

TROUBADOUR

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A FRESH* summer: early reflections on youth, power, and the garden

by Laura Burfoot

I find myself approaching the end of the first FRESH growing season with few answers and many questions. FRESH has been absolutely everything and not quite anything that I expected it to be. Education and farming both have at their essence the same principle - growth. Yet I could envision only the beauty I would find in the growth of the plants around me; the world of educating, of encouraging the growth of people, was entirely new terrain.

The garden is a place of transformation, of growth, of miracles. Of sights and scents, of dynamic beauty, of taste, and of nourishment. I am wildly blessed to have spent so much of my summer in such a place. I deeply thank the St. Francis House community- both for their organizational support for FRESH, as well as for their daily, emotional support of me - for making this work possible.

Before the FRESH summer program began, my expectation (though I pretended to myself that I didn't have one) was that each day in the garden (we worked at four main sites) would reflect those very principles of transformation and change; that these eight teenagers and Arthur and I would let each other in, and we would begin the work of addressing life, together. With the garden as our model, collective insight would blossom into collective evolution. As I have learned, however, gardens are slightly more predictable than people; and to nurture the growth of a carrot is vastly simpler than to nurture the growth of a person.

Or is it? Perhaps they are the same, but a carrot is more forthright in showing its progress. What I do know, is that the work of the educator is a matter of faith: it is my choice whether I believe that every day we were out there we were all learning - about ourselves, about life - in ways that may not bear fruit until years from now.

The FRESH crew consisted of eight New London teenagers, four boys, four girls, all between the ages of 15-18, all self-identified as non-white. All but two attend New London High School. All occupy a middle to lower income economic status. Arthur Lerner and I, both white, both of middle class backgrounds, both educated, comprised the leadership team.

To be a teenager is to be a marginalized member of society. In general, the world around us does not hold respect for young people- especially young people of color (especially young men, who are devastatingly criminalized). Most young people of color experience constant distrust by the white power structures surrounding them - whether it be white folks they pass on the street, whose fear and recoil are tangible or their white teachers making middle class incomes who neither live in their neighborhoods nor are friends with anyone who does. These children - because that's what they are, still, in many ways - are disrespected, disempowered, and are

*Note: FRESH (Food: Resources, Education, Security, and Health) is being developed by Arthur Lerner, who directed two major SFH housing rehabs. SFH resident Laura Burfoot served as Assistant Director for this summer's first FRESH program. St. Francis House serves as the fiduciary agent for FRESH. See centerfold for more about FRESH.

attempting to grow within the confines of a society whose expectations for them are entirely uncreative and inflexible. As students, their lives have been greatly formed and informed by their experience in school. I cannot begin to decipher them, then, without also deciphering their experience of school.

I do not intend to put many words to the argument that school in general is not an empowering experience. If power is defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as "the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively," or "the ability or official capacity to exercise control," then it seems pointless to spend much time arguing that school is not full of moments in which students are exercising power. (I am not, here, blaming teachers, but instead calling into question the early 20th century model of industrial education still in use today). I write from my own experience as a 1999 New London High School graduate, as well as from accounts of my students' experiences. High school was not for me, and still is not, from what I gather, a place where students are encouraged to be their most powerful selves- to design their courses of study, to decide when their attention is there to listen and when they'd rather be moving their bodies, to "exercise control" over themselves. I recall high school - and school in general - as a place where those around me were exercising control over me, often without my consent.

What of this lack of power, this lack of control over oneself? In my experience, disempowerment is felt in my bones, and in my eyes, and on my chest. When I think of moments in my life when I've felt disempowered, I recall them as weighted, heavy, arresting experiences. I remember them (and continue to live them) as moments when it felt (feels) as though the air has been knocked out of me. It is a deflating experience.

If school is a disempowering experience, and it is the institution that has most shaped the FRESH students' lives, then what is to be done? How do I work to create a learning space in which these



people are not marginalized, a space in which their independence and creativity is honored? How do I communicate that FRESH is a space in which they have full power over themselves, as well as over the project that we are collectively creating? How do we work together to repattern ourselves away from the disempowerment of school and society, and towards a place of power? How do we undo years of teachers' low expectations? How do we, collectively, as people coming together to learn, unlearn the dynamic in which teacher knows all and students know nothing? How do I, as an educator, create an opportunity for transformation, for a new way?

At this early stage in my reflection, many of the answers to these questions seem to revolve around the issue of trust. Young people have zero reason to trust that I- in my position in FRESH as both educator and boss- am on their side. They have no real reason to believe that I am operating under any different understanding of myself, or of them, than the world around us.

How, then, do I begin to build trust amongst us? Of this I am not at all sure. What I suspect, however, is that the solution lies in being an ally. This in part is one of the most important lessons that has emerged from my experience as a leader of FRESH New London this summer. The American Heritage Dictionary defines ally as "one in helpful association with another." Being an ally is, fundamentally, about taking risks and making choices that serve the person or people with whom you're allied even if such choices bring you into question in the eyes of the "power holders." Being an ally to youth means trusting in their power to make decisions for themselves. It means enabling them to trust themselves to make those decisions. It means supporting them through discovery. It means being there, it means commitment.

What that commitment looks like could be the subject of another article. For me, it necessitates thinking beyond the professional model. We, the FRESH students and I, are all members of the New London community, sharing in the common

graces and disappointments that are community life. I understand myself as resident of this community first and foremost. From what I can tell, students do not need more professionals in their lives. They need friends, they need mentors, they need allies who are willing to listen, to learn, and most importantly, to respect and to honor.

Sometimes it is as simple as this: during a workshop at a conference that FRESH attended, one of the crew quietly motioned to me and asked if he could go outside. At first, I said no, feeling that it was an inappropriate moment for him to leave the room, and that the others would think it rude. I thought it might look bad, not only for him, but for me, because as their leader I was somehow expected to be "in control" of them. And then I realized what a mistake that decision was. I realized how disrespectful it was for me not to trust his own judgment- that it was exceptionally hot, that he was tired, that he needed a breath of fresh air, and that he had in the first place looked to me to legitimize his choice. So I motioned back and told him of course he should go outside if he needed to. And he did. And then he came back in shortly, and proceeded with the conversation.

I've been meditating on the meaning of radical action - on what constitutes a radical person. I once thought the radicals were on the barricades. Now, perhaps, I have a different understanding. I now suppose that to be radical is also to be committed; and that commitment is often mundane, and is always daily. What young people need is commitment by the people and community around them - commitment that we trust in their own judgment and experience, and commitment to support them through mistakes. I think of the tomatoes in our garden; of their wild, tangled, exploring growth, and of the stakes and twine that keep them standing, supported. Perhaps the model is there.

Laura Burfoot lives and works at St. Francis House.



Broad Street Blues by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

"The blues is an expression of anger against shame and humiliation."

B B. King

Beginning with this issue the TROUBADOUR will carry a regular column about things going on at St. Francis House, our Broad Street neighborhood, and the city of New London. The city planners call our neighborhood a "gateway" to downtown New London. It is also a place where poor people live and suffer, courts hand down sentences, lawyers and doctors make money, drugs and sex are bought and sold, and we try to live as responsible and respectful neighbors to all, exercising a preferential option for the poor. B. B. King's definition of "the blues" gives the column its title: it's about the shame and humiliation poor people feel in our society and our Broad Street, New London, neighborhood, as well as the signs of hope in poor people's gathering strength and purpose, in which we are privileged to participate.

Homeless Victimized Again

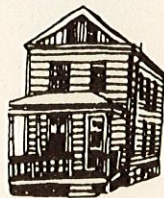
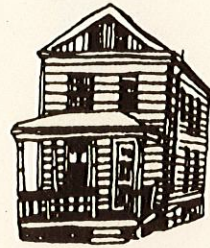
The emergency winter homeless shelter at Mt. Moriah Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, which Laura Burfoot and Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, worked at and St. Francis House helped run, closed about the same time as the mock terror attack events and our participation in a "Fear Free Zone" for citizens. We were just beginning to think how we and the Homeless Coalition and the City Social Services Department would work together to expand shelter services, looking towards a year-round 24-hour, 7 days a week facility for New London's homeless, when the City Manager's 2005-2006 Budget eliminated social services entirely. The City Council, focused on union contracts and the threat of privatization of sanitation and other services, voted to eliminate the \$150,000 for social services from a \$72 million budget without question.



Public outcry was swift and vocal. Homeless people turned out to address the Council. Pat Serluca and Marie Gravel, the two social workers whose jobs were being eliminated, received eloquent testimonials to the work they have done over the years for homeless, needy and marginalized people. Social service folks from around the area rallied to restore the services. A coalition to save social services was formed. We participated in a march to City Hall on June 20 that included scores of homeless people, local activists, and a band of 20 motorcyclists from around the region who had raised money for Pat's programs over the years. It was great to march down Broad Street in such good company! State representatives, local clergy and business leaders spoke against eliminating city social services. *The Day* paper published an op-ed piece by Fr. Emmett on June 19 entitled "New London's Wounded Spirit." But all to no avail.

On June 27, in a final vote, the Council failed to restore the social services appropriation. To their credit, the seven City Councilors voted to give up their \$1,500 a year salaries to pay Pat for two months – July and August – to "transition" social services to marginalized and homeless folks to local nonprofit agencies. Deputy Mayor Bill Morse, a long-time friend of the Homeless Coalition, promised to work to keep people from "falling through the cracks." We argued that the City was creating the cracks but councilors still voted to eliminate social services.

Since then a committee of nonprofit agencies in New London has been meeting with Morse and Mike Rosenkrantz, of Alliance for Living, the local nonprofit serving people with HIV/AIDS, to try to get others to do what the department did. We support these efforts as long as they don't reinvent the bureaucracy but use the occasion to empower our homeless friends. The coalition to save social services has metamorphosed into the Coalition for a Better Community and is seeking alliances with people throughout the city who are concerned about these issues.



Eminent Domain in Fort Trumbull

New London became the center of national attention at the end of June when the U. S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Kelo et al. v. City of New London*, and upheld the use of eminent domain in taking the homes of 70 working class families in the Fort Trumbull neighborhood for "economic development." The land is to be turned over to a developer to construct a hotel and conference center, as well as a Coast Guard Museum, and waterfront area parking lots. Seven of the 70 homeowners held out against the taking, and took their case to the Supreme Court. Losing the case was just the beginning of New London's troubles, because people from around the United States saw this as a use of state power to take ordinary citizens' property and give it to people who would "develop" the property and generate more taxes for the City.

A number of our friends have gone every Thursday morning to the Fort Trumbull neighborhood, walked around, picking up trash and prayed in front of the remaining homes. We joined them occasionally, and were with them on June 30, the day the decision came down from Washington. We marched with them to the City Council on July 5, and had our photographs taken – with several hundred other people – by State Police from the third floor of City Hall!

The Fort Trumbull Coalition is very mixed company! The national public interest law firm that handled the case is libertarian in its politics. Many conservatives support the cause because they believe in the sanctity of private property rights. We do not believe property rights are absolute, but we do want people to be secure in their homes, and not have them taken by more "profitable" enterprises! For us this is one more example of the preferential option for the poor.

Hearings are ongoing at the state level to revise eminent domain law in the

area of economic development. We are watching developments.

Constructive Program

We worked with many people last winter to resist the \$16 million mock terror attack sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, and the group has continued to meet, augmented by friends from the Voluntown Peace Farm, and others. This new group now meets monthly at St. Francis House to reflect on Gandhi's "constructive program," and what such a vision of a good society might look like in our time and place. Our friend Joanne Sheehan, of the War Resisters League, points out that Gandhi thought the liberation struggle took place on three levels: personal transformation, political action, and constructive program. The spiritual work of transformation means "to be the change you wish to see in the world." Political action includes, but is not limited to, civil resistance to oppressive structures. The positive work of "building a new society within the shell of the old" (the Wobblies and Peter Maurin) is where constructive program comes in. For Gandhi it included village sanitation, adult education, women's rights, the elimination of "untouchability." The Constructive Program Working Group, as we call ourselves, is asking what such a vision of society would look like in our time and place.

Oak Ridge Hiroshima Witness

At the beginning of August, Nate Jarrett and Fr. Emmett drove to Oak Ridge, Tennessee (stopping in Richmond to see Board member Linda Powell Pruitt and her husband, Canon Alonzo Pruitt) to observe the 60th anniversary of the dropping of the U. S. atomic bomb on Hiroshima. They stayed with fellow Franciscan Tupper Morehead and his wife Sheila, and others, and marched to the Y-12 plant, where current U. S. weapons are being "updated" so their atomic components can last for another hundred years. Friends from Jonah House, the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington, D.C., and others, were there.

Nate and Fr. Emmett drove 860 miles on Sunday, August 7, to be back in New London for local Nagasaki Day observances on August 9. The shame and humiliation of the poor takes a particularly hurtful form in national spending of billions for nuclear weapons.

C.U.R.E.(Community United for a Renaissance in Education)

In response to the City of New London's refusal to release over \$500,000 of state education monies to the schools for art, music, and pre-school education, C.U.R.E. organized four targeted "mini-protests" around the city to let parents and citizens know what was happening. (Photo below)



Transitional Apartment

This column ends on a happy note. On Monday, August 15 – the Feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God – a mother and her newborn daughter moved into the transitional apartment at the rear of St. Francis House, to live for six months to a year. Our community will offer hospitality and be neighbors, and a nonprofit social service agency will provide case management. Fifteen year-old Sarah Jarrett has already offered baby-sitting services. The important thing is that our ministry of hospitality has taken a quantum leap. The presence of these two new friends transforms our lives in ways we cannot yet imagine.

How I Understand Social Service Cuts

by Sarah Jarrett

What right does a human have to take away basic needs for other humans? For the people by the people is what I thought was supposed to happen – not take away Social Services to save money. The problems here in New London are becoming more visible every day I live here. Now it is not safe to walk home alone. So whether it's me walking from the Garde Theater or church, it's not safe. Personally, I don't see why I can't walk a block and a half alone, but my grown up (especially men) friends will want to walk me home. I know it's because they love me, but what should be done about a city who has so many problems? Is this when you lock your children inside so they won't get hurt and see the bad in things? What gives people the right to take away, but not give? They weren't born higher than anyone else so what gives them the right?

I am 15 years old and already don't believe politics are good. What does that say about our government? It means it's screwed up being run by white middle-class (or higher) people. In New London I started to go to the City Council meetings when they threatened to take away basketball. Basketball is the way out of drugs and gangs in New London. It's something to do to stay out of trouble.

Social Services is a basic necessity of every city, town or state. Taking it away only creates more problems. What's next? Will they tell us how much air we can breathe per day? Because we are already allowing them to run our lives and tell us what we can live without. Break free. Rise up. FIGHT!

Sarah Jarrett is a 10th grade student. She marched to City Hall with the Save Social Services Coalition and went to the council meetings. Right: Her art piece is entitled "My Life Right Now." "The Social Services Gone" page reads: "The City Council knows that they will have many sleepless nights, but this will save us money. Yes, people will suffer but this is...." Stamp reads: "Approved."



The Hundred Years (and continuing) War

by Mark Auer

During August here in New London members of my family gathered for a reunion. As usual in reunions, the talk turned to the "Family History", who was married to whom, and where in Connecticut did great-granduncle Mike settle after his discharge from the Union Cavalry in 1865? (Greenwich) This led me to realize that in my own small family we have had at least one member serve in every war that the United States has been involved in since 1862. Major Michael Auer served with the 15th New York Cavalry in the Civil War, great-uncle Ben Auer in WWI, uncles Tom Auer and Dick Kogler in WWII, uncle Mike Bell in Korea, my year in Vietnam, 1967-68, and now, my youngest sister's husband, serving first in Kuwait, then Afghanistan, and now in Iraq. Only the last has chosen to make a

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FRESH TELLING : SUMMER 2005

BEGINNING TO GROW THE FOOD WE NEED TO EAT

Fresh on F.R.E.S.H.

by Arthur Lerner

The last time that F.R.E.S.H. New London was in the pages of the Troubadour (Fall 2004), we were in the process of gathering resources and collaborators for our first program initiative on local food security. This work is now accomplished. Our summer session crew of eight New London teens had its last work day on August 19. Now we must add assessment and re-visioning to our continuing work of gathering what we need to make F.R.E.S.H. New London an ongoing reality.

We have done what we planned to do in our first summer of operations. We wanted to make fresh local produce more available in New London especially for those with least access. Every Monday since late June we have brought from 50-100 pounds of produce to the Community Meal Center on Montauk Avenue and have worked in the kitchen to get that food ready to be served. We intended to work with youth to increase their exposure to ecological awareness and the wonder of watching food grow from the earth. We have done this, in the garden and the classroom, on a weekly basis with 45 youngsters at the Drop-In Learning Center since May. By delivering our Friday harvest to the DLC we have effectively gotten our produce into the hands of their low-income families while re-enforcing the lessons that we present to the youngsters. We have been active at the Bates Woods Community Center, collaborated with Y.O!(Youth Organization) at their Kid's Café on Garfield Avenue, worked with Community Gardens of New London and Beth-El's Interfaith Garden. We also wanted to make use of marginalized or under-used resources. We have been involved with seven or more separate gardens and all of our sites were derelict spaces or un-used lawns before we started. We have literally re-claimed land in order to feed the poorest amongst us, and made actual assets out of what was deemed to have little value.

Progress is slow, but it feels sure. There has been disappointment bred from

inexperienced overambition, some frustration associated with working with teenagers, and obstacles related to our pursuing goals that are not yet mainstream. By overcoming many such difficulties, we are propelled into the future by new connections with those interested and excited to do the work that can be accomplished now, here, and with our own hands!

Over the course of the summer, our teen crew has been able to participate in conferences sponsored by The Food Project, The Hartford Food System, and the Voluntown Peace Farm. F.R.E.S.H. is excited about collaborations that have begun with the Kid's Café in New London. We have become part of a large network of similar organizations connected through World Hunger Year in New York City. We are excited to be in conversation with Heifer Project International even while we continue our fruitful conversations with local partners and advisors.

We will soon be hiring for the fall session, which will include: continuing the work we have been doing this summer; creating a Web page; planning for next season. We have recently taken trips to Food Share in Hartford and Nuestras Raíces in Holyoke, MA- both national leaders in their respective fields of food rescue and distribution, and community development through agriculture. We want to identify successful models around the country that we can adapt to our work in New London county.

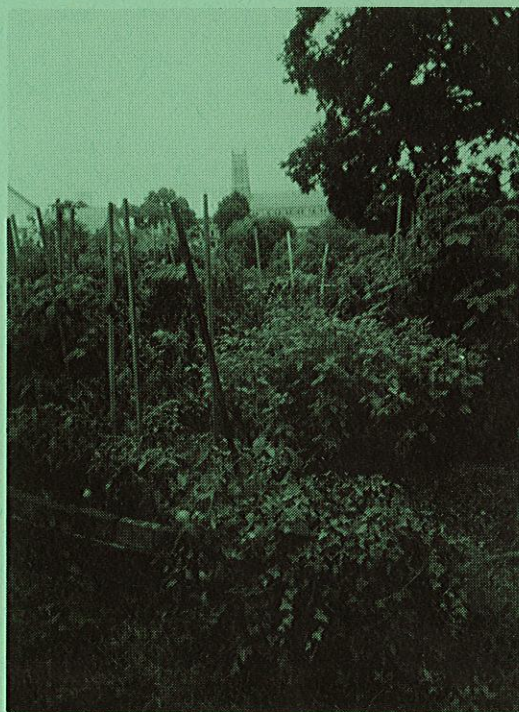
We know that our success in the near future will be determined in part by the quality of our communication with those who have supported us. The extended community of Saint Francis House has been crucial to the progress to date of F.R.E.S.H. New London. The Drop-In Learning Center provided administrative support and generously shared their van. Thank you to all our supporters who contributed to the first year budget and teen scholarship fund. Let's continue to talk! arthner@hotmail.com

Arthur Lerner managed SFH major rehab projects over the last two years. He lives in Lyme with his wife Emily and their daughters Ellanora and Simone. He graduated from Hampshire College in 1996 with a BA in Agro-Ecology.

growing it, and the need for people to buy local food instead so money can be circulated in CT and not go out to other states. That is how we lose money, by buying from other states and not producing enough of our own crops. All that information created a sense that I had to participate in my community, get people started by telling them about the problems and how they could solve them. Then maybe we could talk about taking action, when people are educated enough to help the world. FRESH learned about Community Food Security, which is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.

Laura and Arthur were so enthusiastic that I was screaming with excitement myself. I wanted to get things done. We had field trips to Hartford to meet with the Food Project from Boston and Grow Hartford, and another to Massachusetts. Guests came to speak with us, like nutritionist Erica Benvenuti from the UCONN Extension program, and Alison Miceli, chef at the Community Meal Center. We as a group made a list of goals, and just recently went over those goals to see if we completed them. We were glad to know that we had done most of our goals for the summer.

Olena Garulchuk came to New London from the Ukraine. She is a senior at New London High School.

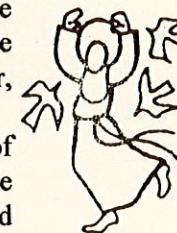


This is the visual story of the garden developed in SFH's backyard with wood chips and compost provided through FRESH. SFH soil tested very high in lead and arsenic probably as a result of pesticides used 50-60 years ago. Therefore we covered the entire area with 12" of woodchips and then built up beds by doing another 6" of chips around the soil (no frames needed). We used bricks from an old chimney at 32 Broad to make the walls. *Top:* SFH volunteer Hope Norris measures depth of compost needed after first layer of wood chips. *Middle:* Beds laid out with boards as temporary frames. *Bottom:* Nate, Arthur and Hope examine first tomato plantings. *Left:* Garden in full bloom - first of three basil crops harvested and pesto served to visiting Franciscans and frozen for winter use.

career in the military. The rest of us just happened to be around when there was a war going on. The Auer family is not particularly fond of wars; we don't travel around the globe looking for conflicts to become involved in. The plain truth is that our country has been at war, almost constantly, for 140 years.

In the November-December 2001 issue of *Duke Magazine*, Michael Hardt, then an associate professor of literature at that institution, discussed with the editors his book, *Empire*, coauthored by Italian philosopher and economist Antonio Negri, published in 2000 by Harvard University Press. The *New York Times*, commenting on the book called Hardt "America's next master theorist." *Empire* was an instant sensation. The book details the demise of the nation-state, the rise of the new global world order and the shifting of political and economic power, seen through the lens of Neo-Marxist economics and the 17th century philosophy of Baric Spinoza.

Last August the sequel to *Empire* was published. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004) attempts to clarify and expand the concepts articulated in the first book. The new book is shorter, and the prose less dense. Perhaps the authors were unprepared for the wide readership of *Empire* outside of academia; the language in *Multitude* is considerably clearer-but, it is by no means an 'easy read'. "We have made every



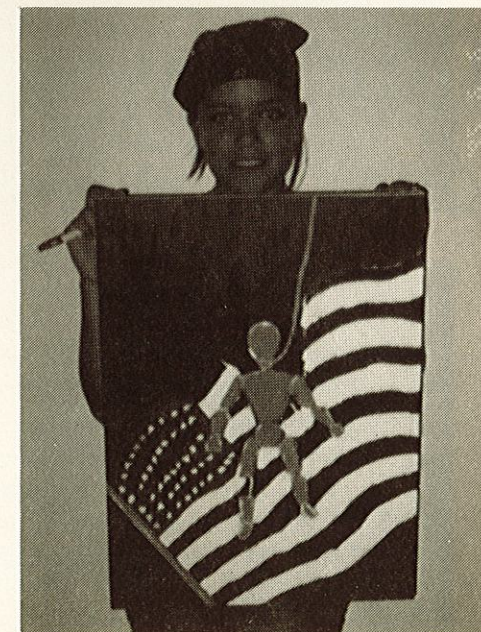
effort to write this in a language that everyone can understand . . . Please be patient. Keep reading. Sometimes these philosophical ideas take longer to work out. Think of the book as a mosaic from which the general design emerges." (p.xvii)

An article of this size prohibits an exhaustive analysis of the entire work. Events of the recent past both here in New London and abroad show a chilling correspondence with principles articulated in the first section of *Multitude*, entitled 'War'. In August members of the SFH community participated in a vigil at the soldiers and sailors monument in support of Cindy Sheehan's one-woman vigil at the Bush ranch in Crawford, Texas. This spring we were involved, with the SE Connecticut Peace and Justice Network, with resistance to the Department of Homeland Security's Mock Terror Attack on the City of New London. Emmett and Nathaniel Jarrett, accompanied by my friend and classmate Tupper Morehead, TSSF, recently returned from Oak Ridge, Tennessee where they participated in a civil action at the Y12 nuclear site in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. What Hardt and Negri are writing about in their two books is not science fiction. It is not 1984. War and its consequences have begun to overwhelm America.

The authors write that this ongoing state of war is not confined to the United States and is no longer waged by nation-states in a contest for national sovereignty, but across the global terrain. "From this perspective all of the world's current armed conflicts, hot and cold-in Colombia, Sierra Leone and Aceh, as much as in Israel/Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq-should be considered imperial civil wars . . . The pretense of sovereignty of these combatants is doubtful to say the least. They are struggling for dominance within the highest and lowest levels of the global system. . . There is no escaping the state of war within Empire, and there is no end to it in sight."(p.4)

This has not been the case throughout history. The notion of *exception* is introduced in the beginning of the book. Briefly stated, it has been the aim of governments throughout history to make war the exception and peace the norm. Hardt and Negri call this 'the fundamental goal of modern political thought and practice.' With the

Sarah Jarrett with her painting "Hanging by a Thread." Mark Auer suggested using this image as the visual counterpoint to what he was trying to express in his review of Multitude.



state of war being now the rule rather than the exception, nation states are now free to embrace war as the norm. "The state of exception is also a term in German legal tradition that refers to the temporary suspension of the constitution and the rule of law . . . in a time of serious crisis and danger, such as wartime, the constitution must be suspended temporarily and extraordinary powers given to a strong executive or even a dictator in order to protect the republic." (P.7) The authors conclude that this general state of global war erodes the distinction between war and peace so that we can no longer hope for or imagine a real peace.

The authors note further the current view that, in the words of former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, the United States has become the 'indispensable nation' and as such is free to use force wherever and whenever it pleases, in order to protect its interests. 'American exceptionalism' has been, in fact, exception to the rule of international law. Our country continually exempts itself from international treaties covering everything from human rights, to the environment, to the treatment of prisoners.

I recall as a young person the stories that my parents told me about rationing and the trials felt by those who experienced WWII on the 'home front'. I vaguely recall the Army/McCarthy hearings in the 1950's-my first glimpse of television. I certainly did not want for any material thing as a child growing up in the suburbs. I know that one of the things that I took for granted was the individual liberty guaranteed to all citizens through the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Now our rights are being eroded in the name of 'homeland security'. I fear the consequences of the Patriot Act. Members of our extended community have suffered arrest and imprisonment for disagreeing with the current regime in Washington.

Hardt and Negri argue that "War is becoming the primary organizing principle of society, and politics merely one of its means or guises. What appears as civil peace, then, really only puts an end to one form of war and opens the way for another. . . . War has become a *regime of biopower*, that is, a form of rule aimed not only at controlling the population but producing and reproducing all aspects of social life." (p.13)



Not all of our recent wars have been armed conflicts. I recall Lyndon Johnson's 'War on Poverty' in the 1960's. Despite heroic efforts by a small cadre of organizations and individuals, the War on poverty was doomed from the start, due to the increasing costs of escalation in Vietnam. The 'War on Drugs' has been being waged for quite some time now, the primary result being the filling of American prisons with people of color from the inner city while the regime in power maintains friendly relations with the countries that supply the poison. We now have the 'War on Terror'.

The authors note two defining characteristics of this new type of warfare. First, this new type of war is conducted with an open-ended time frame. The war might possibly go on for generations. The war provides for the continued and uninterrupted use of force and violence, indeed, "War has thus become indistinguishable from police activity. A war to create and maintain social order can have no end." (p.14) Second, the line between international and domestic politics becomes blurred. "In the context of this cross between military and police activity aimed at security there is ever less difference between inside and outside the nation-state: 'low intensity warfare meets high intensity police actions.'" (p.14) How long before our own citizens are detained for unspecified amounts of time for unspecified crimes? How close are we to rounding up and incarcerating 'enemies of the state'?

Hardt and Negri note the close correspondence of the modern wars against terror to the old wars of religion. They close the first part of their treatise on war with the following chilling paragraph: "The domestic face of just-war doctrines and the war against terrorism is a passage from the welfare state to a warfare state, and others characterize it as a so-called 'zero-tolerance' society. This is a society whose diminishing civil liberties and increasing rates of incarceration are in certain respects a manifestation of a constant social war." (p.17)

This is where we stand today. Not even Orwell's dark genius could have thought this up. We are in a very frightening place.

Mark Auer lives and works at Saint Francis House.

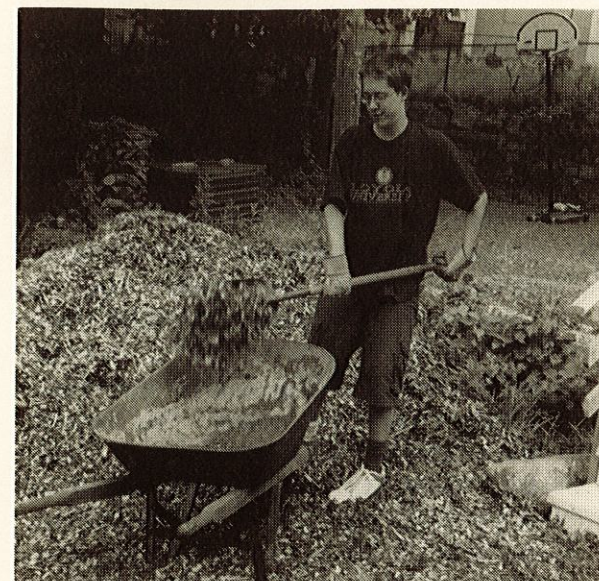
St. Francis House: A Summer Well Spent by Nate Jarrett

When I finished the spring semester of my sophomore year at Loyola University in New Orleans, I was left with the typical pressure of finding a summer job. A yearly undertaking to supply oneself with the spending money to keep oneself occupied in this consumercentric world. This summer however I realized something new about myself: at least for the time being, money was not a very important or necessary thing for me. I didn't really need any money for myself and aside from wanting to occasionally take my girlfriend, Zuleika, out on dates I had no need for money. So this meant I didn't need to get the typical hourly wage job my friends all go out and get. Instead I decided to become the first St. Francis House summer intern.

Some may wonder what a SFH intern does. I did a lot of different things around the house and the community. From helping build the raised bed tomato and basil garden in the backyard (see photo at left), to being the glorified typist for our glorified CFO Mark Auer to install our new accounting system, and, of course, cooking for the multitudes of people (including the Micah Fellowship Urban Ministry group, two different groups of Franciscans and various other guests) who end up eating at our dinner table. In August my father and I drove to Oak Ridge, Tennessee for the witness commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All this and whatever else needed doing was how I spent my summer vacation and I have to admit it's the most fun I've ever had on break.

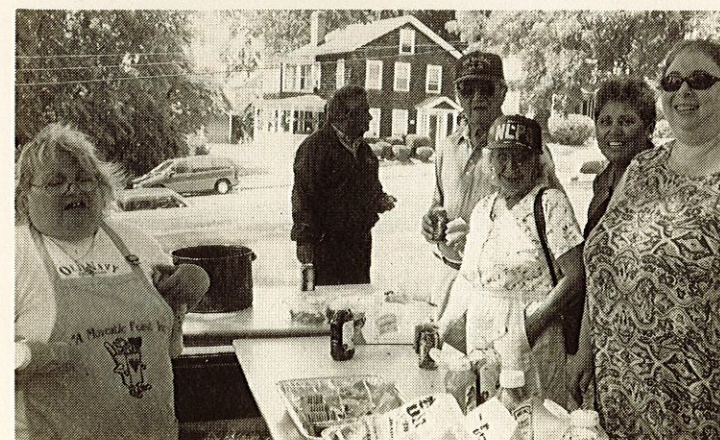
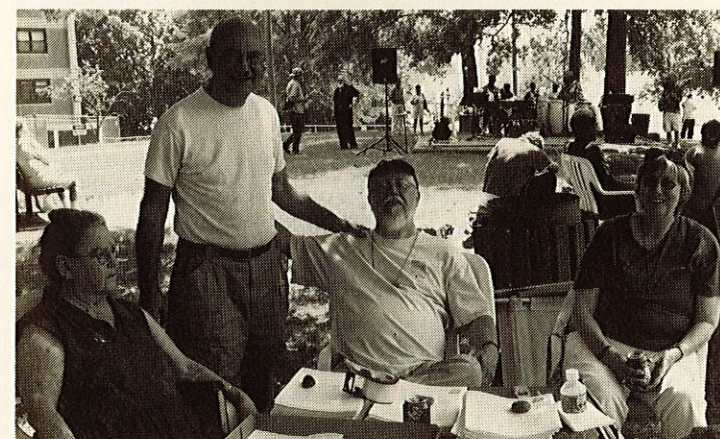
As the summer comes to an end I find myself dreading the return of classes more than ever. Even the allure of New Orleans life is not enough to make me ready for the end of my summer. In a week after I'm writing this I will be back at school and missing all the little things here at SFH. From Mark's passion for the Red Sox, to the constant flow of different people on whom to test my cooking creations, to my sister's teenage growing pains, it will all hold a special place in my heart until I get to come back home to SFH.

Note: Nate arrived safely home 9/1 after being evacuated with the rest of Loyola University. Our thanks to so many of you in our extended community who kept him in prayer and called to make sure he was all right.



Above: Nate shoveling wood chips for new garden.

Below: June 25 SFH Anniversary Fiesta was held in Williams Park. Dorothy Paulsen, Ted Olynciw, Emmett Jarrett, Barbara Lawson at the SFH table with John Scott's band Amizade in the background. Neighbor Marie Soler again helped cook four hundred hot dogs and our friends from the Islamic Center provided special barbecue fare. CURE, Community Gardens, FRESH, Homeless and Save Social Services Coalitions, Peace Network all participated in a great day.



How Are We Franciscan?

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

A FEW YEARS AGO people were always asking us, *What do you do?* and not being satisfied with, "We pray, we practice hospitality, and work for justice and peace." Now that we've been working for six years in the areas of community gardening, peace, urban education, and homeless ministry, we hear that question less often. But when we're with Catholic Worker friends, they tend to refer to us as "the Catholic Worker house in New London," or, sometimes, "the Episcopal Catholic Workers." The Franciscans we know, including especially the Third Order, of which I am a member, think we're Franciscan somehow, but it's hard to nail down.

Recently, a group of Franciscan friends – in the Anglican Third Order, the Ecumenical Franciscans (mainly Protestants) and the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order – met at St. Francis House as the Committee on Franciscan Unity. They asked us to spend half a day with them, sharing our life and the work of the St. Francis House Community. We began the day with Morning Prayer, as always. After breakfast, we spent over an hour together using the African Method of Bible Study. This is the form our weekly Bible Study and community meeting regularly takes. We then talked about some of our ministries. After lunch we took our guests on a walk downtown to the headquarters of the Homeless Coalition and introduced them to Fr. Russ Carmichael and other members, with whom we work closely. We concluded by asking them whether what we had shared was in fact "Franciscan."

They, of course, were generous, but it was still hard to pin down an answer to the question: *How are we Franciscan?*

Of the four adults in the community at present, I am the only member of the Franciscan religious order. Mark Auer may become a Third Order Franciscan, but that wasn't a condition of his membership in the



community. So we're not Franciscan by virtue of membership in an Order.

Our community discipline is one of obedience to the Gospel, not a religious superior; chastity in the sense that all Christians are called to be chaste, not celibacy; and simplicity, not evangelical poverty. This year Anne's and my "earnings" were too low to be taxed, but we are not suffering want, our children are being educated, and we enjoy a great deal of privilege based on wealth. We certainly don't embrace "Lady Poverty," as Francis did. But then, contemporary Franciscans don't think their call is to "destitution," either, but to sharing the life of the poor and relieving their necessities as much as possible.

We pray a Franciscan form of the Daily Office in our regular Morning Prayer, and I certainly think of Francis and Clare as models for ourselves and our ministry. But I also think of the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus as models, and we work more with secular friends on the Left and Unitarians than we do with "orthodox" Christians, because that's who shows up to do the work of justice and peace in this community.

We've begun to think of affiliating with the Catholic Worker movement, much as our friends at the Open Door Community in Atlanta and Jonah House in Baltimore do, because – as Lawrence S. Cunningham once said – Dorothy Day was probably the most Franciscan person in twentieth century America. That won't make us more or less Franciscan, but it may make more sense than closer affiliation with a religious order.

William J. Short, OFM, in his book *Poverty and Joy: The Franciscan Tradition*, speaks of "Franciscan themes." Some of these are:

The incarnation – the humility of God in becoming human in Jesus, the poor man of Galilee.

Life in poverty – imitating Jesus, and living a "life without grasping."

The lepers – seeking out the suffering of our time and caring for them.

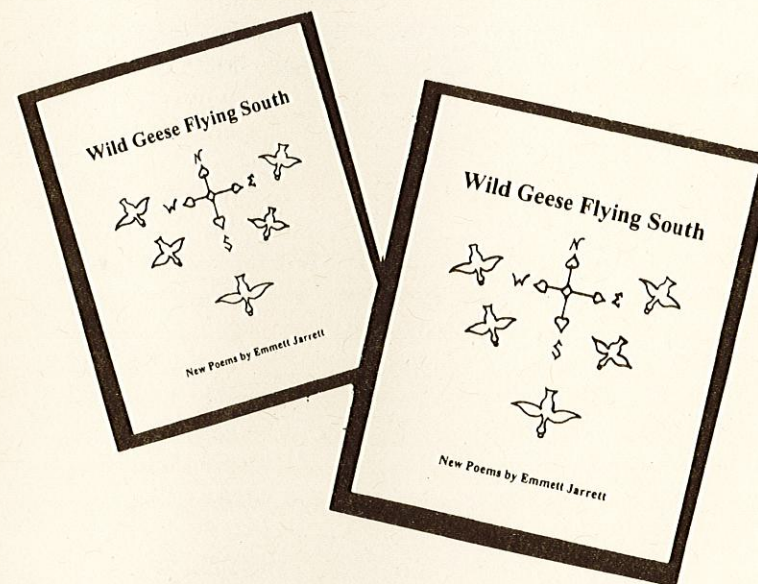
The hermitages – practicing contemplative prayer, the prayer of silence.

The cross – focus on the depth of God's love in the sacrifice of Jesus, and the call to be "united with him in a death like his" to be "united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5).

The creation – devotion to God's creation and all God's creatures.

And I would add, the troubadour spirit of Francis, praise becoming poetry.

How are we Franciscan? We are Franciscan in spirit, I think, because we hear Francis saying to his brothers, when he came to die, "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ now show you what is yours." We want to do what God gives us to do.



A new book of poems by Emmett Jarrett
with cover designed and hand-painted
by Sarah Jarrett

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the St. Francis House
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ST. FRANCIS HOUSE ASSOCIATES An Idea Whose Time is Coming

Some time ago Gail Keeney-Mulligan who uses the St. Francis House Hermitage for regular retreats and has been part of both our national and diocesan urban ministry networks asked how people like her who live too far away to be part of the daily life and work of SFH could have a more formal connection. So we have been mulling that idea over and we invite you to join us.

It seems clear that we are looking for something different from the traditional "Associates" model focused on prayer and financial support. Ideas so far:

- * Involvement in a local form of ministry with emphasis on friendship with neighbors rather than programs and professional/client distinctions;
- * Daily morning or evening prayer when possible with others;
- * Daily reading from Robert Ellsberg's "All Saints";
- * Local gatherings for Clarification of Thought;
- * Regular use of the African Method of Bible Study;
- * Opportunity for regular individual retreats at St. Francis House and/or with a colleague group;
- * Written reflections which could be shared in the *Troubadour*;
- * Disciplined financial discernment not necessarily resulting in financial support for SFH but working together towards the liberation of God's people including ourselves.

These are initial ideas for what a framework of such individual/group relationships with SFH might look like. What do you think? Please write or e-mail us. We will share initial responses with the board at our Annual Meeting 9/30 - 10/2. Look forward to hearing from you!

IN THIS ISSUE

Laura Burfoot, "A FRESH Summer"
Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, "Broad Street Blues"
Sarah Jarrett on Social Services and art:
 "My Life Now" and "Hanging by a Thread"
Mark Auer, Review of Multitude
Nate Jarrett on Summer at SFH
June Anniversary Fiesta – Photos
Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, "How are We Franciscan?"
St. Francis House Associates: An Idea

Centerfold Section: **FRESH TELLING**
Insert: Clarification of Thought Schedule
 Food Survey



"... By a 'planetary culture' I mean the kind of
 societies that would follow on a new
 understanding
of that relatively recent institution, the national
 state,
an understanding that might enable us to leave it
 behind.
The state is greed made legal, with a monopoly
 on violence;
a natural society is familial and cautionary. A
 natural society
is one that "follows the way," imperfectly but
 authentically....
If we are lucky, we may eventually arrive at a
 world of relatively
mutually tolerant small societies attuned to their
 local natural regions
and united overall by a profound respect and
 love for the mind and
 nature of the universe."

From "Earth House Hold" in *The Gary Snyder Reader*, p. 41 - (Shape improvised)

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