

Always a Missioner

a newsletter produced by and for returned Maryknoll Lay Missioners

Volume 2, Issue 1

March 2007

Welcome to *Always a Missioner*, a bi-annual publication of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, designed to keep you informed about the organization and one another. We also send out periodic email updates. I, Jean Walsh ('97 Mexico/US) now serve as your contact person. If you do not receive our periodic email updates and would like to, let me know. Please keep me up to date on your address changes as well! Thanks, Jean!
jwalsh@mklm.org 914-944-0300 ext.205



A Word from
Kevin Mestrich,
Executive Director

Greetings from Bethany!

First of all, thank you for helping to create Maryknoll Lay Missioners' rich tradition of service to the world's poor and disenfranchised. This solid foundation has helped the Association to gain strength, even as we navigate the organization's passage through challenging times...and I am pleased to report that MKLM made significant progress in 2006.

As you probably know, our days of full Society funding ended at the conclusion of 2003. At that time, our spending habits were honest but beyond our means as a newly emerging lay mission organization. Our fundraising and finance models mirrored those of the Society and Congregation, but were not well suited to our unique and sudden concerns. Our percentage of active missioners serving overseas had dipped to 73%.

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Reunite, Reminisce and Reconnect 25th Anniversary Reunion Sending Class of 1982!

Get ready to celebrate... the reunion will begin Friday, Aug. 24 at 3:00 p.m. and end noon on Sunday the 26th here at Bethany. In addition to reuniting, the gathering will highlight honoring Alicia Butkiewicz and Ann Greig for 25 years of dedicated service as Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Alicia served many years in her native country of Bolivia, and currently serves as Director of Missions on the ALT. Ann served in Peru until 1992 when she began her work in El Salvador where she continues her ministry as a nutritionist.

Turn out is looking great! The following people have confirmed their participation: Alicia Butkiewicz, Ann Greig, Terry Allen and her nine year old daughter, Sharon and Dave Raynor, Elizabeth Woo with her husband Steve Green, Michelle Fryt Linehan and Barry Linehan with their two sons (13 and 10). Mercedes Roman and Tom Bamat currently live in Ecuador, but hope to be here. Angela and Terry Donnelly "hope to be there," along with Cathy James, her husband Bolivar Castillo and their two daughters. Linda Savio and Bill Hallerman, also plan to attend. We hope that other members of the group will join us for the weekend. We have not been able to reach group member Anne Dievler—please let us know if you know how to contact her!

VISIT OUR COMMUNITY WEBSITE:

www.AlwaysAMissioner.org



Following a period of assessment and strategic planning, our priorities were reinforced during last spring's Extraordinary General Assembly when major steps were taken to address these and other challenges. As a result, we are leaner, stronger and more focused than at any other time in our history. Entering 2007:

- 85% of our active missionaries are in overseas mission –108. For the first time in ten years both Africa (with 24) and Asia (27) have more missionaries than the U.S. (19);
- Even while reducing overall expenses by \$1.5 million, we were able to increase direct mission expenditures by \$91,000. (MKLM's 2006 total operating expenditures equaled \$6.1 million, down from \$7.6 million in '05);
- While we continue in a deficit spending situation (which is never good), we have "slowed the bleeding". Our use of cash reserves was reduced from \$3.6 million in 2005 to \$2.3 million in 2006 and is projected at \$1.5 million for 2007.
- Our fundraising expenditures were reduced by over \$900,000 in 2006. The Association's Cost per Dollar Raised (CDR) plummeted from 52 cents to 30 cents.
- Our Church Dates increased from 95 in 2005 to 111 last year. Church Date revenues increased from \$214,000 to \$298,000 during 2006. (Many thanks to all of you who presented at Church Dates around the U.S.)!

Many steps were taken in '06 to strengthen the Association's ability to serve others. Our continued progress relies on the support of those who embrace the Christian mandate of service to the poor and disenfranchised. I therefore ask that you lend all the assistance you can. Your financial contributions, your willingness to offer Church Talks, your encouragement of others' support, and your prayers will make a difference.

Thank you, and may God bless each of you with abundant energy to continue working to build a more just and compassionate world!

Happenings and Spottings

Annette Mandeville ('93, El Salvador) gave birth to a baby girl, Olivia Alma on October 25, 2006. Olivia and mom live in Chicago where Annette is a therapist for children and families in the child welfare system.

Rachel Smith ('99 Cambodia) and Sambath Chung welcomed their daughter, Chandra Anna on November 30, 2006. She weighed 9 lbs 5 ozs. Chandra means moon and the proud parents wondered if they had jinxed themselves since she seems to enjoy staying awake at night! To send blessings: The Chung Family, 13541 Whitechurch Rd, Germantown, MD 20874.

Dan Moriarty ('95 Bolivia) and his wife Rocio Peñaranda welcomed their second son Francisco Brian into their family on January 13, 2007. Francisco Brian and big brother Sebastian live with mom and dad in Seattle, WA. Dan, Rocio and family will return to Bolivia in July where Dan will become the Director of Maryknoll Bolivia's Short Term Volunteer and Immersion Program.

In September '06 there was a gathering of returned missionaries in Seattle. The following folks attended: Mark and Joanne Koenig ('77 Venezuela), Janet Quillian ('85 Honduras), Dan Moriarty ('95 Bolivia) with his wife Rocio Peñaranda and son Santiago, Bill Hallerman ('86 Venezuela), Liz DeSimone ('77 Guatemala), Faith Hauer ('77 Guatemala), Lora Wedge ('03, Venezuela). Phil Welch, former MKL priest, was also present, in addition to Henry Enright, Vice President of Advancement for MKLM and Mary Jo Commerford ('94, Venezuela/US) who served as U.S. Church Relations Manager at the time.



Spotlight on Overseas Mission— Meet Missioner Hang Thi Tran- Tuka in Vietnam



Hang and her daughter Annika

Hang joined MKLM in 2004 with her husband Jim and two children Ben and Annika. Hang was born in Vietnam and came to live in the U.S. as a young child. Previous to MKLM Hang lived with her family in Westminister, CO. She is a certified massage therapist and in the U.S. her practice primarily served accident victims. Currently Hang lives with her family in Hanoi where she gave birth to their third child, Mia, in 2005.

Hang shares her extensive experience at a center that teaches blind people massage therapy. The goal of the program is to provide people with a skill that generates income. People with disabilities are often marginalized and at tremendous economic risk. The center helps to ensure that the people they serve are able to improve their economic reality. Hang is involved in teaching, preparing materials, and training students to set up and maintain their own quality massage practice.



Friends Across Borders Builds on Your Expertise

Maryknoll Lay Missioners has a dynamic mission awareness program called Friends Across Borders. The heart of the program is Mission Awareness Trips that take people where MKLM is living working around the world. Returned missioners keep that heart beating—serving as guides for the trip. This year there are four trips—Cambodia, Tanzania, Brazil and Bolivia. Hats off to Judy and Dave Saumweber ('89 Cambodia) who will lead the March trip to Cambodia, Janet Hackert ('85 Tanzania) and Fr. Bill Vos ('79 Tanzania) who head to Tanzania with a group in June, Mary Regan ('87 Brazil) in October to Brazil and Teresa Glass ('89 Bolivia) and Steve Reichert ('88 Bolivia) who will help open eyes in October in Bolivia.

Trips are being planned to Kenya and Thailand in 2008. If you are interested in serving as a guide please contact Cecilia Espinoza ('85 Chile/US), Mission Awareness Trip Manager, FriendsAcrossBorders@mklm.org

Returned Missioners Help Make Church Talks a Success!

In 2006 MKLM set a new record for church talks across the country—111 dates in 44 dioceses, a 17% increase from 2005. A large part of that success was due to the strong participation of our returned missioners across the U.S. Many thanks to: Sean Fleming ('92 Chile/'05 Border) and Ana Maria Abugattas ('05 Border) Charlotte Cook ('92 Kenya) Kathy Kremer ('02 Cambodia) Gerry Lee and Patti McKenna ('84 Venezuela/US) Doug and Lisa Looney ('95 Tanzania/Bolivia/US) Linda and Joe Michon ('90 Peru/Mexico/Border) Sami Miller ('93 Brazil) Lisa Nolan and Dan Griffin ('89 Tanzania/US) Tim O'Connell ('99 El Salvador/US) Tom Rowan ('87 Brazil/US) Doug and Patty Santos-Meeker ('02 Brazil) Joe Sloan ('89 Central America) Fr Bill Vos ('79 Tanzania)

If you are able to speak at a church talk this season (May-October) please contact Ellen O'Connell ('99 El Salvador/US) who currently serves as the manager for U.S. Church Relations, connell@mklm.org

We Are All Oaxaca

*A reflection by Celine Woznica '81
Nicaragua/Mexico. Celine traveled to
Oaxaca on an emergency delegation in Dec.
2006.*

For me, going to Oaxaca, Mexico on a Witness for Peace (WFP) trip was a nightmare come true. I was familiar with WFP from the early 1980s when Don and I were serving as Maryknoll Lay Missioners in Nicaragua. I remembered when the faith-filled group formed a permanent peace presence along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border to deter contra attacks and accompany victims of a misguided U.S. Central America policy. After serving in Nicaragua, we renewed with Maryknoll and went to Oaxaca, Mexico in 1986. Witness for Peace in Nicaragua—I understand. Witness for Peace in Oaxaca, the beautiful, culturally-rich city where we raised four children—a nightmare.

Although I followed the press before traveling to Oaxaca, I was not prepared for what I saw the first night. I walked with a group of fellow delegates down to the Zócalo (main square). Close to 4000 federal police had taken over the city square with their gray anti-riot gear and massive tanks with water hoses attached. It was like all life had been sucked out of the heart of Oaxaca. City crews had been sent to paint over the anti-governor graffiti, and thousands of potted poinsettias appeared in front of the National Palace, as if to return the place to some sense of "normalcy."

But fresh painted and potted plants cannot cover up the tragedy that has confronted the popular uprising in Oaxaca. Our delegation met with family members of Oaxacans who had been detained and others who had been killed by "armed unknowns." We visited with representatives from the Church, the business sector, some of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners currently serving in Oaxaca, and the APPO (Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca).

We listened, we observed, we grieved. We celebrated the courageous spirit of the Oaxacan people as they told us their stories of resistance. They told us, and we felt assured, that the six-month old movement had not ended, but had simply gone underground and changed its strategy.

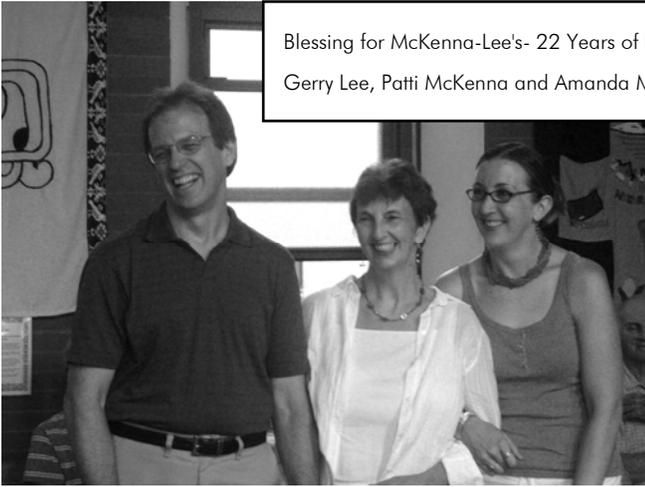
For what are the people of Oaxaca struggling? Why do I say that we are all Oaxaca?



The principal goal is to get rid of the extremely corrupt governor who achieved his position through questionable means. Oaxacans are crying out for opportunity in a country and an economy radically changed by NAFTA. They want the same things we want for our children—a balanced meal, a warm bed, and a decent education. (NAFTA policies have made corn production, which was domesticated in Oaxaca 10,000 years ago, no longer viable.) They cry out for a people-centered, not a profit-centered economic and social policy.

In 1989, the city of Oaxaca was declared a world heritage site because of its unique contributions to humankind. Their struggle is our struggle, and I am proud of the fact that for 21 years, Maryknoll Lay Missioners have been accompanying the people of Oaxaca in their struggle.

Blessing for McKenna-Lee's- 22 Years of Dedicated Service!
 Gerry Lee, Patti McKenna and Amanda McKenna-Lee at Bethany Chapel



Class of 1981: Frances Kramer (Japan) Debra Bartelli (Korea/US), Mary Coonan (Chile) Susan Delahunt (Venezuela) Nora Kramer (Chile) Jack & Yvette Connell (Tanzania, Middle East, China) Don & Celine Woznica (Nicaragua/Mexico), Mimi Fitzgerald (Kenya), Dennis Fazio (Taiwan), Steve and Mary Hicken (Venezuela, US, Mexico), Anastasia Lott (Venezuela), Allen Scheid (Chile/US)

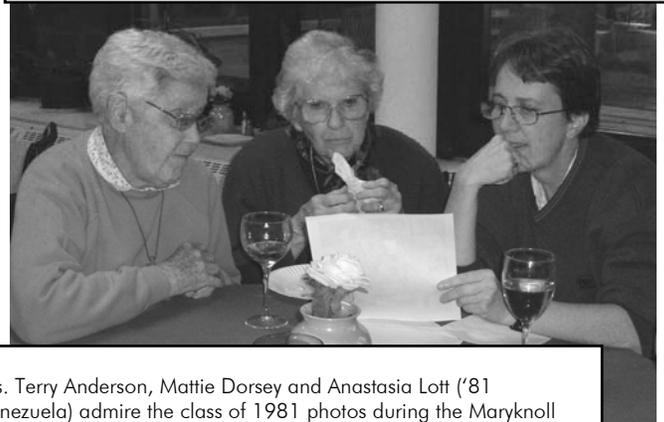


Farewell to The Nolan-Griffins—15 Years of Dedicated Service!

The Nolan-Griffins ('89 Tanzania/US) open their Baltimore home to a gathering with the O'Connells ('99 El Salvador/US) and the McKenna-Lees ('84 Venezuela/US). Currently Lisa and Dan live in Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania where Dan works with Catholic Relief Service. Back row: Dan Griffin, Tim O'Connell holding son Daniel, Gerry Lee, second row: Lisa Nolan holding son Joseph, Ellen O'Connell, Jessie McKenna-Lee, Patti McKenna holding Anne Nolan-Griffin, front row: Devin O'Connell, Grace Nolan-Griffin.



Gwen Vendley (75 Japan/US) (and Mimi Fitzgerald ('81 Kenya) during the Class of 1981 Reunion held at Bethany..



Srs. Terry Anderson, Mattie Dorsey and Anastasia Lott ('81 Venezuela) admire the class of 1981 photos during the Maryknoll Family Social of the Class of 1981 reunion held at Bethany.

Remembering Our Roots—Josie and Frank Cuda ('75 Bolivia)

Remembering Our Roots—Josie and Frank Cuda ('75 Bolivia)

Josie and Frank Cuda were part of the first mission sending group in 1975. They already had a mission vocation—Josie began with the Maryknoll Sisters and Frank had studied with the Maryknoll Fathers.



Frank and Josie in Appalachia

They later married and applied to over 30 programs to serve overseas. At that time (1973) there were not many lay groups sending people to mission. After a call from Maryknoll, Fr. Gordon Fritz notified them of an opening in Bolivia, they packed their bags.

An in-depth interview was conducted by Ellen O'Connell ('99 El Salvador/US) to capture some of their wisdom and perspectives. Below are some highlights. The full interview can be found at alwayssamissioner.org

What was life like in mission with Maryknoll?

We helped train over 50 leaders who were involved with community development (roads and water) as well as spiritual development. People asked if we could do things and we chose to provide ways to help them do themselves; in the end the people felt empowered to lead the church.

What did you find most challenging about the culture where you served?

It was not a single culture - Quecha, mestizo and some Amayra Indians were in our parish of 40,000. They practiced a blend of pre-Inca religious and christianity.

It was often difficult to understand all the layers of cultural and religious perspectives that made up the basis for their lives. People seemed to have contact with another level of spirit that we did not understand. Fortunately, we could ask the children in the youth group anything. They helped us to better understand many things.

What was your favorite aspect of their culture or worldview?

How the people are so gentle and courageous under adversity. They were one of the poorest groups you could imagine, living under martial law most of the time, with very little hope for a better future, yet they had a wonderful love for life. For example, the youth of our barrio would come together and buy string to build a volleyball net; they learned the value of working together and had the ability to see beyond the despair. People had family in prisons; communities could not legally organize; students elected to class president were abducted and yet they persevered with resilience and joy.

What do you find challenging about where you live now?

In the middle of Appalachia - we have lived in the mountains for over 25 years now. We chose this location because it so closely resembled Bolivia. Many of the same needs and challenges exist there as we found in Cochabamba. What we've missed most was a supportive church community—one which both recognizes our mission perspective and challenges us to deepen our commitment to the world community. At times we feel isolated.



We are not part of the "official" church presence and there are not many Catholics in WV. Many people are great solid citizens and we find inspiration in them. However, we cannot always recharge our spiritual energy on a local level because few share our perspectives or understand the language we use to express our spirituality.

We've grown a lot when it comes to religion and what Christianity is all about. We are striving to live a missionary life that is true to the gospel with no church support and very little local support from the local power structure. It is very hard trying to do it alone. Through our professions WE ARE IN mission.

Frank is a family nurse practitioner and serves people of all incomes. For the past 15 years, Josie has worked with a housing authority that offers rental assistance and builds houses that enable people to become homeowners. Another program she runs allows youth to earn a GED and learn to build houses. Josie is very involved with advocacy and policy work around housing. She regularly visited the congressional representative from her state regarding a housing trust fund; Josie recalls that she visited 4 times in 4 months and she suspects the representative thought she was stalking her!



What advice would you have for folks who are just returning from mission abroad with Maryknoll Lay Missioner?

We need better networks of support for the people who come back. We need "bridge people"; the United States needs more people to talk about our experience and broaden the minds of others who are trying to figure this out. When the United States is a bully, it prevents us from creating peace in this world. One might think this is an issue beyond their everyday lives and that they don't have time to think about it, but it is possible.

What have you learned about yourself?

For Frank--

Bolivia becomes a part of the patch quilt that you are. Believing in people and allowing the gospel to come alive confirms a life long dedication to being in mission. So much a part of my identity is being a missionary. It is who I am and what I am; the way we raise our children and the way we are in the community comes out of our mission experience.

Before I went overseas I was participating in the mission of the church. The structure supported that and at times was diametrically opposed to laity in mission. Sometimes the structure of the church is anti-gospel. But I see myself as being church, being gospel.

For Josie--

I think I learned from the Bolivian people that where there's a will, there's a way and to never give up. I will always be a person that works for justice, trying to create opportunities for people to live in a decent place and helping promote structures that free the oppressed by believing in them and their ability to build their own futures.



The Journey of Service and Faith Continues... Doors Keep Opening!

*St. Vincent Pallotti Center was established to "serve volunteers before, during and after their term of service." The Pallotti Center offers many resources related to job opportunities, spiritual retreats, and graduate programs. Check them out at www.pallotticenter.org

*Boston College Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (IREPM) is currently offering graduate study opportunities to people who have served in full-time volunteer ministries. Recognizing the need to support the volunteers' commitment and emerging vocation to ministry, IREPM is able to offer students enrolled in their degree programs 50% tuition scholarship. For more information contact Donna DeRosa, IREPM's Assistant Director of Student Services at 617-552-8440.

Staying in Touch- Mark the Change!

Please update your email address book... to reach folks at the home center please send your correspondence to the first initial and last name of the person followed by @mklm.org For example to contact me (Jean Walsh)—it's jwalsh@mklm.org. Communications sent to name@mkl-mmaf.org can no longer be delivered.

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns- Act for Justice!

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) provides analysis and advocacy on justice and peace issues that impact the communities where Maryknollers live and work. The office has an email action alert network. Alerts are sent out occasionally and cover urgent issues that affect the countries where Maryknollers serve. To join the network send an email to: maryknollalert-subscribe@npogroups.org.

Calendar of Events

Friends Across Borders- Mission Awareness Trips

Cambodia: March 3-17, 2007

Tanzania: June 15-29, 2007

Brazil: October 13-25, 2007

Bolivia: October 27-Nov. 10, 2007

Trips are being planned in 2008 for Kenya and Thailand. For more information contact Cecilia Espinoza ('85 Chile/US), Mission Awareness Trips manager, FriendsAcrossBorders@mklm.org

Regional Maryknoll Affiliate Conferences

Eastern Regional Conference—March 31, 2007 to be held at the Maryknoll Sister Center

Western Regional Conference—July 27-29, 2007 in the San Francisco Bay area.

For more information and to register contact:

www.maryknollaffiliates.org

A Summer Gathering for People

Contemplating Service with Maryknoll Lay Missioners

August 2-5, 2007 Maryknoll, N.Y.

For more information contact Joe Loney ('95 Bolivia/US), Director of Mission Services Department, jloney@mklm.org 914-762-6364 ext. 123

25th Anniversary Reunion—Sending Class of 1982

Aug. 24, - August 26, 2007

Reunite, reminisce and reconnect here at Bethany!

For more info contact jwalsh@mklm.org



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