

TROUBADOUR

A thread of the Good News that we feel called to print

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

Eastertide 2023

Quotes from *Broad Street Blues* presented in this Winter/Spring Clarification of Thought series

"St. Francis House: Looking Forward by Reflecting on Where We've Been"

"...I suggest to you that it is not only Franciscans of whom **commitment to the poor, peace-building and non-violence and care for the creation** is expected, but Christians..." Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, Francistide 2007

The 10th Principle of the St Francis House: Community - All of us were raised in an individualistic culture that values competition over cooperation and greed more than generosity. To overcome this training, we commit ourselves to community. We desire to be accountable to one another for our actions and practices. We pledge to support each other in our personal growth, but we recognize that genuine spiritual growth is never merely individual. **The practice of community, so lacking in our culture, is essential for our growth in nonviolence and our quest for the truth.** Consensus decision-making is more than finding common ground among ourselves. It is discerning the mind of Christ.

"As we approach the idea of community, it's always useful to remember that we come from a society in which the bonds of community both geographically and generationally have been substantially strained and for many people broken all together. We don't come 'from communities' in that almost romantic or traditional sense any more. **To some extent you can say we are all damaged goods** and we come to the effort to create community or search for community as people who to some extent are looking for what we think we've lost or what we have lost or what we imagine someone might once have had." Chuck Matthei, Clarification of Thought, 2002

"An important thing about freedom is that you lose it if you don't exercise it. We are not free if we do not act in freedom. At the conclusion of **the Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus instructs his disciples to 'Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.' (Matthew 7:13-14) We stand today before the narrow gate. The multitudes are being herded through a wide gate into an intellectual and moral prison of imperial power. The fact that resisters are few is not a disappointment. It is what we know from experience. **All revolutions begin with a few people recognizing the lie and beginning in small ways to live the truth in the face of the system.....**

"We must follow Gandhi's example and work together on '**constructive programs**' for individual and communal well-being. At our 'Fear Free Zone' in New London [during the **Mock Terror Attack in 2005**] we named a number of such possibilities, including housing, creative work, art and music, alternate forms of transportation (bicycles don't require dependence on oil!), continuing film series, work with returning veterans and families, counter-recruiting in schools, more and more 'fear free zones.'"

Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, "The Power of the Powerless: A Sequel," Eastertide 2005

"... Like the familiar image of a rock thrown into a pond and creating ripples well beyond the point of entry, so too the accomplishments of the [Peace] Pilgrimage. Our means were simple: we **walked**, we **prayed**, we **walked**, we **prayed**, we **talked**... with people in faith communities about peace; we prayed with our feet for some 250 miles circling out from New London... One of my favorite theologians, Alice in Wonderland, says to the Mad Hatter, 'Don't just do something; stand there!' The Pilgrimage for Peace is kind of 'standing there,' making a statement with our presence, our feet, that says there is another way **other than** violence, greed, injustice and war..."

Glennys Ulschak, "Pilgrimage for Peace 2007"

"...I think more than anything else, **St. Francis House has become a community center for all who are working for peace and justice.** Because it has been a constant presence and a welcoming one, St. Francis House has made it easier for us to meet each other and come together. May we have many more years of working and playing together." Ronna Stuller, "The SE CT Peace and Justice Network and St. Francis House" May 2007

"... **'We are a place of prayer, a house of hospitality and a center for peace and justice ministry** [including homelessness, public education, community gardening, opposing the war in Iraq].' Then would come the next question, **'Yes, but what do you do?'** ... [Live together, Morning Prayer and learning to breathe together, break bread together, African Method of Bible Study as a base for individual and community discernment, listen to and work with our neighbors] Anne Scheibner, "But What Do You Do?"

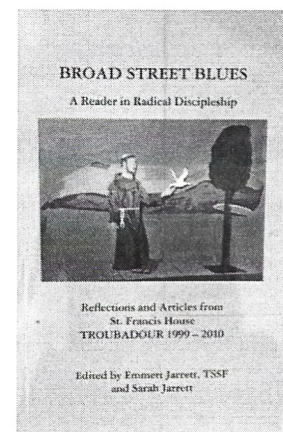
"... **Much of my own transformation has occurred through proximity, through access.** I now know dozens of homeless people. I know them to be generous and funny. I know them to be brothers and lovers. I know them to be grouchy when sleepy and patient in their listening. I can recognize the light that glows in their eyes when speaking of their children. And the fire in those same eyes when recalling struggles in the past. They have become part of my family. As family, I am no longer able to ignore their experience- their needs, their triumphs, their aspirations, and their defeats..."

Laura Burfoot, "On Homelessness in New London: or What Makes a Change of Heart?" Eastertide 2005

"...During the next several weeks, a lot of people will talk about Danny [Worobel]'s life and death, and about his addiction to alcohol. We will speculate about how his addictions played a role in his death. Answers to these questions will matter, but only so much because, well, **a lot of us are addicted, but most of us aren't homeless.** At the end of the day, addicts with resources get to die inside, where it is warm. Those without resources, like Danny, die in the cold..."

Nora Curioso, "Goodbye, Danny" Epiphany 2007

"Last fall Chris Hedges was being interviewed on NPR's *Talk of the Nation* about his book *War is a Force Which Gives Us Meaning*. As a former war correspondent he talked about his personal experience of war as an addictive narcotic. Emmett and I were in different cars on different daily routines, but we each hung on to hear the end of the interview. "So what do you think this means for us now? **What should we be doing?**" asked the interviewer. "**Repentance,**" replied Hedges. We each screeched to a halt and headed for the nearest bookstore..."

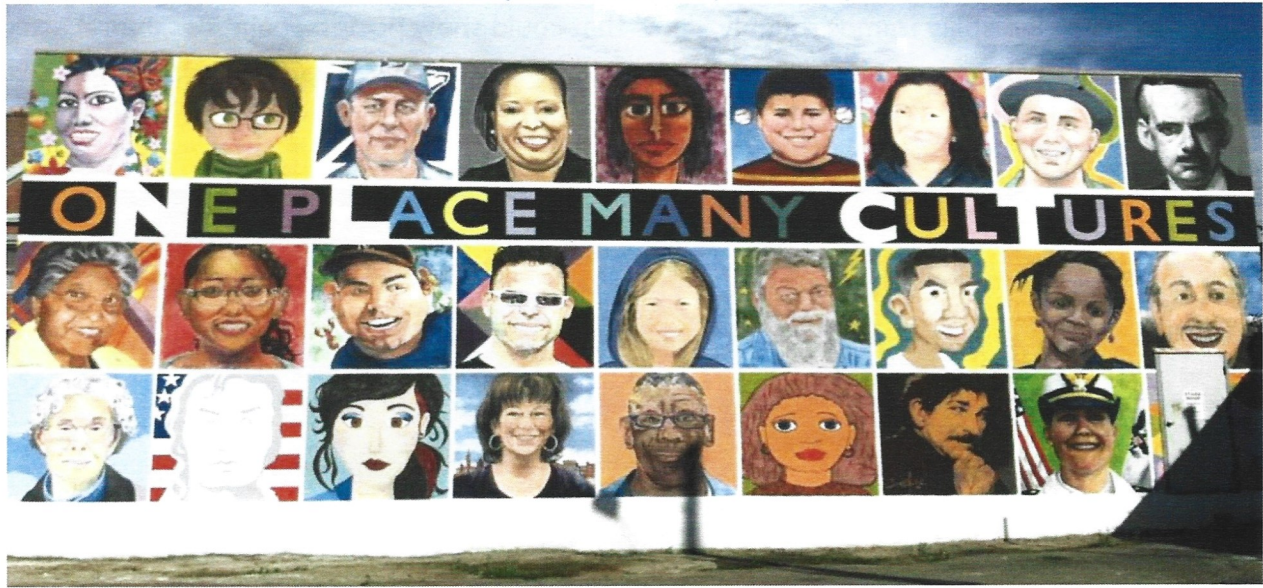


Jesus announced the signs of the Reign of God in Jubilee terms – release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, the year of God's favor when everyone goes 'home.' Ched Myers in his book *Who Will Roll Away the Stone?: Discipleship Queries for First World Christians* talks about recovering ancestral memories- both conqueror and conquered - from his own family in California and realizing that he was called 'home' to 'fight for what was left' after 300 years of destruction by 'development.' That same instinct impelled me to return here to southeastern Connecticut. **How and if we can redeem the traditional notions of community, of the commons and sustainable agriculture remains to be seen.**

Peter Maurin's dictum that we should 'eat what we grow and grow what we eat' seems more and more relevant in a world where land – from the Connecticut River valley to the Fertile Crescent – is being rendered unfit for cultivation by weapons of mass destruction which include urban sprawl and every sort of bombing. The fact that certain corporations stand ready to profit from the bombing – including with 'tactical nuclear weapons' – and the destruction of local economics and plant life, does not change the direction of my 'turning around.' Indeed, it reinforces my instinct to look for what the early tribal residents of southeastern Connecticut understood as a bio-region. I invite you to become our neighbors in this ongoing journey of repentance and conversion." Anne Scheibner, "Repentance: A Lenten Reflection" Spring 2003

NEW LONDON - city of MURALS

Downtown New London: Eunice Waller (second row-first); Reona Dyess (top row-4th from left)



Downtown New London - 2023 Restored Wyland Whale mural

The original Wyland mural was Sarah Jarrett's inspiration for her 2004 painting "St. Francis Comes to New London" which we used on the cover of Broad Street Blues (shown on page 2)



SFH Cottage Street mural designed by Expressiones visiting artist and painted by New London youth

The Porch Art project at St. Francis House

We have 3 cement walls supporting the driveway side porch of Victory House. Our thought is to install 3 display frames roughly 3' x 5' that could show posters, paintings, mural art... that would not be permanent installations but could be seasonal and topical. New London is known as a City of Murals. This would continue our contribution to art on the street/driveway!



Sharms and Izaiah demonstrating the possibilities using Cal's Witness Sign



Sarah Jarrett's Blake mural paintings from the Butterfly Garden side of St. Francis House

“...What is the song we have to sing? What is the work we need to do? We need to do more than just going through the motions. America is more than a bully, more than a consumer, more than just a destroyer of creation. Everyone has a piece of the vision...

“So what do we need to be mindful of as we seek to organize on behalf of the Beloved Community? Point One: *Never believe your own propaganda.* Understanding where people – including yourself – are coming from is very important. People from different generations have very different experiences and contexts for interpreting reality.

“Point two: *The most dangerous thing you can do is leap a chasm in two jumps.* Concentrate on building bridges.

“Point three: *Nothing has a greater hold on the mind than ignorance fraught with technicalities.* Huge amounts of time and energy can be absorbed and wasted by getting caught up in foolishness.

“So stay focused with your eyes on the prize by learning from history, practicing compassion, owning a vision and being willing to sacrifice. Always remain anchored in non-violence. And so create the new music to lead us to the Beloved Community.” Transcription of the talk given by the Rev. Canon Ed Rodman on April 4, 2008 at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation in New London on the 40th Anniversary of the Assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ed Rodman is a founding board member of St. Francis House 1999-2009.

Note: All of the above excerpts are from articles printed in our Troubadour newsletter from 1999-2010 and reprinted in Broad Street Blues: A Reader in Radical Discipleship in 2010. Use of bold type with the exception of Glennys Ulschak's article were done for this current re-printing. Copies of Broad Street Blues can be ordered by writing to us. Donations much appreciated.



Members of the St. Francis House residential and extended community gather at the Soldiers and Sailors monument in downtown New London for the 18th annual reading of Dr. King's April 4, 1967 Riverside Church address.

**Excerpt from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s
April 4, 1967 "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam"**

... The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality we will find ourselves organizing clergy and laymen concerned committees for the next generation. We will be marching and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy... A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death...

From the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute ESSAY SERIES No. 1 which also includes Dr. King's sermon "Loving Your Enemies" and "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

Clarification of Thought Winter - Spring 2023

**St. Francis House: Looking Forward
by Reflecting on Where We've Been**

Background reading from *Broad Street Blues*

Bi-weekly Zoom on WEDNESDAY evenings starting with

6:45 pm Check In and Warm Up Question 7 - 8:30 pm Presentation and Discussion

February 25 - **How are we Franciscan?** Verleah Brown Kosloske, TSSF

Broad Street Blues: Emmett's section on Franciscan Spirit

March 1 - **Living in Community?** Sharmaine Gregor and Ben Abraham

Broad Street Blues: Chuck Matthei article and Ed Rodman on Building the Beloved Community

March 15 - **"But what do you DO?"** Anne Scheibner *Broad Street Blues - article of that title*

March 29 - **Peacemaking** – Joanne Sheehan and Rick Gaumer

*Broad Street Blues: "The Power of the Powerless: A Sequel" by Emmett Jarrett (1985),
Mock Terror Attack (2005), "Pilgrimage for Peace 2007" by Glennys Ulschak and
"The SE CT Peace and Justice Network and St. Francis House" by Ronna Stuller*

April 12 – **Education and St. Francis House** – Reona Dyess, Anne Scheibner and Ellen Adams

Hearing Youth Voices – See SFH Website Fall/Winter Troubadour Vol. 14, No. 3

April 26 – **Homelessness/Housing and St. Francis House** – Cathy Zall and Dan Brewer

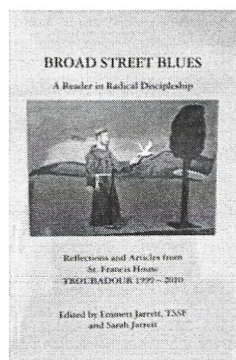
Articles from Broad Street Blues - Section V: Homelessness and Hospitality

May 10 - **Food** – Sharmaine Gregor and Julie Garay

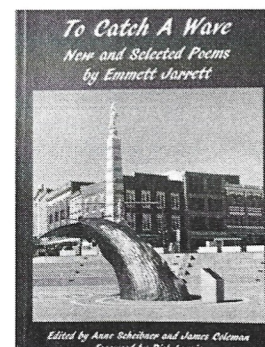
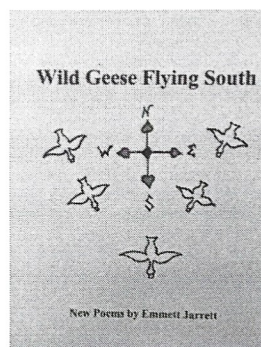
*Section on FRESH (Food: Resources, Education, Security, Health) New London
with articles by Arthur Lerner and Laura Burfoot on FRESH's first summer 2005*

May 24 - **Clarification of Thought** – Ellen Adams, George and Marlies Parent

Radical Discipleship Course section with Participant articles from 2006



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