

Filmmaker to speak in Concordia

Marymount College alum Kevin Willmott has spent more than a decade disproving the disparaging adage that "those who can, do, and those who can't, teach."

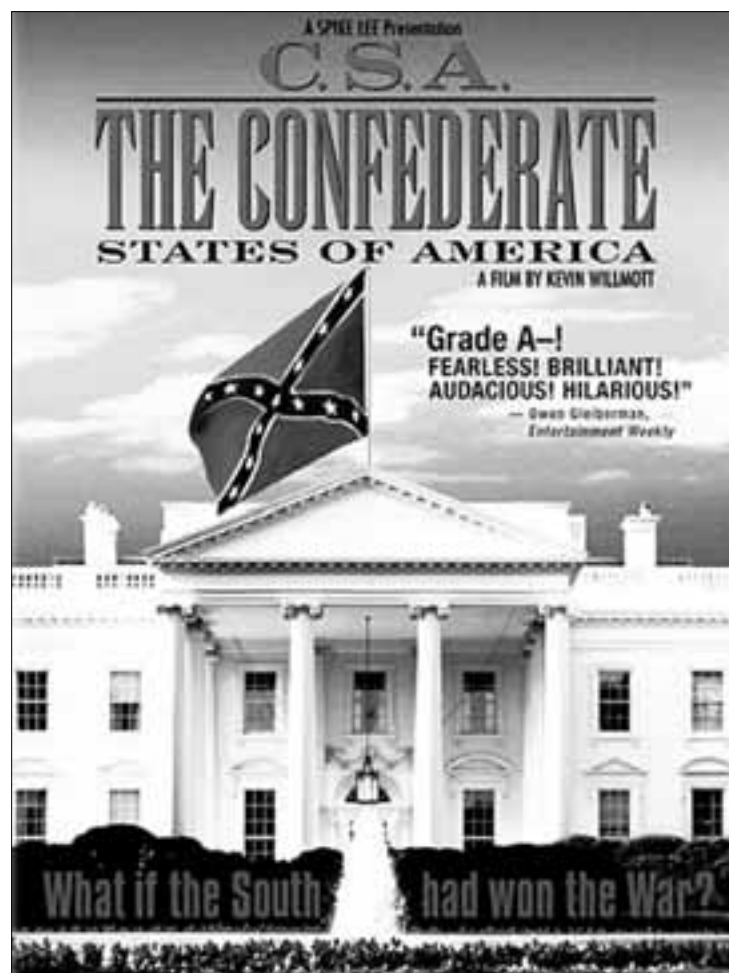
An associate professor at the University of Kansas and a critically acclaimed filmmaker, Willmott will bring both facets to a presentation in Concordia Oct. 7. He will show his "CSA: The Confederate States of America," and lead a discussion of the 2004 film that imagines the fate of America had the South won the Civil War.

The film and discussion are part of the Cook Lecture Series, presented at the Brown Grand Theatre. It begins at 7 p.m. and is open to the public without charge.

Willmott was born and raised in Junction City, Kan., and graduated from Marymount with a bachelor's degree in drama in 1982. But he knew long before then that he was destined to make movies.

"I have wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I was a kid," he said in an interview with indieWIRE in January 2009. "I went to

See **SUNDANCE**, page 16.



ENCORE!

New CDs capture photos from 21 years of theater

The photos from most of the Marymount College productions from 1968 to 1989 have been digitally scanned and are available for purchase.

Photo CDs of a single school year, a summer season, or four individual shows are \$10 each.

You may order by contacting:

Barbara Evans Nichols at jbce@sbcglobal.net; 9621 Meadow Lane, Leawood KS 66206; 913/341-3285.

Checks should be made out to Barbara Evans Nichols. The money will cover the cost of the CD and shipping, and any amount over the actual cost will be donated to the Marymount Alumni Association.

Thanks to the following people who helped with this project:

- ▶▶ Dr. Dennis Denning
- ▶▶ Betsy Green Wearing '84
- ▶▶ Phil Kinen '83
- ▶▶ Pam Kerrihard Sollars '84
- ▶▶ Denise Siefers Slaven '84
- ▶▶ Jim Evans (father of Barbara Evans Nichols '85)

Summer memories, and looking to 2012

DEAR MARYMOUNT ALUMNI, As the calendar continues its slow march toward autumn, I trust you are having a wonderfully relaxing summer.

Soon picnics, vacations, family reunions will be over but will remain as pleasant memories of the past. Some of those memories will also be of the class reunions that have taken place this summer or will this fall.

YOU WILL NOTICE above a note from a group of MC drama grads.

Dr. Dennis Denning had a collection of photos from the various productions presented during his years as head of the drama department.



DON MARRS, OWNER of the Marymount Administration Building, has begun the project of turning the south wing into condominiums. You may find his website — www.marymountproperties.com

In order to preserve these photos and to be able to share them with others, this group worked long hours at sorting, identifying and putting them onto CDs, which are now available for purchase.

— interesting to follow.

MANY HAVE BEEN ASKING about our next all-school reunion. Mark your calendars for Aug. 3-5, 2012.

WHEN I SEND OUT NEWS by e-mail, I receive many of them back as "undeliverable." If you have changed your email address within the past year or so, I would greatly appreciate receiving your new one.

And don't forget, the alumni office is in the MC Ad Building. You are welcome to stop by anytime.

Blessings on you and all your loved ones.

SISTER LUCILLE HERMAN
Marymount Alumni Director

Marymount Alumni Office • P.O. Box 2485 • Salina KS 67402
Email: lcherman@yahoo.com • Phone: 785-823-8803

Eternal rest grant unto them, O God!

Members of the Marymount family we've lost

Barbara Wilson Fore '64
Feb. 28, 2010

Terese June Horgan Knox '62A
April 9, 2010

Dorothy Wissbaum Mason '65
April 11, 2010

Sister Mary Julia Stegeman, Staff
April 18, 1010

Dorothy Hinkle Williams '43/faculty
May 22, 2010

Dorothy Haslouer Jilka '50
May 25, 2010

Ernestine Donmyer McCallum '40A
May 26, 2010

Millie E. Gard '71
June 5, 2010

Documentary grew from sisters' work

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series in September 2009.

It is based on more than 10 years of work by Sisters Mary Savoie and Margaret Nacke, both members of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, who first went to Romania in 1993 as volunteers to help the Church in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. Over the next decade in many visits, they branched out to other Eastern European countries and built relationships with many of the sisters who had survived behind the Iron Curtain.

In 2003, Sisters Mary and Margaret, who live in Belleville, Kan., began serious research into the plight of those Catholic sisters, eventually covering eight countries and the years spanning the rise of Stalin in Russia to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

That included numerous trips to Eastern Europe, interviews with the women they came to call "Sister Survivors" and extensive academic study into the local and Church history.

In July 2006, they planned and facilitated a conference in Lviv, Ukraine, bringing together sisters from eight former communist countries. The goal was

to examine fundamental values guiding those sisters who survived under communism and to explore ways those values can be integrated into the lives of American sisters.

As a result of the work done by Sisters Mary and Margaret, hundreds of testimonies, photographs, books and other documents have been collected and archived at Catholic Theological Union's Bechtold Library.

It was also in 2006 that Sisters Mary and Margaret hired NewGroup Media of South Bend, Ind. — where Judy Zielinski works as a writer and producer — to create a documentary of the stories.

A team from NewGroup, including Sister Judy and photographer Lynn King, and Sisters Mary and Margaret traveled together to Eastern Europe. During that first trip, they interviewed and videotaped 42 Sister Survivors, and would eventually return for more interviews and taping.

Since the documentary's release last September, Sisters Mary and Margaret have continued showing it around the country and have scheduled other educational programs to tell the stories of the Eastern European sisters.



SISTER MARGARET NACKE



SISTER MARY SAVOIE



SISTER JUDY ZIELINSKI

If you plan to go...

The St. Joseph Home and Academy reunion on Saturday, Oct. 2, will begin in the morning as participants gather at St. Andrew's Church in Abilene, Kan., to meet and share with each other.

A meal will be served at noon, and then participants will travel to the area where the Home stood for a prayer service in remembrance of family members and friends. Everyone will then return to the church to meet with Bishop Paul Coakley and celebrate Mass.

During the gathering, we will have available a newly discovered ledger in which the Sisters of St. Joseph listed each resident as he or she came to the home, as well as some items from the chapel.

Also available for sale will be copies of "The Sisters Who Loved Me" by Sister Marie Coleman and a DVD of the history of the Home.

To be added to the reunion mailing list, please send your name, address and email to:

janmccormick@rocketmail.com

Jan McCormick
PO Box 5
Chapman, KS 67431

October reunion will focus on sharing stories of Abilene home

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1912, when they closed the school.

Then, in October 1914, the Bishop of Concordia purchased the building and grounds for \$25,000 and began extensive improvements that ultimately doubled the amount of the investment.

On Sept. 1, 1915, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia again took charge of the property, this time as St. Joseph Home, which would be both an orphanage and a home for the aged. In February 1916, there were 58 people residing there: nine sisters, a chaplain, a half-dozen elderly men and women and 42 children.

By 1924, the diocese had opened the Home of the Little Flower in Concordia for the aged, so from that point on, St. Joseph Home served solely as an orphanage.

At times there were as many as 85 children living there, ranging from babies through high school age. But since the Home also served as a Catholic school, there were many other children from Abilene and nearby towns there every day.

With new Kansas child care regulations in 1951, the old orphanage concept changed dramatically. Foster home pro-

grams were developed and children were no longer put into orphanages. By 1958 there were just 10 children living at St. Joseph Home.

It was then that Bishop F. W. Freking decided to close the orphanage and open a smaller Children's Home in Salina.

In 1959 the orphanage was torn down, and St. Andrew's Catholic School in Abilene opened, to accommodate the students who had been displaced.

On the west side of North Buckeye Avenue where the orphanage stood, all that remains today are the pillars, broken trellises, an empty grotto and the rectory.

Harold Scanlan, one of the boys raised at the orphanage, took over the well-known dairy operation after the Home

closed.

That area on the east side of North Buckeye Avenue is now called the Cunningham Addition, and the Brookville Hotel, Dairy Queen, Feldkamp's Furniture and Holiday Inn Express are on that land.

Organizers of the October reunion include Jan McCormick of Chapman and Sisters Carolyn Juenemann and Mary Lou Roberts, both of Salina, and Sisters Leah Smith and Cecelia Green, both of Concordia.



Sister Regis Schwenzer was the first Superior of St. Joseph Home in Abilene, Kan., when it reopened as an orphanage in 1915.

Sundance Festival has included two of Willmott's films

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the theater literally every weekend and was very influenced by the Blaxploitation movies of the 1970s. I was particularly influenced by Gordon Parks, who also grew up in Kansas."

He started as a playwright and screenwriter. His early credits include the play "T-Money and the Wolf," written with Ric Averill, and scripts for "Shields Green and the Gospel of John Brown," co-written with Mitch Brian, "Civilized Tribes" and "Little Brown Brothers."

He also adapted Michael Blake's book "Marching to Valhalla" for producer-director Oliver Stone. For television, he and Brian wrote "House of Getty" and "The '70s," both mini-series for NBC.

He also found time to earn a master's of fine arts in dramatic writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

In the 1999 feature film "Ninth Street," Willmott dramatically expanded his roles. He wrote, produced and co-directed the film based on his experiences growing up in Junction City, and acted in the role of "Huddie," one of the film's main characters. "Ninth Street" stars Martin Sheen and Isaac Hayes.

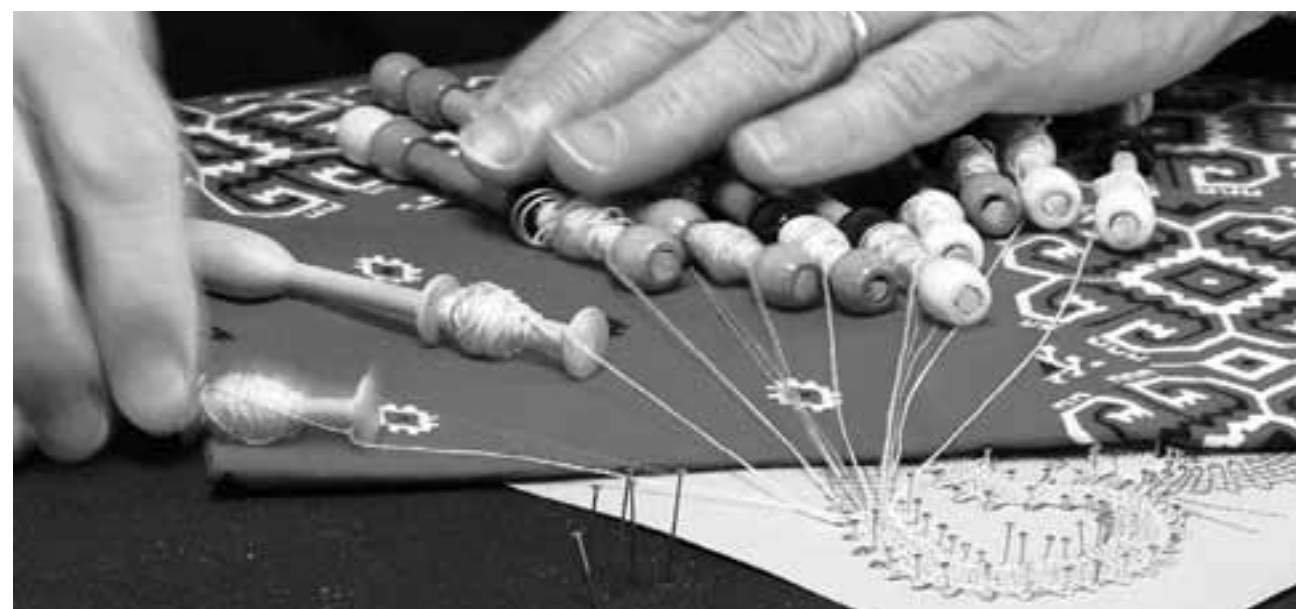
That was followed by "CSA: The Confederate States of America," which he wrote and directed, and was presented at the Sundance Film Festival in 2004. His most recent release, "The Only Good Indian," starring Wes Studi, was selected for Sundance in 2009, and is now airing on the StarZ network.

"It was my time as a playwright, acting and writing in college, and later writing screenplays that gave me the confidence to become a filmmaker," he said in the 2006 indieWIRE interview. "My goal was always to be a filmmaker, but I had no money, so I wrote plays instead ... I would always intend to produce the play, so I tried to carry that same concept with me into filmmaking. That once the screenplay was finished, you were obligated to find a way to have it produced."

At KU, Willmott is an associate professor of film and media studies, teaching screenwriting and film and video production management.



KEVIN WILLMOTT



A participant at the 2009 summer retreat keeps her bobbins in order for the simple yet intricate lacemaking process.

Want to learn bobbin lacemaking?

The very first Sisters of St. Joseph in the 17th century made bobbin lace to support themselves and their works of mercy in the villages of southern France. Today two modern Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia have recaptured that nearly lost art and are teaching others in a "work of mercy" that those first sisters would have appreciated.

Sisters Ramona Medina and Janet Lander will lead a lacemaking retreat from 7 p.m. July 31 to noon Aug. 7 at Manna House of Prayer, Concordia.

No previous lacemaking experience is required.

Sister Janet has worked as an educator and missionary and is now on the staff of Manna House as a spiritual director, facilitator and retreat presenter. She is also an artist and took up

If you plan to attend

WHAT: Bobbin Lacemaking Retreat

WHEN: July 31-Aug. 7

WHERE: Manna House of Prayer, Concordia

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: July 10

FOR INFORMATION: Call 785/243-4428 or email to retreatcenter@mannahouse.org

lacemaking several years ago.

Sister Ramona is one of three women who operate the newly opened Neighbor to Neighbor center for women in downtown Concordia. She has been teaching bobbin lacemaking for more than four years.

Agrégée definition continues to develop

Continued from page 9.

bility for her.

► Also, vowed sisters begin their religious life with a formal "formation" that includes a postulancy and novitiate that are, together, about three years. During this time, they have left their previous life, but haven't yet taken up their works as a Sister of St. Joseph.

For agrégées, the period of being a candidate may be about the same length of time, but they do not leave behind their

outside lives. Instead, they meet with mentors and study around their regular work and life schedules. And after they have professed their vow of fidelity, they return to their regular work and life schedule.

Other congregations of St. Joseph have developed similar definitions or are doing their own studies, but the Concordia congregation is believed to be the first to recognize agrégées as full members of the community.

In Concordia, the definition of who may be an agrégée will be refined as individuals feel called to the community, explained Sister Marcia Allen, the president of the congregation.

"This opens up our charism to people who might not have traditionally given thought to religious life," Sister Marcia said. "We haven't answered all the questions, but we will — as they're asked."

Coming together in praise



CSJs from Mexico, Latin America, Caribbean gather for 'seminario'

Three Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia were among the 101 participants of the Fifth International Conference of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Latin American, Mexico and the Caribbean held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in April.

Sister Esther Pineda from Salina, Kan., and Sisters Joseleide da Silva Neves and Janira Lindoso Diniz, both of Picos, Piauí, Brazil, represented the Concordia congregation. In all, the conference — or "seminario" — which is held every five years, included sisters from 19 congregations in 15 countries.

Sessions were presented in Spanish, and the diversity of sisters attending required simultaneous translation in English, Portuguese and Creole French.

The theme for the two-week session was "Ensanando Redes... Tejemos Comunión" ("Enlarging the Nets... Weaving Communion"), which affirmed the foundation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in France in 1650 and the presence today of congregations around the world. The meeting also allows sisters to share their experiences in their home countries and build networks and friend-



ships that span international borders.

The first International Conference was in 1991, hosted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia in Teresina, in northern Brazil. Since then, the gatherings have been in Mexico, in southern Brazil and in Peru. Mexico is scheduled to host the 2015 international gathering.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Sisters join together for praise during the conference in Buenos Aires; the three sisters representing the Concordia congregation — (from left) Sisters Joseleide da Silva Neves, Esther Pineda and Janira Lindoso Diniz; the participants had a chance to visit ministries in Buenos Aires, including this preschool where Rosa Maria Ovieda Martinez of the Mexico Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon, France, became the photographer; Sister María Chóquez Cespedes from Peru opens a prayer ceremony as part of the two-week conference.



Faith & fun & fellowship

Sister of St. Joseph helps give diocesan kids four

When the “veterans” talk about what brings them back to the Junior CYO Camp at Rock Springs year after year, they don’t mention the horseback riding, canoes, volleyball, swimming pool, arts and crafts, Frisbee golf or even the spirited and spontaneous card games.

“It’s a place we can talk about God and our faith,” says a girl from Colby, Kan., at the Memorial Day weekend camp for the third time. “It allows me to really understand what it means to be Catholic, and I like that feeling.”

“We’re living our faith, our Catholicism, for a few days,” adds her friend across the dinner table, who then notes wistfully that they both have reached the age limit for campers. “But we’ll be back as counselors,” she concludes with a smile.

That is a pattern Sister Barbara Ellen Apaceller has seen often in her 31 years as director of the annual camp for kids in grades six through



nine that takes over Rock Spring 4-H Ranch, about 15 miles south and west of Junction City, Kan.

At this year’s camp there are about 200 campers from throughout the Salina Diocese, plus another 25 or so high school seniors and college students who serve as counselors. Also on hand are a few Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia and several other older adults helping Sister Barbara Ellen with administering the entire event.

Most of the counselors are camp graduates.

Such is the case for Jed Smith of Abilene, who was a camper for four years and then a counselor for another 12. This year he couldn’t work out his schedule to make it 13 —

but he showed up on Memorial Day, Monday, anyway, to lend his support and see if he could help out.

“I just couldn’t quit cold turkey,” he says with

a laugh. “I had to come for at least one day, just to feel part of it.”

What started as a breezy conversation with two other counselors quickly deepens: “This camp is the closest to God I ever feel,” Jed says. “When I was in sixth-grade — my first year here — it was the first place I ever felt everyone loved me, just for who I am.”

“These kids can shine and be proud of their religion and their faith,” adds James Newman, a native of Hoxie, Kan., who now lives in Boston. He flew to Kansas Friday night to be here for the camp — his 20th at Rock Springs, counting both 4-H and CYO. “It’s a part of everything we do, and they all know it’s OK, we love them.”

“It’s about acceptance,” adds Eileen Remley of Concordia, who now lives in Lawrence as a student at the University of Kansas. “God loves them exactly as they are, and we feel that here.”

Jed has the final word on the subject for now: “This is heaven; this is what I think heaven is like. It’s a place where you feel God’s love and you can form friendships unlike any other.”

This year’s camp has been marked by that kind of religious commitment and the accompanying maturity, say Sister Barbara Ellen and several of the other “veterans.”



days in ‘a place where you can feel God’s love’



“Top to bottom, campers to counselors, you can really feel it,” James Newman says. “We’re all having a good time, but we also know that’s only part of the reason we’re here.”

Among the counselors, Sister Barbara Ellen notes, “They’re really here for the kids. There have been some years when (the counselors) seemed to be more here for each other, but not this year.”

Sister Lois O’Malley, a Sister of St. Joseph of Wichita who has taken a break from college students at Kansas State University to help at the camp for the last six or seven years, agrees.

“It’s great to see these kids interact and really have fun,” she says as she looks out over the crowd gathering for lunch. “They create a bond through their faith, and that’s a wonderful thing to see.”

Bishop Paul Coakley and several diocesan priests are also in the crowd gathering outside the dining hall on Monday. The bishop came to Rock Springs to spend a few hours, give a few encouraging remarks after lunch and chat with some of the campers and counselors, who included about half a dozen seminarians from throughout the diocese.

Not all of those were veterans, however. Brian Lager, who grew up in Grinnell, Kan., west of Hays,



Youth Ministry and Religious Education for the Salina Diocese. “With them I have no fear for the future of the Church.”

and is now attending seminary in Denver, concedes that he was sent to the camp as a diocesan assignment.

“I had to come,” he says with a laugh. “But now that they made me come once, I’ll be back if I can arrange it. These kids are special.”

The camp director couldn’t agree more.

“Just to be around these kids... they’re so firm in their faith and love of God,” says Sister Barbara Ellen, who serves as Director of

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: A group of campers and counselors gather in a circle for a few quiet moments of fellowship before lunch on Memorial Day at Rock Springs Camp; volleyball is competitive throughout the weekend; the warm spring weather encourages swimming — and the counselors create diving and jumping games; Bishop Paul Coakley joins the milling campers as they all wait for lunch on Memorial Day; (from left) James Newman, Jed Smith and Eileen Remley share a deepening conversation about why the camp is important; Sister Barbara Ellen Apaceller chats with a counselor during this, her 31st year as director of the Salina Diocese Junior CYO Camp.



Longtime school teacher Sister Pauline Kukula is used to working to engage her students — and she uses the same emotion to capture the Discover Camp audience for the “staff cheer.” After a solo start, she is joined (in the photo at right) by, from left, Sisters Julie Christensen, Rosemary Foreman and Jean Rosemarynoski, staff members Maria O’Halloran and Jessica Thompson, Sister Missy Ljungdahl, volunteer Katie Christensen and Sister Anna Marie Broxterman.

‘CIA’ theme becomes ‘Mission Possible’

Sister Pauline Kukula was there when Discover Camp began in 1999. So were Sister Anna Marie Broxterman, Jean Rosemarynoski and Beverly Carlin.

But in mid-June, when the annual three-day summer camp for sixth-, seven- and eighth-grade girls convened, Sister Bev had gone from helper to the new camp director.

Oh, Polly, Anna Marie and Jean were still there — but more as support than control.

“It’s amazing how much more energy I have this year,” Sister Anna Marie said well into the second day. “And it’s more fun this year, too.”

More fun is relative — but the 35 girls from throughout Kansas and beyond seemed to thoroughly enjoy the mix of prayer, play and discovery.

Also on hand were 10 high school and col-



lege-age young women who served as camp counselors, as well as two “camp leaders” — Jessica Thompson of Kansas City, Mo., and Sister Julie Christensen of Concordia.

This year’s theme of “Contemplatives In Action” allowed the campers to be CIA “agents” working to spread God’s love in the world.

They did that through games, crafts, team-building exercises and interaction throughout the three days with Sisters of St. Joseph at the Motherhouse in Concordia.

On the evening of Saturday, June 19 — when family members were invited to share a Mass and ice cream social with the campers and the sisters — one last memorable experience unfolded.

The city’s tornado sirens went off just as everyone was entering Sacred Heart Chapel on the second floor of the Motherhouse. So campers,

family members, sisters and staff went instead to the building’s “safe zones” to wait out the storm.

After more than two hours, everyone returned to the chapel for the Mass with Father Jack Schlaf, the Motherhouse chaplain. They then joined the sisters for the delayed ice cream social.



for 2010 Discover Campers



ABOVE LEFT: Sister Beverly Carlin keeps smiling Friday morning, June 18, despite her new duties as camp director this year.
ABOVE TOP: Counselor Bridget Baker, right, talks with the members of her Discover Camp team as the camp begins Thursday afternoon, June 17.
ABOVE: Sister Mary Reiter welcomes campers to her home — the historic Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia.
RIGHT: Water balloon games are all in good fun until someone gets soaked — as Drew Kramer of Corning, Kan., discovers Friday afternoon, June 18.

Bulletin Board

Starting college?

A retreat to help those just starting college to keep your spiritual anchor in this sea of change! All college students are welcome! Friday evening, Sept. 10, to Saturday afternoon, Sept. 11.

Single women seeking spirituality

Interested in making a retreat with other single women your age? Want to get more spiritually grounded? Retreat for 20-year-olds: Oct. 15-16
 Retreat for 30-year-olds: Oct. 29-30
 Retreat for 40-year-olds: Nov. 19-20

Live near Hays, Kan.?

Watch our website for coffee house events coming this fall!

We're here — to talk or just to listen

Young adults: Just need somebody to talk to? Want to visit with a sister? Wish you could learn more about faith or vocations? Sister Beverly Carlin will be in the student union on the K-State campus in Manhattan several times a week during the fall semester. Stop by and visit with her. And if you would like her to come to your campus in Kansas or neighboring states, let her know!

To find out more

about any of these, check our website: www.csjkansas.org or contact Sister Beverly Carlin at 785/220-7996 or srbevcc@csjkansas.org.

Volunteers video: It's a rap

Take four talented and energetic young women and a sister with a creative streak, add a little time for practice and a video camera, and what do you get? “Sista Volunteer,” a minute-and-half rap video encouraging young people to give their time to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

In it, the young women tell people of all professions that their time and tal-

ents can be used to make a difference in projects everywhere sisters serve.

The video was shot during Discover Camp at the sisters’ Motherhouse in mid-June, and the four performers all served as counselors for the three-day gathering.

The video will be available soon on the csjkansas.org website, as well as on YouTube.

Discover Camp counselors (and rappers) pose for the song’s writer, Sister Jean Rosemarynoski, after performing on June 19. The “Sista Volunteers” are, from left, Maria O’Halloran, Jessica Thompson, Bridget Baker and Maggie Zody.



COURSE WORK

Bethany students spend Saturday volunteering with Concordia sisters

Nearly 30 students from Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan., spent a Saturday in early May cutting brush, pulling weeds and scrubbing walls at projects throughout Concordia.

The students are all enrolled in Fidel Iglesias' criminal justice classes at the small Lutheran college, and the May 8 project was organized by Sister Beverly Carlin, vocation director for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

The biggest team took on work on the Nature Trail at Joler Park in southwest Concordia. Along with Sisters Julie Christensen and Anna Marie Broxterman, they pulled weeds, cleared dead vegetation and cut brush to make the trails easier to walk.

Another team, with guidance from Sisters Loretta Jasper and Jean Rosemarynoski, cleaned walls, floors and bathrooms at Club 81, the organization for teens in downtown Concordia. All the students and sisters gathered there for lunch — a time that allowed the students to "negotiate" with Iglesias to better their grades through their participation.

Still another team tackled weeds in the Nazareth Motherhouse asparagus patch.

Afternoon projects included work at the Concordia Community Garden of Hope, spreading mulch to create pathways there, plus lots more weeding. The students also had a chance to tour the Motherhouse.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A Bethany College student tackles the undergrowth along the nature trail in Concordia's Joler Park; Sister Anna Marie Broxterman helps pack one of the dozens of trash bags that would be filled with weeds and dead brush; instructor Fidel Iglesias listens to a "point of negotiation" during lunch at Club 81; two of the young men congratulate each other on the progress of their morning's work in Joler Park.



Sister Mary Julia Stegeman: Sept. 6, 1910-April 19, 2010



Eulogist: Sister Virginia Pearl
Vigil: April 20, 2010, Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia

One day several years ago when we had been called because the signs seemed to indicate that Sister Mary Julia would die very soon, Alfreda Maley, one of our nurses, asked her if it was time to put out a sign-up sheet so the sisters could come and sit with her each hour. Sister Mary Julia responded, "Oh not yet, because Jesus is sitting here visiting with me now."

This was a valiant woman whom Jesus would come to visit, perhaps on a regular basis. We are saying goodbye for now, but in the same breath, we are rejoicing over our beloved Sister Mary Julia's death and resurrection calling us to live ever more deeply.

Several years back in the 1980s, Sister Mary Julia asked if I would do her eulogy. I used almost verbatim what she had written in her life story, so one day when I read it back to her, she asked, "Did I write that? It is all so accurate."

I first met Sister Mary Julia when I was a student at Marymount College. I was out walking one day, and she was pushing a cart full of laundry back to the Administration Building. She was having a struggle because she was pushing the cart uphill and the wind was blowing. I ran up to her and asked if I could help her push.

Together we pushed the cart of clean sheets through the hallway past the kitchen. The aroma of freshly baked cookies was upon us, and the cook offered us some. The next day several of my friends joined Sister Mary Julia and me to help; they had heard about the cookies at the end of the trail. Since then — for more than 50 years — I have loved those dark, sparkling eyes that were one of her trademarks.

Anna Magdalena was the second daughter of Cecelia Mumm from Galena, Ill., and John Stegeman from Belleville, Iowa. She was born Sept. 6, 1910, and was baptized on Sept. 8, our Blessed Mother's birthday. Her siblings were Theresa, who would become our Sister Rose Cecelia; Mary Elizabeth, who would become our Sister Louis Marie; Helen, who would become Sister Ermenilda, a Benedictine in Clyde, Mo., and Edward Paul, born in 1915. He died several days after birth. They were raised in Selden and Leoville, Kan.

Anna Magdalena always wanted to be a sister. So at the age of 17, she and her aunt, Mary Karls, came to Concordia to enter the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Sister Mary Julia's first mission was in St. Peter where she cooked for six sisters. The Abilene orphanage, St. Joseph Home, was her second mission for eight years. Next, she was missioned to the St. John's Hospital in Salina to run the laundry. She especially liked St. John's because she could visit the new babies and other patients. Atwood was Sister Mary Julia's next mission. She remembers the "dust bowl" storms dur-



Homecomings

ing these years. Sister made a lot of friends, many of whom she still wrote to.

"Then I was called to Marymount for 29 years," Sister said. She cared for the "sunken garden" and worked in the laundry.

"The greatest joy of my life was the awesome privilege of becoming a Eucharistic minister at Marymount," she recalled. "I was in charge of the chapel. It kept me close to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." Students continue to remember how much Sister Mary Julia helped them when they were struggling spiritually or with their studies.

One remarked, "You did not need to get an appointment and wait for help. Sister was always in the sunken garden or the chapel. She was a special friend who always had time to visit with us."

Sister Mary Julia was profoundly intelligent. She was drawn to the library. She read writings of Hildegard, Theresa and other mystics. This sustained her contemplative prayer. Wherever the Stegeman sisters were, they helped begin and sustain a charismatic prayer group.

Sister's next mission was Grand Island, Neb. She assisted the prayer groups, visited the nursing homes and hospital, and engaged in other pastoral work. She assisted in the garden and helped can and prepare food for the winter.

"My last move was to our beloved Motherhouse. I have cared for our greenhouse with the wonderful help of Sister Mary Esther Otter. I was her sight at times, and she was my hands and knees, tending the plants. Sister Francis Margaret Otter has taken loving care of my volumes of correspondence, for which I am most appreciative. Both sisters have been angels of mercy for me."

The Stegeman and Otter families have been closely connected since childhood, which makes this reflection from Sister Mary Esther Otter even more special:

"Sister is so close to creation, to the people, and to the creatures great and small. She is close to the sounds of nature, the changing seasons and everything associated with them. She is in love with her God."

"I began working with Sister Mary Julia in the greenhouse when I came to the Motherhouse in 2001. No plant was too sick or fragile to be given to compost. Each plant was given 'a chance.' She would say, 'God is that way with us. We have another chance ... and another.' On certain occasions, I would tease and say, 'I think this one has tried very hard. Her eyes twinkled and she'd say, 'Isn't it beautiful? I knew this was a renewed reminder to place it in another area of the room."

"Her joyful spirit was renewed daily. As we left the Motherhouse, she would often sing, 'Oh what a beautiful morning, Everything's going God's way.' It took us a longer time to arrive at the greenhouse than another might proceed. Her 96-year-old body did demand a slower pace, but her young spirit noticed everything and everyone. The moon that had not fully left vision's view, the changing season, the temperature, dew, the sound of a train (until about two years ago when her hearing lessened), or a greeting to an employee who was also in the yard. Sister Mary Julia knew no strangers."

There is a quotation that says, "If the only prayer you ever say is, 'Thank you, I am grateful,' that will be enough."

Sister Mary Julia had "grateful" engraved in her heart. On every page of her memoirs she said, "I am so grateful for my vocation, my community, my faith, my mission, my sisters and on and on."

One of Sister Mary Julia's favorite scriptures was Ephesians 2:10 "We are God's work of art." Yes, Mary Julia, and you were a masterpiece glowing with love that just seemed to ooze out of your beautiful eyes, collecting any unrest, any need of peace, any hurt or injustice, and any need for condolence. Your loving heart and arms had a way of holding the negative, and shining love and compassion into any given situation.

Sister Mary Julia's life is like a gorgeous flower garden. Thank you for your love and bouquet of gifts.



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All the news that didn't fit

Snapshots of events at the Motherhouse and Manna House of Prayer



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ABOVE: Sister Francis Margaret Otter points out artwork to Concordia schoolchildren in the Motherhouse on April 29, as fourth-graders visit on their annual end-of-school tours.

TOP RIGHT: Father Jack Schlaf blesses the new Concordia Community Garden of Hope on April 14, with a number of sisters and gardeners braving the brisk spring weather to take part.

BOTTOM FAR RIGHT: Director of Nursing Alfreda Maley serves as emcee for a celebration of the Motherhouse nursing staff on National Nurses Day, May 11.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Sister Jean Rosemarynoski listens with amusement to Patrick Sieben from Cloud County Community College during a public forum at the Motherhouse April 29. This was the 10th public session in which Concordians and the sisters have worked together to identify community challenges and develop solutions.

