



## The ties that bind

*Families were the focus of his life*

BY TONI CASHNELLI



Allan Schmitz died unexpectedly on Feb. 14 at the age of 63.

The resemblance in looks, manner, even voice, is striking.

There is no mistaking **John, Jim and Douglas**, the brothers of **Allan Schmitz**. And his sister **Sue** – warm, upbeat and engaging – acts just like him. So much of Allan lives on in his family that his easygoing spirit pervaded his funeral at St. Clement.

Anyone who spent time in his presence knew Allan was close to his siblings, nieces and nephews. On Feb. 19, five days after his

sudden passing, they were drawn together at St. Clement in grief and support with Allan's family of friars. There is shock and disbelief when death is unexpected but in this case, there was also an element of relief. Allan's post-surgical back problems and multiple health issues made each day difficult. It was painful to see this once-imposing figure struggle from walker to wheelchair to the electric cart on which he relied for mobility.

"He's a hero of mine by his acceptance of his physical problems," **Fred Link** said, sharing a memory of Allan during the Reception

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## Song and Spirit road trip

March 29, Al Mascia and his Song and Spirit collaborator, Maggid Steve Klaper, will present an Interfaith Havdalah at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. "To date the farthest away I've ever led this service has been Easton, Pa.!" Al says. "So the Oblate School is really quite a quantum leap for us!" More news from Al at the Song and Spirit Institute for Peace in Berkeley, Mich.: "We will also be the main musical performers at this year's Fiesta Franciscana in San Antonio!" The Havdalah service marks the symbolic end of the Jewish Shabbat (day of rest) and ushers in the new week.



Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, OSF

## FROM JEFF

This coming Saturday the Provincial Council meets with the Boards of our Sponsored Ministries. Every year the Council meets with individual boards, but every three years we gather all the boards for a day on the Franciscan charism and board development. This provides an opportunity for cross fertilization, and gives the boards a bigger picture of who we are as a province. It

also give them a chance to meet board members from other ministries. This year **Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, OSF**, a guide on the Assisi pilgrimages and Director of Corporate Ministries for her Congregation (Sisters of St. Francis of Milwaukee), will present on "Franciscan Presence: Our Ministry for the Future." **Len Brzozowski**, Professor of Leadership and Management at Xavier

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# Workshop fosters frank talk about celibacy

BY MARK SOEHNER, OFM

From Feb. 16-20, the postulants were hosted by the novitiate community as they attended a workshop entitled, “Human Sexuality and Celibate Chastity”, given by **Sean Sammon, FMS, PhD**, in Burlington, Wis. The workshop itself was an intense introduction to the importance of self-esteem, friendship, prayer and other helps to celibate chastity. Everyone learned common definitions of intimacy, what is a healthy family, the importance of an effective mentor, what fosters psychosexual growth and what impairs it. It included frank discussions on Burnout and Child Sexual Abuse.

As you can see it was extensive in scope but peppered with the lively stories of our presenter, Br. Sean. A former Superior General for the Marist Brothers, Sean served in Rome after a lengthy period as a provincial here in the States. He provided good clinical insights as well as a sense of humor.

Much of the other learning occurred as the postulants



*Jeremiah Sauber, Sean Sammon and Nickolas Thorvaldsen during the workshop.*

*Top, Postulant Jeremiah Sauber with Cliff Hennings and Bob Weakley at Blessed Giles Friary; above, the community at St. Joseph Friary in Chicago.*

met their potential classmates for novitiate next year. Some beginning bonds of brotherhood were started during this workshop. They also connected with our novice, **Zach Bischler**, the other novices, the formation team (including **Henry Beck**), and were treated to joyful hospitality by the guardian, **Norbert Bertram**.

We left on Thursday to travel to St. Joseph Friary in Chicago where we spent the night at the post-novitiate house. Again, the postulants were able to see

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a potential future home, as well as meet the temporary professed and reconnect with the brothers from SJB. Special thanks to the formation team (including **Tim Lamb**), who provided great hospitality, treating us to the luxurious Thai 55 for dinner. Friday morning allowed us to visit CTU, where we met **John Barker** and went to Bl. Giles Friary. We arrived unannounced there and were graciously received by the rest of the brothers, who just happened to be home at that time.



Far left, Bob Weakley and Roger Lopez at Blessed Giles Friary; top, left to right: Nickolas, Adam Farkas, Tim Lamb, Will Estrellanes, Mark Soehner, Jeremiah and Eric Seguin; left, Nick with Richard Goodin in Chicago.

PHOTOS BY MARK SOEHNER, OFM



## DIRECTORY UPDATES

New rooms for several senior friars:

- **Luke Simon**, Western Hills Nursing & Rehab Center, 6210 Cleves-Warsaw Pike, Room 103, Cincinnati OH 45233; phone 513-941-0099 (main switchboard) or 513-467-3003 (room phone).
- **John Turnbull** is at St. Margaret Hall, Room 231; phone 513-618-0781 or 513-290-9714 (cell).
- **Curt Lanzrath's** new room: St. Margaret Hall, Room 230; phone 513-618-0780.

## FROM JEFF Continued on Page 1

University and Friars Club board member, will present on "Rethinking Board Roles." We friars are incredibly blessed to have the generosity and expertise of so many people on our boards. They help us be more professional and strategic in our Franciscan service. In addition to the Provincial Council, we will have representatives of the Provincial Staff, board members and advisors from Roger Bacon, Friars Club, St. Francis Seraph Ministries, Franciscan Media, St. Francis Retreat House, and the Franciscan Missionary Union. This year we are also inviting board members from Song and Spirit in Detroit.



Len Brzozowski

– **Jeff Scheeler, OFM**

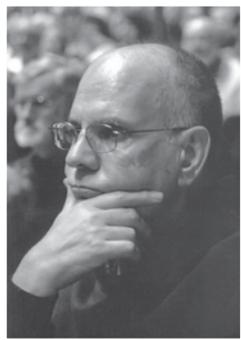
Continued from Page 1 of the Body. **Jerry Beetz** described the storm during the 2011 Chapter that zapped the electricity and drove friars to the basement at St. Meinrad. Unable to navigate those daunting stairs, “Allan never complained. He was very grateful for those who saw him through the storm.” Sister Sue had nothing but gratitude for Allan’s brothers at St. John the Baptist Friary in Sharonville. “You always made me feel so much like family,” she told them. “I know he loved his life with the friars. Thank you for being a brother to him and all of us.”

In welcoming friends and family, celebrant **Jeff Scheeler** expressed the prevailing sentiment. “I’m sure like most of you I didn’t think I would be doing this,” he said, adding, “We all knew that his body was under great stress and he carried heavy burdens.” Scripture readings from Isaiah, Corinthians and Matthew, addressing an end to days of grieving and the lifting of burdens, were comfort food for the soul.

## Families are forever

Homilist **Jim Van Vurst** stressed the connection that binds Allan’s biological relatives, his religious brothers and sisters and those he met in ministry. “We come together this evening to do one of the most sacred acts a family can do for a loved one,” he said. “When I say ‘family’, I mean of course both of Allan’s families...his Franciscan family of friars and Poor Clares, as well as his family of birth.”

Families grow and evolve,



Allan at a Chapter meeting.

but they “do not exist for a brief period of time and then disappear,” Jim said. “Loving relationships never end; once created, they remain into eternity.” There is consolation in knowing that “at the moment Allan completed his journey on this earth, he was greeted by those closest to him; by his Mom and Dad who gave him life and brought him into this world and shared their faith

with Allan....Just imagine what this reunion must have been like and will be for all of us.”

Jim traced Allan’s life in ministry, from his work with the homeless at St. Vincent Hotel through his days as spiritual advisor to the Cursillo, to his final years as Archivist. “The point I want to make is that in almost all of Allan’s ministries, except for the very end, that he was directly caring for people. And I’m certain Allan could never know all the good

the Lord used him for” in 27 years of service to others.

## We are never alone

The shared sadness in his passing is that Allan died alone, in his room. “I would imagine we all have a secret hope that we might be surrounded by our loved ones at those final hours,” Jim said. “We know at the same time that doesn’t always happen. But that brings up the question that so many people have: ‘Just what happens at the moment of death?’”

Consider Jesus’ words of consolation: “Do not let your hearts be fearful,” Jim quotes. “He said, ‘I will come and take you to myself.’ The image he gave us was that at the moment of death he will come and ‘put his arms around us and take us home to the place he has prepared for us.’” That Friday when he died, “The Lord came to him, put his arms around Allan and said, ‘Come, Allan, time to come home.’”

No one ever dies alone, Jim said, “no soldier on a battlefield, no homeless person abandoned in an alleyway.” And Allan was no exception. “It was the Lord who came and took him home to be with all his loved ones, both family and Franciscan brothers and sisters. For Allan, last Friday morning, Feb. 14, was the best day of his whole life.”

Following Communion, when Jeff stepped up to give thanks he echoed those words. “I don’t know about you, but I long for the day when I receive God’s embrace.” He quoted a line from a poem on resurrection, “My Father’s laughter fills the empty tomb,” in reference to Allan. “One of the things I will always remember about him is that huge, huge laugh,” booming, contagious and uplifting.

As legacies go, it doesn’t get much better than that.



PHOTO BY TONI CASHNELLI

Allan greeting a visitor at the Archives in Mt. Airy in 2011.



## FOCUS ON FRIARS

## Our prayers for Lent

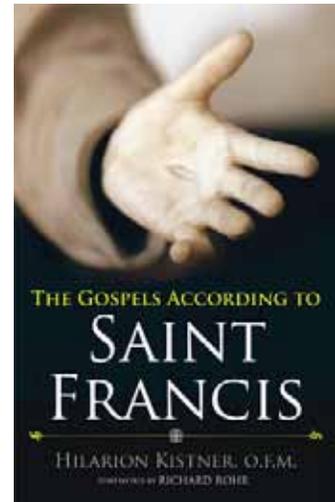
WATCH  
FOR OUR  
COUNTDOWN  
TO EASTER  
STARTING  
MARCH 5

■ Starting next week we will be sharing **friars' prayers for Lent** on our Facebook pages. Thanks to those who have already contributed to the project. To recap: We will present a short daily prayer to the public throughout Lent, expressing the hopes/dreams/wishes of friars on any subject you desire. You are invited to share a prayer you've seen or write a message of your own – something that would help readers come together around a common intention each day. For example, your Lenten prayer could express a wish for spiritual growth for yourself or others, for a ministry or project with which you are involved, for an issue such as peace or conservation, for healing for friends or loved ones, for the world in general. When it is posted on Facebook we will include your name with the prayer, under the "Our Prayers for Lent" logo. You are welcome to submit as many prayers/requests as you like. They can be as short as a sentence or as long as a couple of paragraphs. If you would like to contribute to our series, please e-mail your prayer requests to Toni at [sjbfco@franciscan.org](mailto:sjbfco@franciscan.org). It would be good to have most of them in hand before Ash Wednesday, March 5, but we will gladly accept prayers over the next several weeks. We appreciate your help!

■ The latest **Vocation Office newsletter** is posted online at: <http://vocationvibes.franciscan.org/>.

■ Reminder from **Jeff Scheeler**: "There will be a Lenten time of prayer for Cincinnati-area friars from 1-3 p.m. on Thursday, March 27, at St. Anthony Friary. We will begin with an opening prayer, then have time for quiet personal prayer, and end with benediction at 3 p.m. All are welcome. If you can't make the whole time, come for whatever time you can to pray with your brothers."

■ A series of talks given years ago at Friarhurst formed the basis for *The Gospels According to St. Francis*, a new book by **Hilarion Kistner**. "It was issued as an audiobook years ago and Hilarion has recorded the revised text for an audiobook from Franciscan Media," says **Pat McCloskey**. He and **Murray Bodo, Jeff Scheeler, Frank Jasper, and Dan Kroger** contributed blurbs for the book's inside pages. According to FM, "The Gospels are broken open to blend the teachings of Jesus and Francis in a unique way. In so doing, Kistner looks at four main themes: Francis and his love for the Gospel; the movement of the Spirit through the Gospels; the heart of the Gospels; how Francis lived in the Gospel light." Order your copy today (\$13.99 paperback) at: <http://catalog.franciscanmedia.org/Product.aspx?ProductCode=B36728>



■ Washington, D.C., is the site for this year's **Franciscan Alumni Association Reunion**, June 20-22. The FAA writes, "Our reunion agenda includes Saturday Mass at The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, and tours of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the Blessed John Paul II Shrine. Come join us in the nation's capital for fellowship and spiritual connection." The host hotel is the Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge (<http://www.hirosslyn.com>) - 703-807-2000 (Room Block – FAA). Book by May 19 for a special rate, \$119 plus tax per night. Watch for updates on the FAA website at <http://www.franciscan-alumni.org>.



**FAA Reunion 2014  
Washington D.C.**

## Countdown to Chapter

BY DON MILLER, OFM  
Chapter Planning Committee Chair

■ The Pre-registrations for Chapter 2014 are due by April 1. Those attending are asked to indicate their preferences on a couple of issues so that the Planning Committee can best serve their needs. To be excused (by age or for any other reason) one must write a letter to **Francisco Ó Conaire** stating that one is excusing himself by reason of age or asking to be excused for some specific reason. Once the Friar has received a letter from Francisco stating that he is excused he is to then submit a pre-registration form stating that he has been excused. To make sure that no Friar is excluded from Chapter

preparations, we need to receive a pre-registration from every Friar. We have simplified the pre-registration by putting it on-line. It takes just a few seconds to complete. Just go to the *Friars only* section of our provincial website, enter with the user name *friars* and the password *reachout* and then click *Chapter 2014* in the upper left-hand corner. Many of those who have already pre-registered have commented on how easy and efficient the process is.

■ Staff Reports are to be e-mailed to **Don Miller** as Chair of the Chapter Planning Committee at [donsjb@franciscan.org](mailto:donsjb@franciscan.org) by April 1. The report is to capture the major activities,

achievements, possible set-backs, etc. for the office in the previous three years (since last Chapter). The report will be included in the Chapter 2014 binder given to each Chapter Delegate.

■ In an effort to save paper and to relieve unnecessary storage of binders, we will be publishing the Chapter Binder in PDF format. Any Friar who would prefer to receive a non-paper copy of the Chapter Binder should notify Don Miller as the Chair of the Chapter Planning Committee at [donsjb@franciscan.org](mailto:donsjb@franciscan.org) by April 1, 2014. Notification concerning how to retrieve the PDF binder will be sent to those requesting the non-paper copy.

## The only certainty is change

BY PAT MCCLOSKEY, OFM

Because Francis of Assisi was very realistic, he knew that his brotherhood would change after his death. In fact, he acknowledged this possibility several times in the Rule of 1223:

- friars must obey Pope Honorius and his canonically elected successors (ch 1),
- friars must obey Francis and his successors (ch 1),
- the clothing to be given to new friars was specified “unless it seems good to these same ministers, before God, to act otherwise” (ch 2),
- the Epiphany fast is optional; friars need not fast during a time of obvious need (ch 3),
- the provincial ministers might be priests or they might be lay friars (ch 7),
- office of general minister is for life unless provincial ministers consider the current one no longer suitable and choose a replacement; the general minister can adjust the interval between Pentecost chapters (ch 8),
- friars are to obey their provincial ministers in everything they have promised and which is not

against their soul or our Rule (ch 10), and

- provincial ministers are to judge which friars should be sent as preachers to non-Christians (ch 12).

To Brother Leo, Francis wrote: “In whatever way it seems better to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprint and poverty, do it with the blessing of the Lord God and my obedience.”

Toward the end of his life, some friars expressed concern about their future once Francis had died. He told them, “I have done what is mine to do. May the Lord teach you what is yours to do” (2 Celano 214).

Change in Franciscan life is not automatically good, but it can hardly be considered unexpected!



St. Francis and Leo by El Greco