



WE ARE ALL VOLUNTEERS

by Jane DeRose-Bamman and Diane Menditto

According to the Google Dictionary/Oxford Languages website: “Volunteer” means: “a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.”

Each Secular Franciscan is a volunteer of sorts... a volunteer for Jesus. We choose daily to say yes to our vocation, going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. Although elected to our positions, the members of the new National Executive Council volunteered to serve in those positions.

There are other volunteers in the Order who serve in appointed positions. The appointees are often behind the scenes. Without those willing to serve in appointed positions, those who were elected would be floundering immediately upon election.

On the national level, these appointments are in the areas of the Commissions (Formation; Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation; and Youth/Young Adult), the National Database, the TAU-USA newsletter, 1-800-Francis vocations line, the national website, archives, historian, public relations specialists and, more recently, those working with social media and accessibility concerns. There are also very task specific appointments, e.g., the Quinquennial Committee, which lasts for five years. Many members of the Database Committee (formerly the Computer Committee) and TAU-USA Committee have served for more than 10 years. Some committee chairs and members have served in various roles as committees have transitioned. We are not sure that people would have said yes to their original appointment if they had known it would last 5+ years. Here are a few of those who have been serving for many years:

Dan Mulholland, OFS, served as a JPIC Commission Co-Chair and transitioned to the Computer Committee, and as an offshoot has helped with the website, social media, TAU-USA, setting up and maintaining email listserv, and many other tasks. He always offers his expertise, as well as sharing his knowledge with others. He is active with his local and regional fraternities. His unending “yes” to volunteer and share his gifts is inspiring.

Bob Herbelin, OFS, has been managing the current database for 20 years. He has been helped by the Computer Committee members, but Bob is the main database manager. Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS, for about eight years now, has been overseeing access to the database. Bob and Cyl create the National Directory based on the database information. Cyl also maintains the mailing list for the *Tau-USA*. Bob helps with the annual report functions of the database. They are working with the Database Committee to set up the new database (which we hope to roll out in 2023). Thanks to Bob and Cyl for their longtime efforts.

Randy Heinz, OFS, managed the mailing list for many years before Cyl. He was integral in initiating the new website, Twitter, and Facebook pages. Thanks to Randy for helping us evolve with our communication methods.

Jim and Cindy Wesley, OFS, work on key parts of our communication efforts with the *Tau-USA* newsletter. They have been working on compiling the articles as well as translating them for more than 10 years. Their efforts have produced 32 newsletters in English and Spanish. Their consistent labor of love is a gift for the OFS-USA. Combined with efforts from the website committee members, we have all versions of the newsletter since 1987 posted to the website. <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/tau-usa-newsletter/>

Unfortunately, we aren’t able to list all the volunteers here by name. Thanks to all who have been and will be willing to accept appointments!

Because an appointment should not be considered a life-long commitment, the NEC is soliciting applications for our Commission Chairs—National Formation, National Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation, and National Youth/Young Adult, and the *Tau-USA* Editor in this newsletter. The NEC will solicit applications for other appointed positions in future *Tau-USA* editions.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

National Formation Commission Chair Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission Chair Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair Tau-USA Editor

The National Executive Council is seeking applicants for the above positions. Persons interested in serving in one of these capacities or nominating someone for a position, should contact the National Secretary, Susan Ronan, OFS, at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com AND National Vice Minister, Diane Menditto, OFS, at diane.menditto@gmail.com for an application form prior to March 15, 2023.

Applications will be due by March 31, 2023.

The qualities required for these positions include:

- Strong knowledge of our Catholic Faith
- Good writing and communication skills
- Ability to travel, as needed, including attendance at the annual National Chapter
- Experience conducting “Zoom-style” and “In-Person” meetings
- Ability to prepare and meet an annual budget
- Experience and skills relating to the particular position (e.g., leading formation program or serving as a local or regional formation director; participating in programs to further justice, peace, or integrity of creation (JPIC) or serving as local or regional JPIC chair; participating in Youth/Young Adult activities to share the love of the Franciscan Order with the youth; producing a newsletter for fraternities, other volunteer work including use of specific software programs for newsletter).

Application forms for the individual positions will be emailed to interested persons. The NEC will review all applications and determine whether video interviews will be conducted. The intention is to make appointments prior to August 2023. For additional information, contact Susan Ronan, OFS, at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com.

CHAPTER OF MATS IN NOVEMBER 2024

The CIOFS Presidency is planning a Chapter of Mats for the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra to be held November 14-19, 2024 in Rome, Italy. This will immediately follow the 2024 General Chapter. It is a way to celebrate the 800th anniversaries of important events in the life of St. Francis. In December 2022 and January 2023, the OFS-USA asked Regional Ministers to compile the names of individuals (OFS and family members, YouFra and Spiritual Assistants) interested in participating. Over 500 persons from the OFS-USA expressed interest in attending. CIOFS will be compiling information from all the National Fraternities to determine logistics for the gathering. The National Executive Council will share information once the CIOFS Presidency has finalized plans for this very special event. Stay tuned!

SUGGESTIONS FOR GATHERING LOCATIONS

The National Executive Council plans face-to-face meetings throughout the year. Meeting sizes range from 12 persons (NEC meetings) to 80+ persons (Chapter). Preference is to stay at a retreat center located in proximity to an airport. We are looking for locations for 2024, 2025 and 2026. If you know of a retreat center, friary or convent that may be large enough to hold such a meeting, please share the name of the facility, location and contact information with Susan Ronan, OFS, National Secretary at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com. Thank you for the suggestions.