



RSHM Highlights

Eastern American Area

Winter 2022

Visitation in a New Key...

As many of you know, the RSHM are an International Institute that at the present time has seven “Areas” (formerly Provinces/Regions). Each of these Areas (Brazil, Portugal, Eastern American, Western American, Mozambique, Northern European and Zambezi) has its own governance united under the Institute Leadership Team and Institute Leader, Sr. Margaret Fielding, RSHM. By 2025 we hope to have one unit of governance to take account of our changing demographics, sharing our resources of personnel and material possessions as we continue to carry out the mission of our Institute in a changing world.

It has been our tradition that the Institute Leadership Team, or members thereof, visit each one of the Areas to support the Area communities/ministries and to come to a better understanding of community circumstances in Church and society. The new Institute Team (as of the General Chapter of August 2019) planned to carry out this visitation, but then came COVID-19...

We found ourselves in solidarity with the whole world community as we tried to cope with the illness itself amongst some of our members, with the crisis in our healthcare systems, with the restrictions placed on travel, and with the various experiences of “lockdown.” Our Generalate visitation of necessity had to take on another shape. We, like so many others, became proficient with Zoom which allowed us to keep in touch with one another, with the people we serve and with the Institute Leadership Team. Rather than travel here to the United States, they arranged for Zoom visits with small groups of sisters throughout the Area. While at first it seemed to be a daunting task, in the end the entire Leadership Team got to know the local communities in a way we had not experienced before.

In their report back to us at the end of the visitation, they reflected the impact we had experienced during this time of uncertainty, suffering and loss. Yet it was clear to them that we had also experienced these last two years as times of grace as well. We were at the giving and receiving end of offers of support, care, and meal-sharing in time of lockdown. In some cases, our ministries changed the nature of their service but continued to be God’s presence to those in need. The Leadership Team expressed their appreciation for the sisters’ deep faith in God, resilience, creativity and commitment to our mission. In spite of the limitations of the pandemic, we experienced ourselves within the web of the great human family, and “together with our Collaborators, many congregations and other organizations, we continue to help to bring healing and wholeness to our human family and our planet” (Institute Leadership Team’s report, November 1, 2021).

While we are all desperately hoping to “get back to normal,” we share with the rest of society the reality that we are in a “new normal.” We continue to struggle



L to R: Councilors Sipiwi Phiri, RSHM; Ana Luisa Pinto, RSHM; Maria Aparecida Moreira (Pare), RSHM; and Margaret Fielding, RSHM, Institute Leader

with the complexities and adaptability of this virus. New variants arrive on the scene and remind us of our fragility and the limits of our knowledge, care and concern for the global “other.” The gap between the rich and poor continues to be reflected in the ability to have access to vaccines, even while some of those who have access refuse the vaccines for a variety of reasons.

We end by expressing our gratitude to all of you who reached out to us, and we hope you have experienced our support through our ministry of prayer and the outreach programs we are still able to provide.

Catherine Vincie, RSHM

Ministering to Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters

Like the chance traveler in the parable (The Good Samaritan) we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate, and lift up the fallen. (Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, #71)

I make bold to quote Pope Francis, that great champion of immigrants. It is not a boast, but a humble affirmation that the work here at Centro Corazón de Maria is all about including, integrating, and lifting up our Latino immigrant brothers and sisters. Hampton Bays, Long Island is 30% Latino and the elementary school enrollment is 66% Latino. The support of the RSHM and their benefactors is what makes it possible to do the work. We are all connected.

The ministry is threefold. First, as part of the long and strong tradition of the RSHM, we offer a space for education. English as a Second Language (ESL) is the anchor of that educational effort, with 30 to 40 women participating twice a week in the morning classes from Monday to Thursday. Since most students are young mothers, short skills classes are also offered from October to April in partnership with other agencies. Excellent bilingual professionals come to lecture or give hands-on practice in nutrition, parenting skills, civic engagement, workers' rights, and other topics as needed. Of course, where there are moms there are kids! All classes have childcare provision. Our skilled and loving childcare workers are paid for their work - a provision that not only assures the stability of the workers, but also provides the women who work with us a satisfying way to use their skills and contribute to their own immigrant neighbors' needs.

The second component is a drop-in center staffed by a counselor and a social worker. We screen each person and evaluate needs. We provide short-term counseling; facilitate communication between parents and local schools; negotiate hospital and utility bills; fund and administer an emergency cash assistance program; and handle applications for government programs such as SNAP. We logged 850 in-person visits last year, despite the pandemic. This year we are on track to greatly surpass that number. This is partly due to our participation in the New York State "Excluded Workers Fund" which gave a subsidy of \$15,600 to qualified workers who lost work during the pandemic but did not qualify for unemployment benefits. Through a New York State grant, we screened 170 candidates for the benefit. More than 80 met the rigorous state criteria.

The third component of our work is advocacy. For example, Centro Corazón was an active member of the coalition that pressed the New York State legislature to allocate money for the "Excluded Workers Fund." We served those excluded workers during the dark months of 2020. Their income simply collapsed from one day to the next. Immigrants who work in landscaping, restaurants, childcare, food markets, healthcare, housecleaning, laundries - essential workers who do not have work permits - were unable to qualify for unemployment benefits. The grave injustice touches upon the complex question of immigration reform. So often I wish that more people understood the struggle and uncertainty our immigrant brothers and sisters bear! Yes, it is a complex issue, but as Pope Francis often reminds us, the plight of immigrants calls out for just solutions. Meanwhile, counting on your prayers and solidarity, we strive to make a difference, confident that our efforts give hope and encouragement to those we serve.



Women from ESL class receive their first semester certificate of achievement.



Students' children enjoy Santa's visit.



Staff, volunteers and RSHM board members enjoy Christmas lunch together.



Wee participants in children's program explore colors and shapes.

Mary Beth Moore, SC

Sr. Mary Beth is a Sister of Charity who joined Centro Corazón de Maria in 2010. She has been Executive Director since 2018.

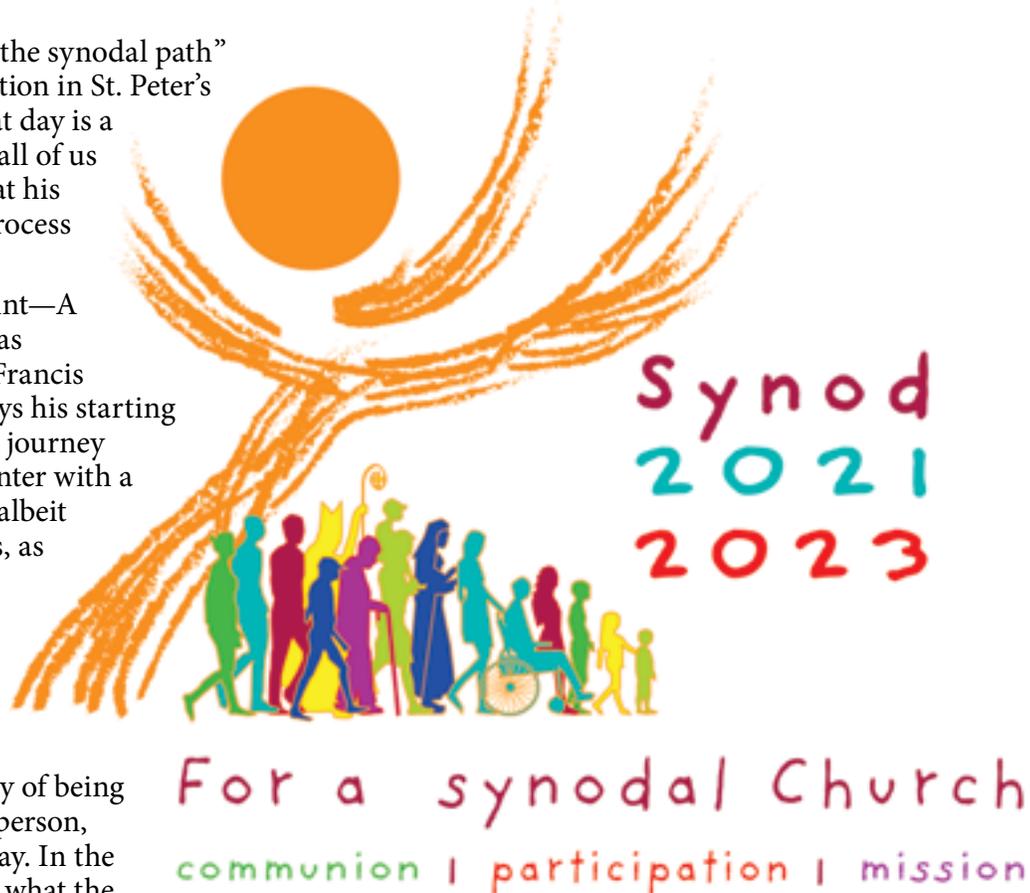
Signs of the Times

Pope Francis formally opened “the synodal path” during the Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter’s on October 10. His homily that day is a treasure, inspiring and challenging all of us in the Catholic Church. I believe that his method in the homily models the process he is proposing for the synod.

He uses Mark 10:17 as a starting point—A certain rich man came up to Jesus “as he was setting out on the journey.” Francis meditates on the Gospel story (always his starting point), and notices that Jesus is on a journey when he has this unexpected encounter with a rich man (who is also on a journey, albeit a spiritual one). Francis speaks to us, as he so often does, of encounter with the other, the stranger, the seeker, the person on the margins. He notices how Jesus listens to the man, hears and receives his heartfelt desire “to inherit eternal life.” Jesus gives that man the dignity of being heard and welcomed; he values the person, his experience, and what he has to say. In the Gospel account, Jesus then discerns what the rich man needs for his journey of faith. Francis says “Jesus encourages him to look within, in the light of the love that the Lord himself had shown by his gaze (cf. v.21), and to discern in that light what his heart truly treasures.” If we truly believe that the Spirit of God dwells in each and every one of us, we can believe that our (and their) deepest desires lead us to fullness of life, life with God. And so he asks the rich man to “look within . . . and to discern . . . what his heart truly treasures.”

Clearly this way of proceeding is not our usual American way. This is not the process we use in our legislatures and in our political life. There is an old quip that God asks us to solve problems by praying, then considering the issues, and then acting, in that order; but we are often more inclined to act quickly and instinctively, then to think about what we have done, and then to pray that we were right! However, many religious congregations, including us RSHM, have used this type of process for General Chapters since Vatican II. We can attest that while it isn’t the most efficient way, it is very effective and life-giving.

For many, the very term “synod” is new, even though it has ancient roots in the history of the church.



Traditionally it refers to a meeting of bishops to discern and decide ecclesial questions. Francis, however, has coined a new word, “synodality,” that escapes easy definition and pushes the whole church to ponder anew what he means and what he is about as he leads the church of today and as he opens the “synodal path” to the future.

I find it somewhat humorous that the International Theological Commission was asked to define synodality in 2018. They offered: Synodality is “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.” I suspect that Pope Francis does not care a great deal about defining the term. He is interested in getting us moving, together, empowered by the Holy Spirit, in discovering together what God is asking of us today. Francis is asking us to enter into the challenge of really encountering one another, especially those most often unseen and unheard. He is proposing an adventure, a movement into the unknown and seemingly mysterious future, secure in the promise of Jesus -- “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (MT 28:20).” He invites us to *Encounter*, to *Listen*, and to *Discern*.

Catherine Patten, RSHM



On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Marymount International School, His Holiness Pope Francis sends congratulations and grateful good wishes to the entire school community. His Holiness trusts that this significant occasion will foster renewed dedication to the school's founding mission of inspiring the young to develop their God-given gifts of mind and heart. Through their pursuit of knowledge and wisdom may they commit themselves generously to the service of others and contribute to the building of a world of authentic justice, fraternity and peace.

Luigi Roberto Lorenzini
Pope Francis



MARYMOUNT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ROME joyfully celebrated its 75th anniversary on October 14-15, 2021. The whole community gathered on the first day for a beautiful liturgy, including priests of St. Paul's Parish and the Pontifical Scots College, RSHM sisters, members of the Board of Regents, families, staff, past and present students. His Eminence Cardinal James Harvey presided. "What a wonderful occasion to be back at Marymount and be able to relive memories from my years here," commented Elizabeth Boon, 1955 graduate.

Marymount also received a letter from Pope Francis recognizing the school's mission and its deep commitment to the transformation of the world for excellence and for good, perfectly capturing the spirit of our community.

Cardinal Harvey's inspiring homily commemorated the seventy-five years of Marymount in Rome, beginning with a reflection on how the RSHM founded the school when Italy was just starting to recover from the turmoil, suffering and confusion that marked the end of the WWII.

The sisters imbued the school with the RSHM mission to enable students to know and love God, to make God known and loved, and to proclaim that Jesus Christ has come in order "that all may have life." With the invaluable help of dedicated teachers, the sisters continue to provide this path that leads students to loving God, themselves, and others while being inclusive of students of all faiths "in order to appreciate the many achievements of the world and advance beyond mere knowledge to wisdom by searching for God." Gratitude was expressed for all those RSHM, teachers, and staff members, both in the past and the present, who helped and continue to help our students to grow in "learning to love and loving to learn."

"I was very moved by the extraordinary sense of thanksgiving and joy communicated by all those present at the Mass. From the youngest members of the elementary school to our most senior students there was a powerful collective sense of communion," said Sarah Gallagher, Headmistress.

Celebrates 75th Anniversary

The Mass was interspersed with the hymns sung by our 75th Anniversary Choir who had prepared for the occasion on two recent choral retreats at the Monastery of Santa Scolastica in nearby Subiaco. The intensive choral workshops featured a superb musical repertoire that included: *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*; *Gloria*; *Ave Verum Corpus*; *Memorial Acclamation*; *Lamb of God*; *That All May Have Life* and more.

“It was so special to be able to gather as a whole community to celebrate Marymount’s 75th anniversary, which made me even more proud to be part of this great family,” said Marco Valerio Mannocchi, Student Council President and Grade 12 student.

The second day focused on Marymount’s internationalism. Throughout the years of Marymount’s history, the school has had the privilege of hosting families from almost every nation on earth. Now, with students from over 70 countries, the number of languages spoken on campus and occasions for cross-cultural learning have grown and with it the opportunity for a deeper sense of unity through diversity. There was a palpable feeling of excitement on this day with an exceptional array of international food stands organized by parents, in addition to a full schedule of games, dance, and sports including a friendly staff vs high school students kickball contest!

“The international food stands really highlighted the diversity of our incredible multicultural community and our students greatly enjoyed tasting dishes from all over the world,” commented Helen Davico, Elementary School Principal.

As we commemorate 75 years of Marymount in Rome, we reflect once again on how the school remains true to its core commitment: offering international and local students a transformative educational experience, where their academic journey is supported and enhanced by a desire to celebrate God’s love, responding generously to the needs of the world and promoting justice and dignity for all.

*Vivian Barsanti, Digital Marketing Manager
Marymount International School, Rome*



Since the RSHM LIFE Center's Immigration Legal Services Program began in 2013, immigration attorney Kelly Carpenter, RSHM, and her staff have provided legal services for vulnerable, low-income immigrant families. One of those services is the naturalization application process. In 2021 alone, 70 clients became naturalized citizens. They came from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Yemen.

I became involved when Sr. Kelly invited me to prepare clients for their naturalization interviews and tests. Evelyn Rios, the LIFE Center's Legal Services' full-time paralegal, is in charge of the naturalization cases and provided guidance. So, over the past year or more, I have met via Zoom with about 24 clients, usually three or four times each.

After submitting a 20-page Application for Naturalization, a person is called for an appointment at the US Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at Federal Plaza. That, in itself, is intimidating. I try to prepare them for what it will be like, and to be sure they have all the necessary documents.

One part of the interview is a review of the application. Some of that isn't difficult—basic biographical information. But there are also 50 questions asking about affiliations with various groups and organizations, and personal questions about one's behavior and character. Many clients speak English as a second language, and words such as "totalitarian," "vigilante," "guerrilla," and "genocide" aren't easy when they are nervous and asked to explain their answers. I have created a vocabulary guide for them.

Another part of the interview consists of reading and writing in English, based on vocabulary lists available to applicants, and I practice with them. At the interview, they have to write (not type) on a tablet. I always tell them to print, since we knew of one person who had failed because she wrote in script, and the officer said he could not read her handwriting.



Evelyn Rios and Sr. Joanne Safian, RSHM, with one of our new citizens.

Finally, there is the Civics (US History and Government) test. Of 100 possible questions, they are asked no more than 10 and have to get 6 right. The questions cover principles of democracy, the system of government, rights and responsibilities, American history, geography, and culture. When I first looked at the study guide, I was relieved that I knew all the answers except the exact number of members in the US House of Representatives (it's 435). I wonder, however, how many citizens born in the US would know most of the answers. The clients have studied hard and do well as we review. The main challenge occurs if they know the answers, but don't have an overall context, for example, that questions about slavery, the Civil War, Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation are all interrelated.

The six years I lived in Italy have given me great admiration for what these clients have accomplished. We did not have to pass a test for our *permesso di soggiorno* (temporary residency permit), and I had gone to Italian school and had a level A2 certificate (functional Italian), but it was still somewhat stressful to go through even the *soggiorno* process every two years. The clients I have helped prepare for their interviews have worked so hard, and fortunately, all who spent time with me thus far have passed; I have been greatly relieved and very happy for them. They will be wonderful US citizens!

Joanne Safian, RSHM

Those of us who have spent our careers in educational institutions know well that technology changes our lives – AND our classrooms, presenting new opportunities as well as challenges. The ubiquitous cellphone, for example, enables anyone to record scenes whenever and wherever. As a result, video clips of police killing unarmed Black men shocked the nation, provoking a public outcry and a new awareness of realities far too long out of sight and mind. This raised consciousness led our university president to issue an urgent call: together turn our attention to the study of race relations and to reflect on how to respond in a faith that does justice.

It was that call that inspired me to design an undergraduate course that would combine my expertise in biblical studies with my interests in gender, power, and privilege, with a sharpened focus on racialized difference. Three years of interdisciplinary study of race produced *The Bible, Spirituality, and American Public Life*, an elective that enrolls students from multiple majors who, although not racially and ethnically diverse, are preparing for diverse professions: healthcare, law, social work, journalism, counseling, advertising, computer and environmental sciences. Reflective of our Jesuit identity and mission, the course explores the link between Christian spirituality and justice by examination of the realities of American public life at the intersection of race, gender, and economics. The overarching

goal is to develop our capacity for “spirited citizenship,” which we define as “the conscious effort to live the rights and responsibilities of one’s citizenship ‘inSPIRITed’ by the ideals on which our country was founded and by the biblical vision that is the foundation of Christian faith.”



Poster exhibit in Creighton University library during Black History Month.

The course is an in-depth investigation of racialized disparities in three interrelated systems: the economic, healthcare, and criminal justice systems, with a focus on Black women’s experiences. Students self-select which disparities they want to study, then pursue their questions in teams. As required by the core curriculum, teams use data searches on the internet in order to learn how to differentiate reputable sources of information from the misinformation served up in social media. Colleagues and I lay the historical groundwork by lecturing on the economic motives at work in the creation of “race,” which conveniently “justified” slavery and later Jim Crow laws.

Because the learning opportunities that higher education affords are not available to everyone, we share “highlights” of our learning in a final class project. Inspired by a course I took at Marymount in the 70s, Roger Panetta’s *American Cultural History*, in which we produced multimedia presentations, I require each team to use digital technologies to produce materials about racialized disparities, including personal reflections on the call to respond as “spirited citizens.” The first such project, illustrated in the photo above, was a poster exhibit that hung in the library during Black History Month. This project involved learning how to create the “augmented reality” that museums now use in exhibits, then embed them in each poster. Future plans include putting our digital technology skills to the service of the Great Plains Black History Museum in the African American neighborhood north of campus.

In a closing ritual each of us share what this course has meant to us and what our own action step will be as “spirited citizens.” As I listen to each, I am deeply gratified, but more so grateful, as memories of my own undergraduate education call to mind those who prepared me for this profession: my mentor Ellen Marie Keane, RSHM, Frank Demers with whom I studied sociology of religion, and Roger Panetta, whose creative pedagogy has inspired my efforts for decades. I do what I do in this course thanks to them . . . and the cellphone. Deo gratias!

Susan Calef, Ph.D., Director of Women’s and Gender Studies, Creighton University

HIGHLIGHTS PUZZLE: Heavenly Host

Themed clues in this puzzle refer to particular angels in scripture, tradition or fable. Answers are posted at www.rshh-east.org/rshh-highlights

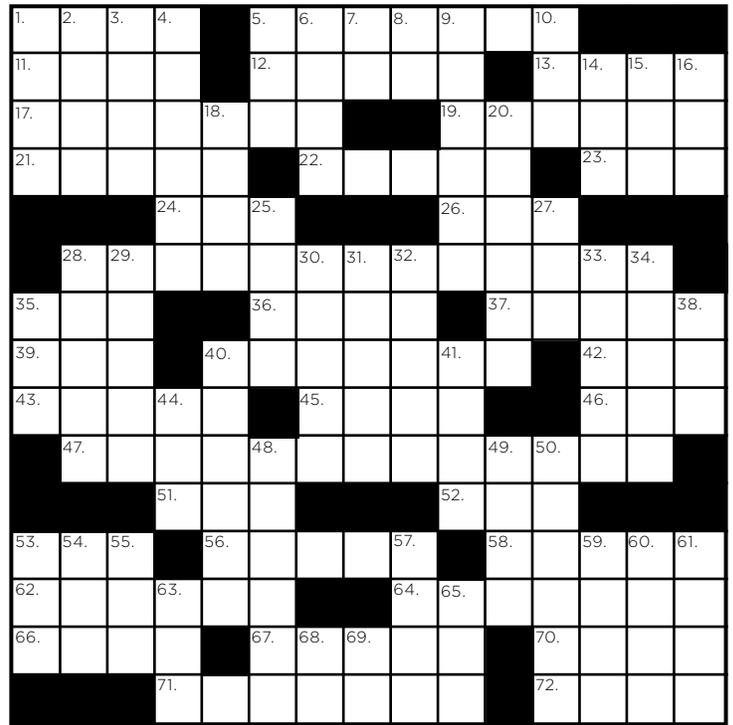
Across

1. Wise one or herb
5. *Fallen angel*
11. Ever and _____, quaint expression
12. Brief response to "Did you get Section I or II?"
13. Delete last step
17. *Angel of the Annunciation*
19. Beautiful Jewish wife of Persian king
21. Otherwise known as
22. It will cause a rising
23. Be prone
24. Princess and the _____
26. Best
28. *Titular figure in popular children's book*
35. _____ Cheney, movie actor and director
36. First part of a drama
37. _____ de Valera, Irish statesman
39. Roman numeral 7
40. Ended
42. Condition involving obsession and compulsion, abbr.
43. Ancient people of Peru
45. One with pants on fire
46. Greek letter T
47. *Protective spirit for each individual person*
51. Go quickly (archaic)
52. _____ for two
53. Japanese article of clothing
56. Alternate course of action
58. Where 'company' ends, before 'crowd' begins
62. Drug group
64. *Angel who healed Tobias*
66. Scarlett's home
67. Outdoor space at home

70. Volcano in Sicily
71. *Archangel victorious in battle against Satan*
72. Runs from Q to U

Down

1. Long story
2. Having a fussy, meticulous personality
3. _____ Desert in East Asia
4. In a state of awe
5. Prevaricate
6. Like the shunned baby duckling
7. Care of, abbr.
8. What you don't want to be in a game of tag
9. Celebration in Barcelona
10. You need a new approach to get out of it
14. Islanders' league, abbr.
15. Lamb of God, Agnus _____
16. Find for a gold digger
18. Confucius: "From the age of fifteen, _____ (2 words) my heart on wisdom"
20. High on drugs
25. Where a scientist works
27. Tiger's tournament
28. Tributary of the Seine
29. Under critical care, briefly
30. Some outbreaks of this bacterial infection have been associated with yogurt
31. Narrow bands
32. Giant
33. Gush
34. Not global



35. Roman Numeral 56
38. Sch. of the Fighting Irish
40. Equally mature
41. Part of QED
44. Doctor's words: Open and say _____
48. Particular personal computer, briefly
49. Type of tide
50. Assemble
53. Halloween mo.
54. Sheep talk
55. Abbr. on the tag of a discounted item, perhaps
57. Popular French cheese
59. Does some needlework
60. Left
61. Greetings in Madrid
63. Scottish cap
65. Preceder of dot com, perhaps
68. Exclamation of surprise or pleasure
69. British expression of thanks

Bea McMahon, RSHM

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50 Wilson Park Drive
Tarrytown, NY 10591

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