



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

Fall Newsletter 2015 Volume 16 Issue 2

DIA Artist Catch Dreams at Great Bend



From July 21-25, 2015 the Dominican Sisters of Peace extended warm hospitality to DIA artists for their 19th annual Gathering at the Heartland Spirituality Center in Great Bend, Kansas. Twenty-nine participants from fifteen congregations and sixteen continental United States plus the English Province made this little mid-western town feel like one global destination. Artists came from cities and boondocks, from deserts and flood lands, from Atlantic and Pacific shores, and everywhere in between. They drove for days over mountains, highways and “the dining room table;” they waited more hours in airports than they flew “over the pond.” But an outstanding welcome from the Great Bend sisters and a rich experience of each other as artists contributed greatly to the evaluation consensus: “It was worth it!”

Above, members at the Gathering. Below from left to right, Past Fra Angelico winners welcome Elaine DesRosiers OP to the group. Elizabeth Slenker OP with the Spirit Award and Ann Marie Santen OP, Panel

Participants’ long journey matched the Planning Commission’s long road toward the 2015 Gathering theme: “Catching the Spirit—Creating the Dream” This inspiration actually began in 1997 when Co-Chair Liz Slenker, traveling through Arizona, had her first encounter with a Native American dream catcher. Eighteen years later, following the selection



Of the Dreamcatcher logo, Liz immersed herself in texts of Native American culture from which she composed Gathering prayers celebrating creation-centered spirituality. Amy McFredericks' hymns with Indian accompaniment completed the theme.

This year, the Planning Commission replaced the customary keynote address with inspiration from within the membership. A panel of Fra Angelico awardees – Thoma Swanson, Elizabeth Michael Boyle, Anita Smisek, and Barbara Schwarz— reflected on the mutual interaction of their Dominican vocation with their identity as artists. Fruitful table conversation followed with personal reflections on Annie Willets' 2014 address, "Feel the Flame, Catch the Fire, Burn with Peace."

This year's Virtual Gallery production began with a moving memorial tribute to Adele Rowland, OP, a founding member and the first recipient of the Fra Angelico Award. Eighteen DIA artists provided slides of their works in poetry, music, acrylic, watercolor, sculpture, photography, wood carving, ceramics, film, photo montage, and pottery. Thanks to Barbara Schwarz' s indefatigable devotion, those who could not travel to Kansas can view an exhibit of these works on the DIA webpage.

As a special part of every gathering, everyone present had the opportunity to share an artifact, poem or work they had done during the year and how it preached to the artist. It was a very sacred sharing.

We each constructed a personal dreamcatcher. Doing something together was fun!

Great Bend sisters contributed significantly to the content of the Gathering events. Sisters Rebecca Otter and Joan Geiring provided transportation to an afternoon with the alpacas and a picnic supper at Heartland Farm. They also drove members to Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Preserve.

Sister Judith Lindell gave a detailed tour of the award-winning Dominican Chapel of the Plains, and Sister





Imelda Schmidt used her collection of symbolic artifacts to illustrate an informative and deeply moving account of her ecumenical ministry among Native Americans.

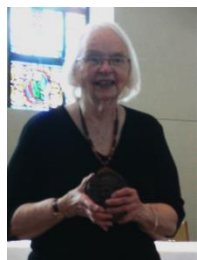
Sister Charlotte volunteered an unscheduled invasion of her kitchen where members produced a batch of irresistible cinnamon buns enjoyed by all.

Socialization acquired a fiercely competitive edge on Trivia Night when Ann Marie Santen challenged memories of minutia related to the arts and DIA history, while the Gala Night included a concert of scripture-inspired original compositions by Amy McFredericks.

The event culminated with the conferring of the Fra Angelico Award. President Barbara Schwarz announced the Executive Board's 2015 Elaine DesRosiers OP, a Dominican Sister of Peace. Vice President Pat Daly presented the Spirit of DIA Recognition to Elizabeth Slenker OP, who was completing her third service as Gathering Chair.

Preaching, coordinator of arts festivals, newsletter editor, master teacher on public television, actor, playwright, painter, and, perhaps most memorably, as legendary impersonator of Jane deAza, Catherine of Siena, Mother Teresa, and recently as Maggie Smith of Downton Abbey.

The eight congregations who now comprise the Dominican Sisters of Peace are grateful that Elaine has elected to devote her "leisure" years to painting a gallery of all their Motherhouses. We are thankful that Elaine has shared her talents—especially her incomparable wit—with the DIA.



**Elaine DesRosiers OP:
2015 Fra Angelico Recipient**

At the concluding Eucharist of the 2015 Gathering, President Barbara Schwarz OP was happy to present the DIA's highest honor, the Fra Angelico Award, to Elaine DesRosiers OP, a multi-talented artist from Kentucky.

Both within her congregation and beyond, Elaine has practiced her arts---sequentially and often simultaneously--- as Notre Dame Director of Educational Media, congregational Promoter of

**Highlights of Board Report
and Consultation**

At their annual meeting with membership, the Board reported that its most significant 2014-15 achievements were in the areas of communication and publicity. Barbara noted an average of 45 weekly hits on DIAarts.com. Frequent Board Updates and DomLife articles prompt 100-200 more. Mailing the newsletter to congregational leadership and to Associate Directors has generated lively interest beyond the DIA itself. *(Nevertheless, members themselves need to visit the webpage often since its content is regularly refreshed and updated.)*

Once again, Board members worked to increase and sustain membership by making personal appeals to all lapsed members. This personal contact has resulted in a paid registration of 80 members. Pat Daly, Board Liaison to the Planning Commission, reported that a Planning Commission is in place for 2016 at Racine and that the Adrian venue has been secured for 2017.

In addition to reporting, the Board devoted a total of two and a half hours to listening. A process of eliciting input from the membership garnered many recommendations including: strengthen participation by inviting others, to invite others to collaborate, to conduct workshops, and to exhibit their art; to mount a travelling exhibit of exceptional work; to combine art with social justice issues.

Pat Daly led the group in a brainstorming session to elicit themes for the 20th Anniversary Gathering and the culmination of the 800th Anniversary of the Order.



2015 Exhibits, Publications, Recordings, Awards

Within the past year, OPalette has learned of the following DIA artists' achievements. We encourage you to report your activities before they happen.

Exhibits

Elizabeth Slenker OP, Sparkill- One-Woman Show: "For the Birds" at the Bank of America, St. Louis, Missouri

Thoma Swanson OP, Peace- Retrospective: "Swansong"-Columbus, Ohio; "Creation" at the Ohio State Fair

Jan Schichtling OP & Bernadine Egleston OP, Peace Word Collages in Pencil Art & Wood Carving- Cleveland, Ohio

Judy Smith OPA, Peace- Margaret Howell Art Museum, Poplar Bluff, Missouri Gourd "Wise Giant": First Place, Fiber Art + "Best of Show"; Show Me Gourd Society: First, Second and Third Place; San Gabriel Fine Arts Society-"Wild Mild Horse"- Honorable Mention

Recordings & Film

Armando P. Ibañez OP, Southern Province, "*Gentle Men of Steel – Los Padres*" Accolade Global Film Competition awarded the documentary an Award of Merit; IndieFEST Film Awards awarded the film an Award of Excellence and an Award of Merit Special Mention; and WorldFest Houston International Film Festival honored the film with a Gold Remi Award.

Dominic Delay OP, Western Province, "Maintain the Light" and DVD "Zoila Jumped in"

Michael Burke, OP, Southern Province "Winds of Time" Available at Amazon & on iTunes

Publications

Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP, Caldwell - *The Bible & Literature: An Interdisciplinary Text for the Study of Scripture in Dialog with Multicultural Literature*

Mary Navarre OP, Grand Rapids, *Tapestry in Time: The Story of the Dominican Sisters Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966-2012.*

Barbara Schwarz OP, Amityville – A combination of over 30 photos and art pieces have been published in Global Sisters Reports in their visual blog.





Historians Recognize American Dominican Artists

Early in 2015, the McGreal Center for Dominican Historical Studies issued a call for proposals for research grants on the theme: *American Dominicans in Mission*. Director Janet Welsh explained that the best of the proposed essays would be published in Volume II of Project Opus. Of the many proposals submitted, none referred to the arts.

Janet, being a staunch daughter of Samuel Mazzochelli, exclaimed: "How can we publish a book about Dominicans in mission without the artists?!" So she leaned on the president of the DIA who in turn issued a life-threatening invitation to Elizabeth Michael Boyle. The latter will now spend the next year interviewing artists and archivists for answers to questions like these:

- I. To what extent have the vision and work of American Dominican artists contributed to the mission of the Order in the twentieth century?
- II. How did Vatican II, the most important event in twentieth century church history, impact the vision and work of American Dominican artists?
- III. How did post-Vatican II American Dominican artists respond to social realities like economics, feminism, environmentalism, and the ecumenical struggle for peace and social justice?

Participants at the 2015 Gathering were asked to contribute their insights. The full membership will soon be consulted via email.



Collaboration by Rudolf Lowenstein OP

Thinking about collaboration prompts me to remember how much collaboration already exists within the organization itself. Not only does the board collaborate for the good of the Holy Preaching, but so also do all the different planning committees...different artists each with their own art forms come together fusing ideas and creating that which is greater than the individual parts.

My own examples, inspired and aided by DIA include: a round/canon composed with Barbara Schwarz at the Elkins Park gathering, celebrating creation; three musicals written (myself as composer, Elaine Taylor as librettist) for teenage theatre groups; a few knitted and crocheted articles combined with sculptures by Thoma - these are the principal collaborations in which I've been involved.

Aside from collaborations, I compose music and have even had three pieces published - a setting of the Stations of the Cross for children's voices with optional piano accompaniment; two sets of piano duets based on arrangements of Czech and Slovak folk melodies. I have also had numerous Christmas carols performed, although their publication is some way down the line as yet. I am always open to composing material for people...just let me know!

Knitting and crochet (examples on the Virtual Gallery) form part of my output too, with one recent afghan retailing for £600. I enjoy creating afghans and bedspreads and am inspired by the colours I see around me.

Finally, children's literature...having completed academic research on this, which formed the dissertation part of my Masters degree, I regularly review children's books for three separate publications, and am happy to discuss and advise on reading materials. I've even used this for a day's in-

service training for teachers who seek to use children's literature more holistically in the (primary/elementary) classroom.

Often we collaborate and don't recognize it:

Mary Ellen Paulsen OP has been reading her poetry at the Senior Center where she volunteers and they are most appreciative.

Pat Daly OPA created party favors for an organization having a reunion.

Barbara Schwarz OP has taken pictures for Homecoming Farm, designed bookmarks and done some video for passing on the Dominican Charism.

What are the organizations and ways in which you collaborate? Send it in to diartsop@gmail.com.



Judy Smith OPA
Gourd Artist

Among the most popular exhibits at the 2015 Gathering was the gourd art of Judy Smith, OPA. Within the past few years, Judy has become a much-admired contributor to the annual exhibits of the South East Missouri Gourd Society. Her artifacts involve a unique variety of designs and techniques: carving, painting, pyrography, beading, inlays of bone, ribbon, resin, and crushed glass.

Most of the items are woodburned (pyrographed), then colored with some type of dye. Then carving with a Dremel tool may be done, as with the owl, the hummingbird, eagle and egret. Painting is done with dyes, acrylics, with inlayed resin or crushed glass, as



in the hummingbird, egret and eagle. The process evolves slowly, as the gourd "speaks" to you.

Competing in a fine art exhibit differs from gourd society competitions. Fine art considers the aesthetic appeal, while gourd

competitions look at the skills involved and executed, the fine points utilized in the process. The elephant won a 1st place and Best of Show in the MHAM



exhibit, but in the Show-Me Gourd Society completion it only took one 1st place in its division. Use of natural materials is encouraged, so it involves God's "hand" ultimately, especially with the artist's inspiration as the "brush in His hand."

"Being retired and able "to play with my crayons" is this kid's forever passion; my prayer is that it pleases God as much, especially when it is shared." -Judy Smith OPA

**BE SURE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY
QUESTIONS ON OUR HISTORY AS
DOMINICAN ARTISTS AND SEND THEM TO
Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP at
emichael@caldwell.edu**



REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Great Bend was a very special gathering. Old friends and new gathered and shared the joy of being understood as artists

together. We dreamed dreams and prayed in the chapel our sisters from INAI had designed. Our latest brochure has personal reflections on the gathering.

We thank Elaine Taylor OP for her years of service on the Board, our Planning Commission and all who make DIA alive through their gifts.

The challenge we face is making ourselves visible sometimes even to each other. Who knew Elaine Taylor was not only in theatre but a painter? We saw the gift of wonderful works shared with each other. Some of that challenge is also to recognize how we collaborate already with the gifts we already share with other ministries in our congregations and provinces.

Some of our members have taken it upon themselves to invite Associates in the arts or congregational members who do not recognize their gift as artists to join us. Some are sharing with others friends who might be interested in coming to Racine in July.

Share your stories. Send your pictures. Tell the history of times spent together as artists. Who influenced you? We are preachers who together can create change in how others see the world. How will you do your part? Send your ideas and stories to diartsop@gmail.com for the web or emichael@caldwell.edu for our newsletter.



The Shack

Let's take a look inside this old green farm shack. I see a coat of dust

covering a broken bench, a well worn saw horse, an empty seed sack, a mostly empty paint can and a few dried brushes. Not covered by dust are a few implements more recently used: a rake, a hoe, a bucket.

I bet this is not the only "shack" on this property. I bet there are several more nearby. Inside the house, the attic is a "shack." Up there you'll find dust covered items no longer usable like broken chairs, outgrown children's toys, an old typewriter, and boxes filled with items the owners no longer remember what's inside. Now that Spring had arrived, more recent items like ice skates, sleds, and mittens stack up in the corner. There may be piles of magazines Mom intends to read as soon as she has the time.

The garage may be a "shack" with those items Dad really thinks he needs, and those he really doesn't. What about that kitchen drawer, the one called the "junk drawer?" That's the helpful place where the scissors are kept, and the scotch tape, the stapler, a few pens and pencils, a screw driver, and maybe band aids. In addition, hiding in the dusty corners are a few broken, dried rubber bands, a dozen old nails and bent screws, two rusty bobby pins, and a yellowed newspaper clipping.

Finally, a story which identifies the smallest "shack", found in the automobile. It's a personal one. After a massage therapist had restored circulation to my aching shoulder, she pointed to my robustly sized purse and advised, "If you get rid of that huge purse, you will save yourself money and pain." That very night I switched to a small purse, placing all the other items in a bag in my glove compartment. Three years later, when selling my car, I opened that compartment, and seeing the bag, asked myself, "What's THIS"? I had never once opened that bag even once! Perhaps this is the lesson shack owners need to hear.

Painting and reflection by Elaine DesRosiers, OP

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***Have you let your
congregational or provincial
communicators know if you are
in our online gallery?***

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To receive **Gathering Scholarship**

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To receive **Collaboration Grant**

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***The 2016 DIA Gathering
will take place at the new
retreat center at Racine, WI
from July 27 - July 30, 2016***

***Looking forward to seeing
you there!***



See us at www.diartsop.org