



Linwood Current

It is only when we silent the blaring sounds of our daily existence that we can finally hear the whispers of truth that life reveals to us, as it stands knocking on the doorsteps of our hearts.
~K.T. Jong

An Excerpt from *Exercising with Ignatius* by Caroline J. Martone

Reprinted with permission from the author. Caroline J. Martone is a freelance writer, and graduate of Fordham University and the State University of New York at New Paltz.

Ten years ago, if anyone told me I would attend a silent retreat to start the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, I would have thought it more likely that I run naked through the Mission in San Francisco, where I lived. Back then I was in my twenties, performing in theaters and comedy clubs. The opening line of my act was, "I was in a cult for 13 years; other people called it Catholic school." One word could describe my feeling about my Catholic upbringing: embarrassment. A life that centered on the philosophy of "finding God in all things" conflicted with my preference to find humor in all things.

I extricated myself from the church before it could extricate me.

An unexpected phone call from my father would change everything. "Mom is sick again," he said. "She's starting chemo tomorrow." Two weeks later, I left California and moved back to upstate New York, a 29 year old comic-turned-caregiver. To say that I was mad at God would imply that we shared a personal relationship, perhaps the funniest notion of all.

Day one
Eight years and my Mom have passed.

Here I am sitting in a circle on the first night of an eight-day silent retreat at Linwood Spiritual Center in Rhinebeck, N.Y. I looked around at the other participants, feeling like the only kid at a table of "grown-ups." Their introductions were along the lines of, "I'm an Ignatian scholar and this will be a cinch since I did the 30-day retreat last year!" I viscerally

dreaded my turn. How would I introduce myself? "I'm an unemployed 30-something writer with a Master's Degree but no job?" "I named my dog after St. Francis?" "I missed Mass for about 10 years, but I want in again?"

Even when I stopped attending church in my 20s, I was drawn to the lives and literature of the "misfit" saints and mystics: St. Paul, Mary Magdalene, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Augustine: those who lived flawed and complicated lives, thinking they were doing just fine without God until one day they weren't. I had heard about the power of the Spiritual Exercises to help answer this one universal question: What was I created for? For the next eight days, I hoped to grasp a mere glimpse at what St. Ignatius spent a month experiencing in the mid-16th century. I imagine it had to be somewhat easier to find

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It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.....
Henry David Thoreau

Behind the Scenes

If you have ever been to Linwood, you know that the food here is not only plentiful, but well-prepared, nutritious and really, really good. That responsibility lies with Chef Andrew Jenners, a graduate of Johnson and Wales, who agreed to be interviewed for this article. Although he was a bit reticent to talk about his talents, we got him to share some of his thoughts with us....

LC: What made you want to become a chef?

Chef: My mother was a big influence on me. I remember making Christmas cookies and helping her in the kitchen. She's Italian and was always doing something in the kitchen.

LC: So Andrew, What brought you to Linwood?

Chef: I needed a job and thought Linwood sounded like an interesting place. I was a vegetarian at the time and felt that a spiritual center might be a good match. I kind of think of myself as a personal chef or a cook in somebody's home. And I really like the hours. I don't like to work nights any more.

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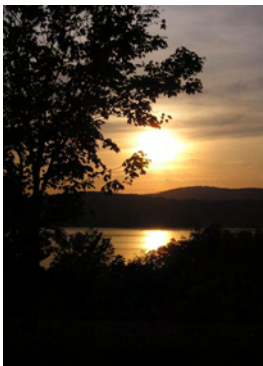


One of our views of the Hudson River

“Every flower is a soul blossoming in nature.”
~Gerard de Nerval



Photos courtesy of Sr. Kathy Donnelly



inner peace back then; a time when even Inigo didn't have to worry about missing e-mails, text messages, and if he would have enough money at the end of the week to pay a dog-sitter.

Day two

The first two days feel like a detox; essentially, what you are detoxing from is the world itself. Could I give up the outside world for eight days? In the beginning, the surreal atmosphere of pervasive silence was surreal. (Try chewing barbecued chicken in silence while no one dares ask to pass the salt.) At least I wouldn't have to worry about coming up with witty small talk, because essentially, there is no talk. The Mozart CD playing helps ease the awkwardness, but not much.

Day three

I quickly became aware of my own “disordered attachments” — the Ignatian term for the superfluous externals, which separate us from our true calling and from God. I thought of too much time spent checking e-mail, worrying too much about the past or the future, always missing the nature of the present; too many social commitments; television. I'm a fan of *Mad Men*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Weeds* — not exactly

EWTN programming. I check my e-mail five times a day and often Google things like, “*Home remedies for Lyme disease when one doesn't have health insurance and a red ring on right leg is looking pretty ominous.*” How would I make it through the week?

Mass is in the chapel every day at five. Unlike in days past, I've actually started to look forward to going. This is the first time I've ever experienced a Mass during which a woman gives the reflection. Sr. Maureen's exploration of the gospel is thought provoking, relevant and funny. In the words of little orphan Annie; “*I think I'm going to like it here.*”

Day four

One of many things I relate to about St. Ignatius is that he was not a holy roller. (I learn through books I've skimmed in Linwood's library that he is the only canonized saint to have a police record, apparently for a barroom brawl in the 16th century.) This information delights me. I am reminded of a God of love and mercy; the only God I can comprehend. I sense that Ignatius understood the pressures of this world; it was when he withdrew from it and spent time in silence that he was able to make the distinction between consolations (that which uplifts) and desolations

(distractions that bring despair.) Being born in the 20th century meant that one's life was going to automatically come with some attachments. It was up to me to realize when those attachments were becoming disordered. I could still check e-mail; I didn't have to 18 times a day. Likewise, I could stop living my life as if it was one massive to-do list. I realized that I'd been going about the retreat as I did my daily life — trying to get as much done as possible and becoming easily frustrated when results weren't immediate. “*Hear the voice of God and now, damn it!*” was my first thought in the morning, as if this was something to check off in the day planner. This retreat wasn't about doing; it was about willingness and surrender. Clearly, it was also about trust and patience, definitely weaknesses for me. I thought about a favorite quote by St. John of the Cross; “*If a man wants to be sure of his road, he must close his eyes and walk in the dark.*” I'm not sure where I'm headed, only that I have to keep walking.

To read all of Caroline's article visit <http://bustedhalo.com/features/exercising-with-ignatius-part-2>

Linwood Programs Announced

By now you should have received your 2011-2012 brochure of all the wonderful offerings that Linwood has during this next year. If you have not, please give a call to the office, so we can mail you one or visit us online at linwoodspiritualctr.org.

Need a little R&R to renew your spiritual self, just feel like getting away for a few days to re-focus, forget

about work and de-stress, Linwood is the perfect place. When you just need time to yourself to renew your relationship with God, schedule a personal retreat. Spend the night in one of our private rooms, some with Hudson River views, and enjoy three meals a day that you don't have to cook or clean up afterward. Comfy chairs in the library beckon. Wireless internet access is avail-

able. Borrow one of our all-terrain bicycles and a helmet for a ride along River Road. Travel the labyrinth. With plenty of hammocks, benches, gardens, patios and even a tree house, there is a beautiful vista at every turn.

Linwood Gift Certificates make great holiday gifts!

Director of Development and Marketing Appointed

Sr. Mary Dolan, Regional Superior of the Sisters of St. Ursula, announced the appointment of Susan Linn as Director of Development and Marketing, a newly created position for the Linwood Spiritual Center.

Sr. Mary noted that people have referred to Linwood as the best kept secret in the Hudson Valley and with retreat centers closing around the country, she said, "It's time for the Spiritual Center to become proactive." In creating this position, the Center hopes to reach out more to the public, making them aware of the wonderful programs, services, and surroundings that Linwood has to offer.

Because of Linn's diverse background in being involved with the arts, community, and chambers of commerce, as well as the hospitality industry, Sr. Mary felt Susan is a perfect match for the Center. Most recently, Linn was the Executive Director of the Orange County Arts Council and prior to that held the position of Executive Director of the Rhinebeck Area Chamber of Commerce (RACoC). Colleen Cruikshank, current director of the RACoC and board member during Linn's tenure feels that Linn is a great fit for the Center. "Susie is really in tune with people and comes from her own spiritual place in the art world. I can't think of anyone better for the job."

Susan Linn has had a career as an arts administrator for more than 25 years. As an arts administrator on the national level, she served as a manager for the American Craft Council, and on the statewide level, as the Director of Development and Finance for SUNY University-wide Programs in the Arts. Regionally, Susan was the Director of Arts Services at State University of New York at New Paltz, Director of Development at Unison Arts, and Acting Executive Director of the Albany League of Arts. Her husband, Michael Lalicki, is a designer and sculptor and they are thrilled to have three grandsons who are budding artists.



Special points of interest:

- **Linwood to begin accepting credit cards.**
- **Director of Development and Marketing hired**
- **Send us your e-mail address.**
- **Follow us on Facebook (Linwood Retreats), Twitter, and check out our new Blog!**



Linwood to Soon Take Credit Cards

As a courtesy to our guests, Linwood will soon begin taking credit cards on both the website and at the Center.

On the website the Center will use the PayPal system, which is an outside company that is completely secured and guaranteed.

PayPal uses the latest anti-fraud technology and encrypts sensitive financial information so that only the person making the payment can see it.

Credit cards will also be accepted at the Center so guests can now use that method to pay their retreat

balances or for on-site massages.

In addition, if individuals would like to contribute to the Spiritual Center, donations to Linwood will also be accepted with credit cards at the Center and online.

Behind the Scenes, Cont. from page 1

LC: What inspires you?

Chef: I like being creative and crafting new dishes. I love making desserts. I have several gardens so I try to use seasonal ingredients

LC: Where can we find you on your day off?

Chef: I enjoy doing a lot of different things. I like drumming and playing percussion. I love to ski, if I weren't a chef, I'd probably be a ski instructor. (We also

found out Andrew has a black belt in karate and was a member of the U.S. Junior Karate Team.)

LC: What is your favorite local restaurant?

Chef: I don't go out a lot, because I don't care to spend a lot of money on something that I know I can make just as well. But for special occasions, I like The Red Onion in Saugerties.

LC: Name three people you would like to share a

meal with, past or present.

Chef: That's a hard one. I don't really have a favorite chef. I don't know that I would want to eat with my favorite author. I guess I'd have to say Thomas Jefferson, because he was a real renaissance man who did a lot of things and was really into food. I think I'm a little bit like him. Also John Burroughs because I'm a nature guy and probably Martin Luther King.



Andrew in his environment

Join us for a retreat at Linwood Spiritual Center to experience the culinary genius of Chef Andrew Jenner. His creativity with leftovers is amazing!

LINWOOD SPIRITUAL CENTER

A ministry of the Sisters of St. Ursula

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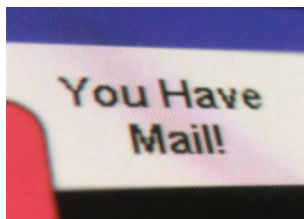
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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
LINWOODSPIRITUALCTR.ORG

We need your e-mail address!



In order for us to better communicate with you, we need your e-mail addresses. This newsletter

will be sent bi-monthly and to aid in cost-effectiveness, it will be sent primarily by e-mail. Also, so that we might update all of your record, please confirm that the address we have is correct or submit any changes it might need and give us your primary phone number. You can do so by:

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Or

Snail mail this form to:

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