His purpose against all odds.

Sarah was brought up in a very strong WASP family in Ridge Farm, Illinois. Even though there were no Jews, Catholics, or Negroes in that town, her family was both liberal and forward-thinking.

So much so that in spite of her background, when it was time for Sarah to go to college, they agreed that she could go to the school that could offer her the best instruction in her beloved instrument, the violin, which she had played since she was eight. Thus, after having been given strict instructions to excel in music, remain a "nice young lady," and stay away completely from the religious influence of the school, she was allowed to enroll in the College of St. Francis in Joliet.

Sarah did excell in music, but she defied the parental instruction on religion and became completely immersed in Catholicism. She not only became Catholic, but became a member of the Third Order. She longed to become a Franciscan Sister, but because of strong

family opposition, she felt the Third Order Secular was the best she could do.

After graduation, she went to Salzburg, Austria, to continue her study of the violin. There she met Charles Ledoux who had remained in Europe after WW II. They were married in Germany in 1945 and later came home to live in Massachusetts and often vacationed in Maine and attended daily Mass at the Monastery in Kennebunk.

When her husband died, she moved to Maine to continue her vocation at the Monastery among her friends there.

One of the friars asked if she would be interested in trying to revive interest in the 30-years-dormant Secular Franciscan Order. She was given the title of Provincial Minister, but there was no province. After repeated inquiries, she found one small group of Secular octogenarians whose only connection with other Franciscans was a yearly visit to the Monastery.

On March 7, 1988, she professed 7 new members. By word of mouth, others became interested. Whenever she was approached by an interested person, she told them to get a group of Catholics together at their homes and she would go tell them about the order. As each group formed, she arranged to meet them once a month at the monastery for instructions and formation.

She sings the praises of their Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Bob DesRoches, O.F.M. who has been a great support and of Brother Michael Bearce who teaches the children while their parents come to the meeting.

# GOYDEN REACHES OUT

Our old rule insisted that we be holy. It did not speak of our apostolic service beyond our own families and fraternities. Now we have a new rule. In it we are instructed to be more than obedient and devout. Today we must reach out, beyond our fraternity to the world. Jean Goyden of St. Francis Fraternity in Binghamton, N.Y. is doing just that.

Jean gave up her car, her apartment, and the joy of being near her family, as well as her job as a nurse at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton to serve in Father Bruce Ritter's Covenant House in New York City. She was later sent to the one in Texas where she served for about one and a half years. She then was sent to Guatemala where she learned Spanish before being sent to the Covenant House in Panama. In Panama, she tends mostly to young children and their mothers.

Jean said, "The problems in Panama are more than I can hope to humanly solve, but with the help of God and lots of willing people who commit themselves, physically and financially, the programs for the kids and their moms will move on little by little. When these people have no more hunger pains and have clean healthy bodies, they will learn to love

and respect themselves and see their value as people and as children of God."

This Secular Franciscan is full of the love of the Lord, and her bubbly spirit bears witness to what it means to be a Secular Franciscan in today's world. Who can say what the Lord has planned for her in today's unsettled Panama?

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## SARAH Cont. from page 3

Now they have four groups in this fraternity of The Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Some day these groups will probably form separate fraternities.

Sarah says, "We are beginning to 'perk' now. By June of this year we will have enough members to elect a council, establish leadership roles, and help me with instructions." As of now they have 2 "Old timers", 4 professed last year, 8 professed in April of this year, and 15 will be professed May 14. They have 15 Candidates--a total of 44, not counting the children,

She also says, "The real work has been accomplished by the grace of God, the love of others, and the love of St. Francis. God put me here to teach when I thought my life no longer had a purpose. God is so good and I am so grateful!"

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