



NOJOSHING NOTES

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*NOJOSHING is an Indian word. It means "Straight Tongue."
In 1849, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi built their Motherhouse on land that was called Nojoshing by the Indians,
because it protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue.*

When All Else Fails...READ! *by Sr. Celia Struck, Librarian & Congregation Archivist*

Our library in the new St. Francis Convent has seen a host of visits during the COVID-19 pandemic! Besides books, books, and more books, one will also find audio books, DVDs and CDs. Well over 750 books will have been read in 2020; hundreds of DVDs will have been viewed. Our sisters have always been avid readers; they also enjoy a "good" movie.

When we first moved in May of 2019, the library was crowded with heavy carts and boxes. I thought that it would take several months to make order. Actually, that did not happen! The sisters needed some activity while everything was finding its place in the new space. With the assistance of volunteers, the room transformed into a library and, within the first month of residency, the library was open for our sister residents!

Our sisters' reading choices seems to be centered around favorite authors: Catherine Coulter, John Grisham, John Sanford, Richard Paul Evens, Beverly Lewis – to name a few. The reading interests run a gamut – from mysteries and historical fiction to wholesome stories and biographies.

The library is not stagnant. Two ways our circulation increases are through donations and purchases. I attempt to keep up with the favorite authors' new releases; but that can be a challenge at times. Special requests are also welcomed.



Today, the library at St. Francis Convent is a quiet space to read or even take a break from all the activity of one's day.

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Christmas 2020 – *Sights and Sounds of the Season*

A Beautiful Tree to Behold

Within the Town Square of St. Francis Convent stood a 12-foot Christmas tree. Its beauty came from how it was decorated with many natural items found on the convent grounds. As one gazed on the tree, one found bleached hydrangeas, star gourds, ornamental grasses, popcorn husk stars, grape vines, and lunaria. These were accented by artificial sumac, red apples and berries. Sisters and staff were found spending time resting in its beauty. It definitely reflected the opening lines of the German folk carol, “O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, how lovely are your branches.”

A Beloved Christmas Crèche

Did you know that the tradition of the Christmas crèche can be traced to St. Francis of Assisi? In 1223 at Greccio, Italy, St. Francis reenacted the first Christmas to show the brothers and the people of the town the humble birth of the Savior. To this day, numerous homes and churches throughout the world display a Christmas crèche. Much to the sisters’ delight, the beloved Christmas crèche that once graced the former Motherhouse chapel was displayed in the San Damiano Center. Mother Madeline Heimann, who was the Mother General from 1947 to 1961, purchased the crèche from the Carl Moser Studio. Each piece was hand carved by sculptor Alois Senoner in Italy. Throughout the Christmas season, one could find sisters coming to pray before this beloved crèche.

Christmas Boutique

Like other events during COVID-19, the Holiday Boutique was adjusted because of the pandemic. On December 4, the Town Square was transformed into a Christmas shopper’s paradise. With face masks and social distancing in place, the sisters and staff were able to purchase homemade bakery and candy, clothing and craft items. Vendors proudly displayed their items and welcomed shoppers to their tables. The Christmas spirit filled the space and Santa was seen interacting with those present. Hopefully by December 2021 the Holiday Boutique can once again be opened to the broader community.

Celebrating the Season

Throughout December, the sisters gathered to reflect and pray on the Scripture message of the Advent season. Later in the month, Clare Circle and Elizabeth Hall were all decked out for the Christmas season. Sr. Mariella Boehmer commented that, wherever she went, she saw Christmas decorations, poinsettias, and beautifully decorated Christmas trees. She couldn’t help but be put into the Christmas spirit. At their Christmas party, Sister Evelyn Brokish accompanied the sisters in singing Christmas carols. At the New Year’s Eve party, Bingo was the highlight of the evening, complete with many wonderful prizes.

At right:
Winter in
the Urban
Forest on
the Convent
Grounds



Above:
Christmas Tree in the
Town Square

At left:
Italian Crèche Figurines



Winter Wonderland

A white Christmas was not to be at St. Francis Convent in 2020. However, a week later on New Year’s, Mother Nature came through with five inches of snow. She dressed the trees in gowns of white. She covered the ground with a blanket of fresh fallen snow. A father was seen pulling his young son on a sled in the urban forest. A snowperson near the convent waved to all who passed by. The convent grounds were truly a winter wonderland.

Center:
The First Snow of 2021 at St. Francis Convent



OSF Vendor Develops Desk Shields

At Thanksgiving this year, the president of Barton Cotton (BC), Kathy Calta, sent a letter to all of its customers about its *Pay It Forward* campaign. The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi work with BC to develop the materials and schedules used in the OSF direct mail outreach.



Prior to the pandemic, as part of that community development initiative that encourages BC team members to volunteer time and resources to others, BC had “adopted” an elementary/ middle school near its office.

This Baltimore school is a critical element in the lives of its students. In addition to providing learning, it provides a structured environment, a warm meal, and a place to create the future. When the pandemic hit, the school’s administration told BC their most urgent priority was to provide a safe environment for in-school attendance for 2021.

BC employees went to work developing desk shields. The *Little Desk Shield* is a trifold cardboard frame with a clear plastic center that attaches easily to a desk with tape, and this provides an added divider between students and teachers during times of learning and lunch.

Ms. Calta’s letter to the congregation stated: “It is because of you that we’re able to help, so we will be donating a *Little Desk Shield* in your honor. A dedication sticker with your ... name will be affixed to the desk shield to let the children and faculty know we care.”

**Please remember the
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
in your will.**

**A bequest is a wonderful way to support our
retired sisters and is a testimony of your
care and concern for them.**

**Nojoshing Notes is published by
the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.**

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