

# TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



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## WORK AND JUSTICE: A CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT

by Ellen Adams

Our Clarification of Thought series this spring was on “Work and the Future of the Earth.” Corporations and governments have less regard than ever for the environment and people in the new millennium. A lot of people no longer have job security. Young people are not getting the jobs they need to live independently. The series dealt with how these changes define our work in 2012.

Anne Scheibner opened the series by dividing a chart in half and asking us to give a personal example of work for one side and toil for the other. Some of us gave different examples for work and toil but most of us gave examples of when our attitude changed from work to toil. Sometimes this change occurred because of the physical labor involved or because of the duration or the magnitude of a project. For most of us, however, the change came when we lost our sense of ownership and autonomy, when someone else started telling us when, how or what we were to do. When the values or agendas of our supervisors were different from our own, work became toil.

The concept of being your own boss was echoed by Peg Moran when she led her sessions on entrepreneurship and sustainable agriculture. (See her lead article “Entrepreneurship as Passionate Vocation” in the Eastertide 2012 *Troubadour*.) I was surprised by the number of people present who had had a business. Most people had the experience of being their own boss or in charge of a project at some time during their life. We discussed the joys and pitfalls of being the one responsible for the work getting done.

Laura Burfoot, who lived at St. Francis House in 2005, asked us to consider work as a response to an unjust society. All faiths call their members to promote justice, peace and love. “(God) has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness; and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) Both of Laura’s presentations dealt with justice issues. She first talked about immigration and the fact that many immigrants come to this country because they can’t survive in their own countries due to American economic policies. She used El Salvador where she lived as a student last year as an example. The Free Trade Agreement has dumped American made goods into El Salvador’s market and the farmers and industries can’t compete. Coffee, their major export, costs more there than here. The banks in El Salvador are owned by outsiders. Factory workers are locked in and when they try to organize for better conditions they are threatened or killed. She also told us that documented and undocumented workers in Alabama and Arizona are leaving the crops on the vines and fleeing because of the new immigration policies in those states. The owners can’t find any one to harvest their crops. A lot of our immigration policies pit people against people.

Laura led a second session about youth in general and those in New London in particular. She asked us to describe today's youth and talked about age oppression. She told about a training that she helped lead recently at the Voluntown Peace Trust. There were 30 participants, ages 12 – 24. It was a racially and ethnically diverse group with a 2 to 1 female to male ratio. They used a tree metaphor to look at the problems, the roots of the problems and the fruit those problems bore. Some of the problems named were the institutional racism and cultural bias experienced in the educational system; violence, bullying and gang war zones; teen pregnancy and many students with STD's; poverty, homelessness and addictions. Laura told us that the young people had come up with solutions. They need adults to support and empower them but not to take over the work. They had learned the six steps of nonviolence – gathering information from all sides, educating themselves and others, making a personal commitment, negotiations, direct action and reconciliation – a win/win result. Some of them will be learning to do interviews this summer. Then they will ask New London High School students and recent graduates about their experience in the school system. Laura asked us to support these young people. People working with people, instead of people working against people.

Frida Berrigan and Patrick Sheehan-Gaumer also talked about justice work –peace work and gender discrimination. Frida worked for an organization that promotes disarmament and Patrick worked for peace by not supporting the government's military budget. He does this by keeping his income below the amount that is taxed. Patrick works with fathers to help them understand both their responsibilities and rights.

Anne's second session was about justice issues related to genetic engineering and economics. She talked about how people are being treated as consumers and commodities. Anne also talked about environmental justice. She used the story of bees being trucked thousands of miles to pollinate monoculture almond trees in California as an example of how we are killing our world and justifying such actions as economic necessity.

During the last session, the concept of vocation was discussed. Ed Rodman's definition of vocation, "where the deepest desire of your heart meets the deepest need of your community," had been quoted at a lot of the sessions. (See "Building the Beloved Community," Ed Rodman in the Spring 2008 *Troubadour*.) I shared the Reformation theologian John Calvin's concept of vocations: *vocation universalis*, a call extended to all people and *vocation specialis*, a call extended to individuals. We talked about how we chose the areas of justice to work on and how the specific work we do changes over time. Frida and Patrick were both brought up in families that have dedicated their lives to peace efforts and so perhaps they inherited that work. Some of us choose our work because of life experience. Laura had reflected on the difference between the education she received in New London and the education some of her classmates received and decided to work on making the system more accessible to all. Realizing that many of the New London youth speak Spanish took her to El Salvador to learn the language and that is where she learned about the immigration issues.

Jobs and work can no longer even pretend to be synonyms. Bennett J. Sims, founder of the Institute for Servant Leadership says, "A job is something somebody else defines. Work is something you define for yourself." This concept was born out at the last session when the participants were asked to give an example of work they found rewarding. Everyone gave an example of making a difference in one or more lives. Monetary compensation was not an issue; the knowledge that someone was helped was what mattered. Discussing what we really value led to the idea of doing the fall series on "What is 'the Good Life'?" We will talk about how we define "the good life" and how we go about living it. Stay tuned!

Ellen Adams is an Episcopal deacon, retired school teacher and secretary of the St. Francis House board. She is an active member of the SFH extended community.



# EUNICE McLEAN WALLER

JUNE 29, 1921 - APRIL 20, 2012

## HOME GOING CELEBRATION SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH



*Eunice Waller designed her own funeral service two weeks before her death..*

*“Anne, you’ll have two minutes after the first solo, “ she said to me. I was one of three “community representatives” to be so honored. The two hour liturgy was a wonderful event and a fitting send off. She was very mindful of and deplored that front page above the fold news stories involving African Americans were usually negative. She no doubt smiled from heaven as The Day ran the news of her death as the lead front page story on Saturday, April 21 and then her final interview on the front page of the Sunday paper. That interview is reprinted with permission in its entirety in the center section of this Troubadour. The photo above was used in the Celebration Service bulletin with her obituary. Our extended community member and official photographer Chester Fairlie took that picture of her in front of the door of the St. Francis House chapel. Below are my remarks from the funeral service. Anne Scheibner*

Dear Friends in Christ – A neighbor is one who passes close by. Eunice McLean Waller was a Neighbor – neighbor with a capital “N”. Jesus told the man who asked him how to be perfect to love God with everything he had and his neighbor as himself. The man seeking to justify himself said, “But..” - that infamous word “but” – “.... who is my neighbor?” Eunice Waller set for us a Golden Standard for what it means to live a life dedicated to answering that question, “Who is my neighbor?” She did so across the sorts of lines that rob all of us of the opportunity to live life as God intended in the bosom of the Beloved Community.

Mrs. Waller served on the St. Francis House board and she frequently joked about what to say to her friends who saw her car parked in front of St. Francis House at 30 Broad St. “Now what are you doing there?” they would ask. Well, what did we do there? We prayed together and studied Scripture together using the African Method of Bible Study from the Liberation Movement in South Africa, we celebrated together and we worked together for the Beloved Community – through being neighbors with those who are homeless, with young people learning about both agriculture and social justice through FRESH New London, with those seeking to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. King’s assassination and most recently with our new Francis Fund -a community loan fund for South-eastern Connecticut.

I think what drew her to St. Francis House was our shared commitment to being neighbors to those who pass close by in whatever ways we can cross all the lines which would seek to divide us. Those lines of division are the thieves and robbers on the road to the New Jerusalem. We will all miss her words - and notes of encouragement - as we continue to try to be neighbors.

Some 12 years ago as we were starting St. Francis House I sought Mrs. Waller’s advice as to whether having now returned to the area in which I grew up and helped start the Drop-In Learning Center, I should run for school board. Since then I always stopped by her house to talk over issues in the city which I found perplexing and she always had a clear thought or two to help me on the way. I will especially miss her modeling a community-minded widowhood which strengthened me during the two years of my husband Emmett Jarrett’s cancer and for the two years since his death.

I would like to conclude with this offering from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer: O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our sister Eunice. We thank you for giving her to us, her family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## HER FINAL INTERVIEW—FRONT PAGE ABOVE



Former New London Mayor Eunice Waller addressed the hundreds gathered for the 40th Anniversary Dinner of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund at the Mystic Marriott in Groton in October 2008. Waller was given a certificate of honor by then-Gov. M. Jodi Rell for her years of work with the trust fund. Waller died Friday at age 90.

Tim Cook, photo

By Lisa McGinley, Day Staff Writer, April 22, 2012  
**Hours before her death, former mayor and civic leader offers a message of hope for New London.**

**New London** - On Thursday afternoon, less than 24 hours before she gently breathed her last, Eunice McLean Waller had much to say.

In her room at Lawrence & Memorial, where she had been hospitably holding court even as she faded away, the 90-year-old grande dame of New London politics and the city's African-American community wanted to leave this message:

"I have truly enjoyed my 54 years spent in small-town New London.

"We have to live together and cooperate to keep a good small town.

"When one loses, we all lose. When one wins, we all win.

"When one starts fighting another, we're not taking care of the town's business, so we need serious cooperation there.

"That's about it."

But that wasn't all of it.

Soft brown hands resting lightly on the pinks and reds and whites of a patchwork quilt, no tubes to keep her from talking in a soft but clear voice, Waller took her time to reflect.

Two of her loved ones kept watch, including a niece just in from Phoenix, who wept softly in the corner room where spring sunlight could stream in from morning till late afternoon.

Mrs. Waller wasn't weeping. The conversation trickled as if she were rocking on her porch on Vauxhall Street or in the summer heat in North Carolina, where she grew up, instead of lying still in a hospital bed.

A little of the Southern pace and grace lingered in her speech, and she chuckled when her own comments struck her funny.

The lady who got herself elected ceremonial mayor in 1988 with some intricate maneuvering in the Democratic Town Committee, coached generations of black women in leadership, and with her husband gave the first donation to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund, is known in all those circles as a firm, even relentless, guiding hand, and she wasn't quite ready to give that up.

Listen up, she was saying. It's up to all of you.

### **Looking for cooperation**

From the perspective of almost 91 years, and knowing that she had little time, Eunice Waller was done with political battles of will and was looking for statesmanship.

"Everybody has to get working to save New London, and we can do that. They think it's impossible, but it's not. We can do that. We have to do that.

"I hope it happens soon, too."

Daryl Justin Finizio, elected last November as the city's first strong mayor in 90 years, is where he is in part because of her, she believed. A friend set up a meeting for the two last year.

"He came and spent one afternoon with me and I gave him a lot of advice. I said some of it may work for you and some of it may not. What worked for me may not

# THE FOLD: "Last Words from Eunice Waller"

work for you.

"But he was experienced at Harvard and went down to New York and had a big, big job, and everything around him was huge, but when he came to New London, it's a whole different personality, a whole different take on things, which he had to drop down to from the New York experience. That's why he made a lot of mistakes.

"He didn't realize big cities are very, very different from small cities.

"I think he handled it well, 'cause it was overwhelming for him at first, and I think he may come out of it."

She made a last wish for cooperation.

"We may as well accept our new mayor and keep him from going too far - in a quiet political way.

"We should be working together, all departments. We don't have the financial means for grandstanding ... Like him or not, the mayor is what we've got, so cooperating with him is item No. 1 on the list."

## **A legacy in activism**

Many of the city's longtime activists learned their skills from Eunice Waller, often starting with teachers union business.

"I took Jane Glover (now chief of staff to the mayor) and Shirley Gillis (former head of the New London Housing Authority) to all the national meetings when they were just new teachers. ... They started out early."

Glover later served as ceremonial mayor herself. A retired children's librarian, she left a position as director of the Kente Cultural Center last fall to serve as chief of staff for Finizio. And her old mentor has been watching.

"I feel sorry for her, even though it's a good paying job." Mrs. Waller laughed at her own joke.

"She's got to learn how to smile. ...She made the state NAACP president mad, and he then called in the national president. So she just lumped stuff on her head.

"I think she'll be able to handle it. It's her responsibility. She didn't greet the state president too pleasantly, and he's one of those 'I'll get you back.'

"We're saying to her, 'Don't do that.'

"I still admonish them that being peaceful is the way to handle your problems."

As a New London Democrat, Mrs. Waller herself could be strong-willed, including in her own maneuvering to become mayor.

She chuckled but didn't deny it. "It's the only way it would have happened."

"I didn't have any unpleasant moments. I had lots of disagreements. I'd fight with the Democratic Town Committee, but we'd fight behind closed doors. We didn't bring it out in the open.

"Most of my journey was pleasant."

In 1989, *The Day* praised Mrs. Waller when she

gave up a trip to the National Conference of Mayors annual convention in California so the \$2,000 it would have cost could be used instead for jackets and rings for the New London High boys' basketball team, winners of the Class M state championship. "I knew we didn't have money to throw away."

"Being mayor was ceremonial. That's about what I was accustomed to. I still wanted the full mayorship to happen."

## **Advice, admonition, admiration**

Adults she admonished. Adolescents she advised. On Thursday, she also expressed admiration for those she felt had made a difference.

Her late husband, William DeHomer Waller, was a lifelong educator and dean of then-Mohegan Community College, now incorporated into Three Rivers Community College. Her name has been linked with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund awards ever since the couple gave the first seed money, not long after the death of Dr. King. *The Day* gives an annual scholarship in William Waller's name.

"I give recognition to the big institutions in this area that gave the money," she said, citing former banks and other businesses.

She expected the best from young people: "Get on the upward path and not down to failure. I wish each of you a successful career." But she had words for parents: "Parents in the city have to wake up, take their responsibility, and leave the drugs out of your house and that will help all of us."

A longtime member of Shiloh Baptist Church, where she was affectionately known as "Mother Waller," she believed in the power of churches to change behavior.

"I think the ministers can do more of drawing our young kids back to church, back to afternoon games or something to keep them out of the drug houses.

"I'm inspired that it can happen, it must happen if everybody is working together to save our kids. If we save our kids, we save our city. If we don't save our kids, the churches will have let us down."

She said she told all that to her pastor, Bishop Benjamin Watts. "I let him come in, we just closed the door, and we talked."

She paused to consider how much she had said in an hour. "It's coming right off the top of my head."

"I'm happy. Peace and mercy is all I ask.

"I have my favorite Bible verse but Reverend Watts says he can't find it in the Bible. 'Mother Waller, you must have made them up.'"

She was done.

"That's my thoughts. Arrange it right and fix it."

Interview over, she went to sleep.

## MEASURING WELL-BEING AS A FORCE FOR CHANGE

by Len Raymond

I became a resident member of St. Francis House on June 1. Acceptance was the culmination of a three month process of mutual discernment. As a resident, I live in a context of morning prayer, time for personal meditation practices, weekly community meetings, Bible study and being available for work in the community with our neighbors. Engagement in this context is the framework within which we can look at well-being both as individuals and as a community.

But I was already interested in wider social ways of measuring well-being and indeed I was interested in attending the conference “Strategies for a New Economy” in Red Hook, New York at Bard College, the weekend of June 8. The House supported my interest and so a week later off I went. Foreshadowing today’s opportunities, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s stated some 200 years ago, “If you treat an individual... as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be” and by extension, if the world measures what really matters — what can be and ought to be — then the world *will* find it’s happy state. This mindset I took to the conference.

I was particularly interested in the string of workshops on Measuring Well-Being. I and many others find engaging measures of well-being instead of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is essential for achieving a healthy nation and world. There were a wealth of ideas on what to measure, my favorite being Gross National Happiness (GNH), a measure created by Bhutan, a tiny, remote Himalayan kingdom between India and China. There is also the Happy Planet Index (HPI) emphasizing green factors. On HPI, United States ranks 105 out of 151 countries with Costa Rica, Vietnam and Colombia ranking 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The United Nations uses the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI). It and the similar HDI are in the widest use, however IHDI/HDI has nowhere near the acceptance of GDP. United States is 23rd on IHDI.

I told my friends this conference was Occupy for the 1%, where a one-percenter could learn how to make things better. I even posted the conference as an Occupy event at the Occupy New London Facebook page. The conference did not disappoint. I was perhaps overstating it with “Occupy for our 1%,” but in contrast to the Occupy Movement, it had the kind of substance the 1% likes — reports of real results from real actions. Of course, the soul of the conference was “decentralized, sustainable and cooperative economy”

### Robert Kennedy's words of 40 years ago

Too much and for too long, we seem to have surrendered personal excellence and community value in the mere accumulation of material things. Our Gross National Product, now, is over eight hundred billion dollars a year, but that GNP -- if we judge the United States of America by that -- that GNP counts air pollution and cigarette advertising and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwoods and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and it counts nuclear warheads, and armored cars for the police to fight riots in our cities. It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile...

Address, University of Kansas, March 18, 1968

— not your Fortune 500’s capitalism. But still, stuff I think the progressives of the 1% would like.

Recently, I assisted a neighbor who’s room turned out to have a significant infestation with what appeared to be black mold. It began with a knock on the door of St. Francis House one evening, with an individual saying he could not sleep in his apartment — a clear measure that something was not right. I went to his apartment and it did not smell right. Before he came to us he had gotten the fire department to respond to his call for help. They put a monitoring device in his apartment to test for poisons. It did not test for mold. This is one example on how important it is to measure the right thing. The most difficult component of measuring our national well-being is knowing what to measure!

Nevertheless, measuring well-being has gotten significant traction in the world. The European Union measures psychological well-being with its Euro-barometer, and the Gallup World Poll reports on well-being in more than 130 countries, covering 98% of the world's population. What is lacking is a real presence of these measures in politics. A lack of agreement on what measure to use explains some of this, but also, the top-down nature of these current measures is a major impediment. The Gallup's well-being index, for example, is very useful to Gallup in its consulting business on improving employee climate within corporations. The Happy Planet index is very useful regarding environmental concerns and the index being developed by the Social Wealth Indicators Project is useful in focusing on the status of poor and minority persons. The only bottom-up measure of well-being is the Occupy Movement -- a crude reporting on wealth inequities. I am all for expanding Occupy into a civil yet crowd sourced approach to measuring well-being..

### In New London

I moved to New London in the fall of 2011, with a mission of connecting New London to restorative practices. I got involved with the Occupy Movement and then later with new-economy ideas such as at the June 8 conference.

My graduate work in restorative practices has shed light on the role of expertise and leadership decision-making. This exploration was the dawn of a new path in my life, a path that lead me to St. Francis House and thinking about well-being. The restorative approach encourages leaders to rely on community engagement as the place where decision making occurs. For example, our neighbor went to his landlord, the fire department and his neighbor, St. Francis House. Within this larger community the right thing eventually got measured -- presence of mold. Interestingly, it was not my simplistic skill in finding mold that made the difference but that our neighbor *engaged* his larger community-in a bottom-up fashion -- rather than being overly dependent on the expertise of the fire department. The importance of grass-roots engagement should not be underestimated.

### Engagement, engagement, engagement

Everyone knows the three most important things in real estate: location, location, location. For governance and communities it is no doubt engagement, engagement, engagement. Engagement makes governance smarter, much smarter.

Robert Kennedy's meaningful words of 40 years ago were quoted in the pre-conference materials

— see the sidebar on the previous page. I vividly remember watching live reports of his death at the house of my best friend. In that moment of pain, I felt a personal connection to my future, a connection to a reach embodied by Robert Kennedy. I *feel* that reach today as reaching to restore community — community as a civil and intelligent force!

As Goethe suggests, when a world *engages* front and center with what really matters, something delivers. If the vanity-beast that the global community is, finds a mirror to hold up — *which it will* — a mirror to measure the occurrence of “that which makes life worthwhile,” then a positive force for change can emerge — *will emerge*. Community at its best.

The keynote speaker at the conference deserves special mention — Bill McKibben, one of the founders of 360.org. He asserted global warming is an all-hands-on-deck problem, and that society has it on a back-burner. McKibbens states CO-2 emissions need immediate attention and as such trumps all other issues. Interestingly, when asked, if something were to be measured of our nation's people, what ought that to be? He answered, “immediacy,” that is, how immediate do we feel is the need to address global-warming.

*And the soul of Robert Kennedy responds, “How immediate is our engagement with what really matters?”*

**Len Raymond** lives and works at St. Francis House. His diverse set of interests, include the Occupy Movement, Restorative Practices and a keen interest in the role community — in all its forms — has to play in making the world more civil.



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**Eunice McLean Waller**

**June 29, 1921 - April 20, 2012**



**R.I.P.**



Anne Scheibner, Funeral Remarks  
Reprint from *The Day*, “Last Words....”

**CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT**

**FALL 2012 SCHEDULE**

***What is “the Good Life”?***



- Sept. 21 Marykate Glenn, Paul Jakoboski,  
Eric Swanfeldt: Generational Perspectives
- Oct. 5 Donna Medina-Death & Dying: Final Gifts
- Oct. 19 Alexandro Melendez-Cooper - Health
- Nov. 2 Deborah Penuto - Cultural perspectives
- Nov. 16 Jeff Goliher - In what “Environment”?
- Nov. 30 Laura Burfoot - Education
- Dec. 14 Ellen Adams and Len Raymond—  
What is “the Good Life” and How Do We Live It Out?
- Dec. 28 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY



