

# Life Cycles



Fall 2003

The newsletter of the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

## Board Member Elections 2003

It's election time again for the PNFPN. Please select three new members for our board. Each new member replaces one that has completed his or her term and is scheduled to leave in January, 2004. All nominees have agreed to serve for the next three years and will sign the following pledge:

*As a member of the board of directors of the PNFPN, I recognize that our mission is to inform the public that Natural Family Planning (NFP), a system whereby couples choose natural methods of birth regulation are in accordance with God's order of creation. I believe that couples who practice NFP have stronger, healthier and more permanent marriages.*

*Therefore, while serving on the board of directors of the PNFPN, I agree to promote all methods of Natural Family Planning that recommend abstinence during the couple's fertile phase when seeking to avoid pregnancy for serious reasons. I also agree that I will not recommend or refer couples/clients for contraception, sterilization, abortion, or techniques or drugs that separate the unitive or procreative nature of intercourse, or interfere with the right to life of children in utero.*

Please vote for **three** of the following four candidates

### **James Volpe**

Hello. My name is Jim Volpe and I am running for a position on the board. I have been married to my wife Jen for two years. We had the blessing of receiving training with the Couple to Couple League (CCL) while we were engaged and have been using the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP throughout our marriage. Currently, we are training to be instructors for CCL and we hope to be certified in September. We belong to Mother of Divine Providence Parish in King of Prussia and are members of the Patricians, a club dedicated to learning about the faith. We also run a weekly Bible Study among our friends where I take on the leadership duties. I do have a variety of leadership experience from serving as Vice President of the Newman Club at Penn State and from receiving my Eagle Scout award. As for my formal education, I graduated with my B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Penn State in 2000 and, this past May, I received my Master of Software Engineering from Penn State Great Valley with the help of my employer, Lockheed Martin. To complete the picture of myself, my hobbies include reading, movies,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## *A Message from your President*

At the April PNFPN meeting the Executive board approved a motion that a membership fee be initiated next year. The reasoning was that our ongoing appeals for donations has not brought in much. We struggle to get enough funding just to publish and mail *Life Cycles*, put a few ads in the *Catholic Standard and Times*, plus a few ads in conference brochures. The hope is that by having a fee, we will have more money to spread the good news of NFP. The board is still considering how the fee will be implemented. The current thinking is that fee paying members will elect the Executive board. The mailing list for *Life Cycles* will remain the same. This issue should be finalized at the September 22nd meeting. Voting for this year's Executive Board candidates will still be open to all on the mailing list. However, should the current proposals be adopted, next years candidates will require a membership fee to be paid for a valid vote.

*George Finnin*

# Life Cycles

The newsletter of the Philadelphia  
Natural Family Planning Network  
(PNFPN)

## Life Cycles Staff:

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## Board Members of the PNFPN:

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Sr. Sheila Galligan

Joseph Hare

Cecilia LeChevallier

Rev. Msg. Thomas J. Scanlon

Phyllis Stanton

## Officers of the PNFPN

President: George Finnin

VP: Barbara Rose

Treasurer: Michael Castagno

Secretary: Lester Ruppensberger

## Kudos

To Father Gabin for inviting  
the PNFPN to celebrate its  
5th Anniversary during NFP week  
at St. Dominic Church.

## Welcome New Members:

*Raquel and Lee Friedman  
Bensalem, PA*

*James and Jennifer Volpe  
King of Prussia, PA*

computer games, and working on our house. I ask you to prayerfully consider your vote and cast it according to the will of God. May God bless you with a full quiver and the grace to serve Him.

## Jeannette Williams

My name is Jeannette Williams. I am a homeschooling mother of five children and happily married to Art for nearly 15 years. I have been the coordinator of the Respect Life Group at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Hilltown, for 9 years. I graduated summa cum laude from Villanova with a degree in Finance. I produced a pro-life newsletter for several years, and have recently revived it with a great team of helpers. It is a combination of pro-life and apologetics articles. Being involved in pro-life and a committed Catholic, I know the seriousness of the contraception issue and that it is really the root of all attacks on marriage and family. However, we will not be able to heal this cancer unless we heal the philosophical errors that have bred it. My vision is to help people see the ramifications of the contraceptive mentality by retraining them using the Holy Father's *Theology of the Body* and Fr. Robert Spitzer's *Life Principles*. This retraining should be archdiocesan wide; in the high schools, the marriage prep, parishes, and the *Standard and Times*. We shouldn't just teach NFP as a "natural" contraceptive, but rather as an act of *reverence* for male and female, and a form of worship of God. Perhaps the PNFPN could be a part of that work. If chosen as part of the board, I would encourage PNFPN to work toward this goal.

## Liz Parrish, RN, FCP

My name is Elizabeth Parrish. My husband Scott and I have been married 10

years and we have been blessed with five children, whom we home school. Our family has recently moved here from Washington state as my husband is in the Navy and is stationed at Naval Air Station, Willow Grove. I am originally from the East Coast, so it is nice to be back near family and we are enjoying Pennsylvania very much. I graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Physiology and later earned a second Bachelor of Science degree from San Diego State University in Nursing. I worked as a registered nurse on a women's surgical unit and in the neonatal intensive care. A little over three years ago I was led by the Holy Spirit to attend the Pope Paul VI Institute's Creighton Model FertilityCare™ Practitioner program. It was a rigorous and lengthy program and I was challenged by participating in it while caring for and educating our four children at home. There were times when I had my doubts as to how I was going to accomplish this feat. My husband and I worked together and we thank God that we answered this call to promote Natural Family Planning. Our lives have been changed forever.

We experienced an awakening to God's plan for marriage and the family. Although we were already open to life it suddenly had a much deeper meaning. I feel privileged to be able to share the truths of Natural Family Planning. Ignorance alone accounts for much of the contraceptive mentality and use in our society. I want to educate couples and especially women about the beautiful design of God's plan from the moment of conception until natural

(Continued on page 3)

death. If elected to the PNFPN board, I will bring my experience as a Catholic health care provider and a woman in a marriage of life-giving love.

***Elena LaFrance, PA - C***

I am Elena LaFrance, spouse, proud mother of a newborn daughter, and a certified Physician Assistant. I moved to the Philadelphia area two years ago as a newlywed and recent graduate with a Masters degree as a Physician Assistant from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/Rutgers. Immediately upon moving to this area I sought out an OB/GYN familiar with Natural Family Planning (NFP) for two reasons. First, I was pregnant and, second, to find out how to become more involved in promoting NFP. I was fortunate to find a doctor who fit the description and he quickly connected me with one of the board members of the PNFPN.

My first encounter with NFP was as a curious teenager listening to my oldest sister discussing the topic with my mother. I very soon realized, again thanks to my sister, that contraception was not an option for us as practicing Catholics so I began asking questions about the Church's teaching. I have since caught the contagious fervor that comes with the excitement of learning, understanding, and teaching this basic truth about love and family.

As an engaged couple, my husband and I were taught the Sympto-Thermal Method by the Couple to Couple League. I also decided to make NFP the topic of my Masters Project both so that I could learn more about the science/research behind it and to spread the information to those around me.

This experience helped me realize the widespread ignorance medical professionals have on this topic. For this main

reason, I am running for the Board of Directors of the PNFPN. I would like to become more actively involved in spreading the good news and correcting many of the common misconceptions on this topic. Specifically, one of my goals is to target popular reading materials and reputable publications in correcting erroneous NFP information. The local hospital maternity wards are a good place to start. Thank you for the nomination and consideration for a position on the Board.

***God's Little Blessings***

Brenna Leigh  
born July 14th to  
Stephanie and Joe  
Schoenleber

Here's your official PNFPN ballot.  
Please vote for **three**, clip this out and mail it back  
to Mr. George Finnin at:

3842 Lywiski Road  
Collegeville, PA 19426-1025

- Elena LaFrance, PA – C*
- Liz Parrish, RN, FCP*
- James Volpe*
- Jeannette Williams*

# A Homily from NFP Week



The following homily was given to the St. Dominic parish community at a Mass to celebrate the PNFPN's fifth anniversary and the end of NFP week. Special thanks goes to Father Gabin for courageously speaking from the pulpit.

*A little while ago I visited a mother in the hospital who had just delivered her fourth child. She and her husband were thrilled. But she told me that during her pregnancy several people had said to her "you're crazy to have another baby!" "You belong on the pill."*

*Children are the supreme gift of marriage. What wonderful blessings they are. Parents have the tremendous opportunity to cooperate with God to bring children into the world and form them for society, for the Church and for heaven. And yet parents know what a real sacrifice and challeng-*

*ing work it is to raise children the right way.*

*Husbands and wives should decide with God, in a spirit of responsibility and generosity, how many children to have. The method of family planning is among the most important decisions spouses make. The world, of course, promotes contraception, sterilization and even abortion as the only sane and reliable methods to avoid conception and regulate birth.*

*As baptized Christians, husbands and wives pledge on their wedding day to be a living sign of Christ's love for the Church. They seal this pledge in their public consent to three vows: to permanence, to faithfulness and to openness to becoming parents. In this way, they cooperate with God's design for marital love and their children become a living sign of their covenant.*

*Unlike contraception, the very reliable, safe and moral methods of Natural Family Planning are entirely open to life. Never does the*

*couple using Natural Family Planning close their sexual acts to the Lord and Giver of life. God remains God.*

*Far from being just another technique of avoiding children, (and it is not the old rhythm method) Natural Family Planning fosters those virtues that bring spouses into the right relationship with the Lord and with one another. This is certainly to be promoted to the ends of the earth.*

*In the words of Pope John Paul: "using the natural methods requires and strengthens the harmony of the married couple, it helps and confirms the rediscovery of the marvelous gift of parenthood, it involves respect for nature and demands the responsibility of the individuals"*

*This week is Natural Family Planning Awareness Week. The two classes to learn and practice NFP will be held right here at St. Dominic on August 14th and 21st. Call the Family Life Office at 610-660-9002 to register.*

# The “Net” works

## Fertility Appreciation Classes Scheduled

A Mother/Daughter Fertility Appreciation date TBA (sometime late 2003) in the New Brunswick, NJ area. It is open to girls ages 13 - 15 and their mothers. There is a \$15.00 registration fee per daughter. Mothers attend free. For more information, please call Rosemary Kerns: 732-745-8600 ext. 8862.

## NFP Teacher Training Course

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is sponsoring a STM method NFP class for instructors this year. The class dates will be announced in September. This will require an interview to determine eligibility and a two weekend commitment for training. For more details please call Lisann Castagno at 610-660-9002 ext: 20

## NFP CLASSES SCHEDULED

### Pennsylvania

September 2 – Perkasio

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and NaProTechnology, a means of monitoring one's reproductive and gynecologic health. Applicable to all reproductive categories including breastfeeding and pre-menopause. In addition to achieving or avoiding pregnancy, this system can help in evaluation and treatment of infertility, repetitive miscarriage, abnormal bleeding, ovarian cysts, pelvic pain, PMS and perimenopausal symptoms.

Individual follow up instruction for a fee is available from a FertilityCare Practitioner. Referrals are available to specially trained Creighton Model NFP Medical Consultants in the area who utilize NaPro Technology, a new reproductive medical and surgical science.

Please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at 215-249-9829 for more information or registration.

September 3 – Limerick

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Elizabeth Kauffeld, FCPI at 610-495-8821.

September 5 – Media

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Couple to Couple League will be held at Nativity BVM, Franklin & Monroe Sts. This is a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. For directions and registration call Joe or Maria Hare 610-544-2349

September 5 – Paoli

A Sympto-Thermal method NFP class by the Couple to Couple League will be held at St. Norbert Parrish, Route 252 near Route 30. This is a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. For information or to register please call Michele or Chris Szupica 610-408-8447.

September 11 – Oreland

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Barbara Rose, RN, FCPI at 215-884-2922.

September 23 – Downingtown

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology to be held at St. Joseph Church in Downingtown. See above for details. To register please call Dorice Millar, RN, FCPI at 610-873- 8334.

October 2 – Limerick

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Elizabeth Kauffeld,FCPI at 610-495-8821.

October 7 – Perkasio

Free introductory session of the

Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at 215-249-9829

October 9 - West Grove

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning at Assumption BVM. For more information or registration please call 610-660-9002.

November 4 – Perkasio

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at 215-249-9829.

November 7 – Limerick

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Elizabeth Kauffeld,FCPI at 610-495-8821.

November 11 - Langhorne

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning at St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne-Newtown Roads. For more information or registration please call 610-660-9002.

December 2 – Perkasio

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at 215-249-9829

December 3 – Limerick

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System and Napro Technology. See above for details. To register please call Elizabeth Kauffeld, FCPI at 610-495-8821

(Continued on page 6)

December 4 - Meadowbrook  
The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning at Holy Redeemer Hospital, 1648 Huntingdon Pk. For more information or registration please call 610-660-9002.

## New Jersey

The following classes listed are sponsored by the Camden Diocese. Each course is taught in a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. Course fee is \$ 70 per couple which includes all materials, charts and bi-monthly magazine. Preregistration is requested. For information call: (856) 756 - 7900 ext. 6315 or email: nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org

September 8; 7:00 – 9:30 PM at  
St. Mary Church, Williamstown

October 21; 7:00- 9:30 PM at  
St. Vincent Pallotti Church, Haddon Township

November 13; 7:45 - 10 PM at  
St. Andrew Church in Gibbsboro

## PNFPN Conference planned for March 6, 2004

We had such a fabulous conference in March that the board decided to make it an annual event. The conference date has been set for Saturday, March 6, 2004 and it will be held once again at St. Mary's hospital in Langhorne. The committee is seeking volunteers to ensure that our 2004 conference is a huge success. Please contact Betty and Lester Ruppertsburger at 215-321-6698 or Michael Castagno at 215-885-8388.

# LIFE CYCLES UPDATE: Just how well did we do?

Remember in last year's summer issue of *Life Cycles*, when we asked just how well we were doing in promoting NFP?

At that time our calculations resulted in a total of 186 couples that were instructed in NFP for the entire Philadelphia and the Southern NJ region. We promised our readers that we would return to this question of how well we were doing with another survey of area NFP instructors and a look at the number of couples attending classes. Here is a report from NFP instructors throughout the area with their statistics and comments.

Maria and Joe Hare are the regional coordinators of the Couple to Couple League (CCL) for our area and have been instructors for nine years. According to Maria Hare, she and Joe taught two series of classes for the period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. The readers should remember that a "class series" with the CCL program is defined as four classes, each about a month apart.

*"We taught seventeen couples with the following breakdown", says Maria, "twelve referred by a member of the clergy, three from friend/family, one from the internet, and one from CCL Central in Cincinnati. I recruited one couple for teacher training during the same period of time."*

Much of the Hare's success is due to the fact that their parish priest has

embraced the idea of making the CCL course mandatory for engaged couples.

The classes review the theology behind NFP and the benefits of the NFP lifestyle. Joe says, "Living the NFP lifestyle opens up lines of communication between spouses that ordinarily might not be there. Great communication is important to the long term success of marriages. Our priest considers our class an inexpensive marriage-insurance policy!"

"Four additional couples were instructed by the other active CCL teachers in the Philadelphia region" Joe Hare says, "It takes several years for new teaching couples to get established in this area. Soon they will be enjoying the larger class sizes that come from word-of-mouth recommendations and name recognition."

Cecilia LeChevallier, NFP program coordinator for the Camden diocese informed us that sixty one couples attended sessions from the same June 30, 2002 to July 1, 2003 time period. Of those couples, twenty nine of them were engaged to be married.

Cecilia was proud to inform us that the Camden diocese offers both a course specifically designed for couples attempting to achieve pregnancy and a course for couples that speak Spanish.

At this same time last year, The Family of the Americas Foundation (FAF), was the only organization in the Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey region providing instruction in the ovulation method. Since then, the only two certified instructors for the FAF have left

*(Continued on page 7)*

the program and are now training to become FertilityCare™ Practitioners for the Creighton Model FertilityCare system. Says Dorice Millar, a FertilityCare practitioner intern (FCP): “At the present time, I have thirty-nine clients (couples) and I’m not teaching any additional people for the next few months so that I can effectively manage my caseload.” Dorice is referring couples who inquirer about the Creighton model to the other FertilityCare practitioner and FertilityCare practitioner interns in the area.

Among the four Creighton Model FertilityCare practitioners and interns there is a total of 57 couples receiving instruction. The readers are reminded that, in the Creighton Model, couples are followed up for their entire reproductive lives. When statistics are reported, it is the number of new

clients that are entering the program of instruction and not the total number of clients being followed. Each FCP records this data in monthly census reports. Information from their clients’ confidential records is sometimes utilized in ongoing research for the Pope Paul Institute.

*According to the Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, there have been 65 couples attending NFP classes from June 2002 to June 2003. “I just want to say that in our classes this year probably three couples have told us that they came because of the network!”*

*“Thank you!” says Lisann Castagno, NFP coordinator.*

So there you have it. The final tally is 204 couples attending NFP classes in the Philadelphia region and Southern NJ since last year. That’s an increase of 18 couples! Of course, class attendance is only one indicator of how well we are promoting NFP in our region. What measures of success can you think of for the network? How well have you been promoting NFP? Please consider sharing your promotion ideas and successes with other members of the PNFPN. Just write to P.O. Box 220 Jenkintown, PA or e-mail our president at gfinnin.icdc.com

## *Become a Member of the PNFPN*

*Ever stop to consider what would be possible if more people understood the gift God gave us in our cyclic fertility? If you are excited about bringing knowledge of this tremendous gift to others, please join us. You can share more of your talents by agreeing to be listed in our directory.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession or association with NFP: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clergy, laity, couple, healthcare professional, promoter, pro-life advocate, etc.)

Are you a member of an organization that provides instruction in NFP?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Archdiocese Family Life Office, C.C.L., Family of the Americas, or other)

Would you agree to have your name, address and phone # listed in a directory for PNFPN members only?  Yes  No

Any additional information or comments \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: George and Eileen Finnin  
3842 Lywiski Road  
Collegeville, PA 19426-1025

## *Our Ongoing Appeal*

*God bless you for your generosity*

\$ 5       \$ 10       \$ 15      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your contribution to PNFPN, P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046. The PNFPN is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization.

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