



*Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts*

Fall 2017 E-Newsletter Volume XVIII No. 2

## Fra Angelico Award Honors Janet Wright



Janet Wright, whose radiant watercolors glow on many walls throughout the Adrian Dominican headquarters at Adrian, Michigan, is the recipient of the 2017 Fra Angelico Award. Presenting the bronze medallion, the highest honor bestowed by the Dominican Institute for the Arts, President Barbara Schwarz cited the passion and spirituality which distinguishes Janet's art: "Her paintings reflect the voice of God found in nature." After four decades as an outstanding teacher of young artists, Janet now generously volunteers to teach weekly painting classes to retired Sisters of Mercy. Throughout the history of the DIA, Janet's spirit and creativity has supported the work of many Planning Commissions with a continual, irreplaceable energy. Janet's paintings can be viewed on the DIA webpage under Gallery and Fra Angelico. Mary Boyce was the Board's selection for the 2017 Spirit Award given to a member (See p.6 Fra)



## Gathering 2017: The Artist in RESPONSE

From the compelling simplicity of Aneesah McNamee's graphic design announcing the theme of the 2017 DIA Gathering, to Barbara Cervenka's eloquent homily at its concluding liturgy, Joella Miller's Planning Commission kept all participants intellectually and emotionally engaged and firmly "on message." Sue Schreiber's keynote illustrated one artist's historic "Response" to injustice with the stark beauty of artifacts protesting, war, violence, and poverty. A panel of compassionate art therapists—Nancy Ann Turner, Barbara Kukla, Judi Engel—reported the "Response" of their healing ministries to children, battered women, immigrants and refugees. Nancy Murray responded to the martyrdom of human rights crusader Dorothy Stang with a dramatic performance that brought the missionary to stirring life. Before and after absorbing this sober theme, participants enjoyed relaxing experiences of each other and each other's art. On opening night, the Virtual Gallery, Barbara Schwarz' annual investment of time, art, and devotion, was dedicated to one of the DIA's founding members, recently deceased Phyllis Mrozinski. Another portrayal of the "Response" theme, was the feature length film (See p. 6 Gathering)



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## Board Report: Farewell & Welcome

As Barbara Schwarz concluded her presidency and retired from the DIA Board, Elizabeth Michael Boyle summed up the impact of her leadership: “Over the past four years, Barbara’s consistent, vigorous communication— both internally with membership through online Updates and externally with the public through DomLife, DSCC, and GLOBAL SISTERS REPORT— has yielded tangible results. Paid membership doubled, publicity attracted respectful attention from congregational leadership, and bonds of friendship among members strengthened. In short, under Barbara’s leadership the DIA has evolved from a yearly event into a year- round community.” While declining to remain on the Board Ex Officio, Barbara did agree to retain responsibility for the DIA webpage.

## Board Election Yields New Officers

A rich and well-planned experience at Adrian generated enough enthusiasm for an impressive number of talented and generous members to accept nominations for the DIA Executive Board. The ensuing election assembled a seven-member team which promises to balance experience with fresh perspectives: President, Pat Daly, (Peace); Vice-Pres. Ann Marie Santen (Sparkill); **Secretary, Aneesah McNamee (Adrian); Treasurer, Joella Miller (Adrian);** Membership, Judy Smith (Peace); At-Large, Rudolf Loewenstein (London Province) and Jos Kilikevica (Central Province.)



The new boards members are Rudolf Loewenstein , Aneesah McNamee, Pat Daly, Joella Miller, Ann Marie Santen, Judy Smith, and Joseph Kilikevica

## Report of the Legacy Commision: Your Artwork and Its Future

The Legacy Commission –Elizabeth Michael Boyle, Barbara Cervenka, Joeann Daley, and Elaine DesRosiers—reported on their year-long exploration of actions each artist can take to assure the meaningful survival of her best works. Under the title, “Your Artwork and Its Future,” the group’s panel discussion stimulated a lively exchange. Clarifying input from Mary Navarre, Grand Rapids archivist, stressed the role of artifacts as historical documents. Recommendations distributed by the Commission will be sent from the Board to every congregation’s leadership In the Fall. A packet containing the three guidelines was distributed to each DIA member present, with the reminder that artists are responsible for their own legacy. The time to begin is NOW. Links to the guidelines may be found on the DIA website ([www.diartsop.org/](http://www.diartsop.org/)).

### Your Artwork and its Future

The next issue of **Opalette** will feature ways in which YOU and/or YOUR CONGREGATION have acted upon the guidelines presented by the Legacy Commission. Please submit to the editor any progress you have made on this project. Remember, the time to start preserving your legacy is **NOW**.

## A Message From the President



President Pat Daly, OPA

Recently, hours before folks set out blankets or beach chairs to “catch a few rays,” I was walking the beach—literally surrounded by nature. To the north and south, there was sandy shore line, to the west sea oats among the rocks and to the east ocean as far as the eye could see. My sole companion a seagull checking quohog (large clam) shells hoping for a tasty breakfast treat. Silently, announcing the dawn, shades of mauve and peach began to fill the ocean’s horizon. Sitting on my favorite praying/thinking rock, I relished the view.

Sunsets can be breathtaking but I love to watch the day break. It speaks to me of a new beginning. Yesterday, I might have messed up but today God gives me another chance to get it right and that includes my photography. So many times I’ve ventured out eager to make images of the beauty of nature with the results being far from noteworthy.

Over the years, some of you have shared with me stories about paintings completed and then immediately destroyed, a piece reduced to a mound of clay after spending hours with it at the wheel or a poem shredded. Disappointment with the results of our art happens to all of us but a new day dawns and we have another chance to do it again as we, Dominican Artists, continue to preach God’s Word through our Art.

Have a blessed Autumn and enjoy the colorful beauty it brings.

## Mission San Jose Artists in Review

Among the many artifacts on display in this year’s Gathering marketplace, two bound volumes could be described as retrospectives: Brigid Bray’s *Portfolio* and Irene Mary Diones’ *Visio Divina: Reflections in Photography*.

Brigid Bray, who rarely misses a gathering, is familiar to all who have heard her tell the story of the “stroke of luck” that launched her career as a fulltime artist. Brigid’s growing display of award-winning works on her page of the DIA Gallery attracts modest attention. This year, however, her hard-bound

autobiographical album, available on a table in the marketplace, elicited a cumulative impact of surprise mingled with deep respect. The collection exhibits an impressive variety of subject, style, and genre. Above all, a sense of humor, especially evident in the numerous self-portraits, becomes the artist’s distinctive signature.



Brigid Bray, OP



Irene Mary Diones, OP

Irene Mary Diones’ *Visio Divina* offers a collection of brilliantly-colored photos for use in meditation as an alternative to religious paintings and sculptures. A valuable Foreword explains the origins of *Visio Divina* with clear, concise instructions for its practice. Irene Mary’s consistent choice of nature subjects reflects the contemporary emphasis on the natural world as God’s first revelatory scripture: of more than forty photographs, only three depict religious figures and none depict Jesus. If Irene Mary publishes a sequel to this volume, and she should, two changes are recommended: only one photo per page and no words necessary.



Sue Schreiber, OP

## Social Protest in Black & White

Printmaking/Photography/Preaching

In 2017, as the art world celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of German expressionist human rights activist, Kathe Kollwitz, keynoter Sue Schreiber introduced the DIA Gathering theme with a richly illustrated presentation on one of the earliest artists to dedicate her work to the service of peace and justice. Although many in the audience were unfamiliar with Kollwitz, she has been an inspiration to Sue since the late 60's when she was pursuing her first art degree in Studio Angelico at Siena Heights. Later as a first grade teacher, Sue was attracted to Kollwitz' many depictions of mother and child. Alternately brutal and poignant, these modern pietas seem to plead for an end to all forms of violence and cruelty. "As my social justice awareness grew through my association with the Catholic Worker in Detroit, I began to appreciate the full spectrum and historical context of this woman whose work earned her the title 'the conscience of Germany,'" Sue explained. As a photographer who has specialized in black-and-white imagery, Sue is drawn to "the visual strength of Kollwitz' prints and . . . the timeless quality of her work." That timeless quality was evident as DIA participants listened and viewed giant projections of Kollwitz' creations, for these images immediately resonated with grim photographs on current nightly newscasts where children flee Syria, beg for food in Somalia, and grieve over siblings gunned down in Bagdad and Brooklyn. An exhibit of Kollwitz' reproductions mounted in the newly-renovated INAI studio invited DIA visitors to further contemplation. See p.5 for additional reflection.

## Art Therapy Opens Doors in Alzheimer's Ministry

Irene Mary Diones, O.P. has spent a lifetime as an educator, liturgist, pastoral associate, musician and—within the last year— art therapist. In a building on her California campus shared with ASIEB (Alzheimer's Services in East Bay), her recent part-time volunteer work with Alzheimer's patients has suddenly opened doors, not only to her clients' buried emotions, but also to her own possibilities for a meaningful retirement ministry. When Irene Mary takes up her guitar and strums an old melody, memories awaken for one or more people in the group. Gradually, some respond by humming, tapping, or singing. Others express themselves musically by clapping or accompanying Irene Mary on drums, maracas, and other percussion instruments. Most importantly, someone who has been silent for months (or years) suddenly begins to tell stories associated with that song. Eventually, as they remember who they are, clients' stories pour out. The music therapist's deep satisfaction grows as music restores communication with family members. On alternate weeks, Irene Mary's art therapy sessions produce greeting cards like Valentines which also serve to awaken memories and restore communication with loved ones. The highlight of 2016 was a Christmas concert beginning with carols and concluding with "When the Saints Come Marching In." Grateful family and friends rose to their feet in a standing ovation.

In her research for a painting of Saint Albert commissioned by Albertus Magnus College, Thoma Swanson discovered a Dominican connection with Alzheimer's. Apparently in his late years, the thirteenth century saint exhibited symptoms we would now associate with this dread disease.



Irene Mary Diones, OP

## **Pieta 2017**

*Mixed Media*

In her forest studio  
the sculptor bows low  
over silent stone  
listening to a thousand sobs  
from the heart of a planet.

A spume of alabaster tears  
floats out over the river  
chilling the heart of a Son  
who knows what it means  
to break the heart of a mother.

Ahead of the approaching dusk  
amber light slips into worn sandals  
steps gingerly from a sinking boat  
and strides the path shifting clouds lay down  
in glaze after subtle glaze of  
pearl

cobalt

jade

purple

black.

In mimicry of night's descent  
the sculptor bows lower  
drilling the world's pain into mute rock  
praying for a miracle  
greater than walking on water.



Replica-Kathe Kollwitz Bronze Pieta: 1938-93

Memorial dedicated to all victims of war after the fall of Berlin.

**Elizabeth Michael Boyle, O.P.**

(Con't from p. 1 Gathering)

**Frida**, portraying the controversial relationship between Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. They sought to make art that reflected the lives of the working class and native peoples of Mexico particularly during the time of the Mexican Revolution.



Nancy Ann Turner, Barbara Kukla, Judi Engel reported on their healing ministries to children and battered women.



Nancy Murray portrayed the human rights crusader Dorothy Stang.

Three Fra Angelico artists— pianist Magdalena Ezoë, soprano Anita Smisek, and poet Elizabeth Michael Boyle provided an evening of entertainment. Finally, Joseph Kilikevics led the group in an experience of inter-faith unity through the art of dance.



Servers Aneesah McNamee and Joella Miller; Presider Rudolf Loewenstein; and Preacher Barbara Cervenka face the altar with sculpture by Jeanne Stickling.

WE SPEAK, WE WRITE, WE DO LANGUAGE  
THAT IS HOW CIVILIZATIONS HEAL.  
Toni Morrison

Throughout the event, behind the scenes, Janet Wright worked with the Weber Center staff to secure the Planning Commission's thousand-and-one invisible "nuts and bolts" to which everyone else could be comfortably oblivious.

(con't from p.1 Fra) who demonstrates the true spirit of the Dominican Institute for the Arts. Mary's long support of the Institute merited honoring her with this award.



Mary Boyce, MM receives Spirit Award.



Clockwise: pianist Magdalena Ezoë, soprano Anita Smisek, dancer Joseph Kilikevics, poet Elizabeth Michael Boyle, accompanist Rudolf Loewenstein



## WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO LATELY?

*Information for this column is gleaned semi-annually from membership registration forms.*

*The editors welcome members' reports directly to the newsletter at any time.*

This summer, **Laureena Aflen** (Grand Rapids) mounted her first solo show at the First United Methodist Church Gallery in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Sharon Bock** (Adrian) exhibited at Impasto Art Gallery in Longview, Colorado and mounted shows in Berkley, Coachella Valley, and Palm Springs, California.

Paintings and photography by **Barbara Cervenka, Janet Wright and Sue Schreiber** (Adrian) continue to support "1000 Cranes for Iraq," a funding project which assists the Iraqi Dominican Sisters in their ministry to refugees displaced by ISIS. (You can contribute at: [1000cranesforiraq.org](http://1000cranesforiraq.org)).

**Phyllis M. Chapell, M.D.** (Houston) performed liturgical dance at a Gospel Brunch at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, Houston Texas; co-directed "Healers' Art," a course for medical students "intended to help them retain their compassion, empathy, and awe in medicine;" organized an evening of interfaith dialog; and contributes daily prayers to the Dominican Family Blog.

Since 2011, **Magdalena Ezoë** (Adrian) has presented a First Sunday Series of Piano Lecture Recitals.

**Lorraine Ferguson** (Hope) collaborated with two college seniors to design a monthly newsletter for residents at an assisted-living facility. Lorraine also updated archival records on sisters in her congregation who "preach through the arts."

**Nancy Murray** (Adrian) having presented her Catherine of Siena dramatization in nine American States and Vancouver, Canada during the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Order, has taken to the road with her biography of Dorothy Stang.

**Vicki Perfect** (Peace) As "part of her pilgrimage in discerning a new ministry," carved a stone owl, her first serious departure from abstraction. Vicki also participated with a team of Dominican Sisters of Peace in developing a program for the on-going formation of Associates. One module considered for this program is *Vizio Divina, Praying through the Arts*.

**Kathy Rhody** (Province of the Most Holy Name) and her brother Patrick started an online business designing inspirational tee shirts. ([Saintsbepraised.myshopify.com](http://Saintsbepraised.myshopify.com))

**Thoma Swanson (Peace)** has exhibited in many different galleries during her long career, but none has given more pleasure than the location where she began hanging a few years ago—the tunnels underground the Columbus Ohio Motherhouse. Regular patrons include—not only sisters and their guests—but a very appreciative maintenance staff. .

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**  
**THE DIA GATHERING NEXT  
YEAR WILL RETURN TO THE  
WEBER CENTER AT ADRIAN.  
JULY 25-28, 2018**

**IF YOU HAVE A  
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