

TROUBADOUR

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



July 2000

Vol. 2, No. 2

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FINANCES AND CONVERSION OF LIFE

An Interview with Anne Scheibner

At the May meeting, the Board agreed that disclosure and openness are important to the health and life of any organization. Since we are at the beginning of the story of St. Francis House, now is the time that norms and expectations get established both for those living in the community and for our friends and supporters. Hence the following interview between the Rev. Canon Edward Rodman, a member of the Board, and Anne Scheibner. We look forward to others joining the conversation.

Ed Rodman: *How is St. Francis House being financed starting with the purchase of the New London property?*

Anne Scheibner: Last June Emmett and I personally lent \$40,000 which we are prepared to forgive over a ten year period. I also arranged a no interest \$55,000 loan from Equity Trust which is to be repaid at \$10,000 a year starting in 2003. Equity Trust has agreed to give first priority in the use of funds repaid from this loan to help sustainable agriculture development in Southeastern Connecticut. Both loans were a hedge against our discovering that the experiment of St. Francis House was a mistake and we needed to sell the property and repay the initial investors.

Ed: *What about the capital improvements to the House which are totaling around \$150,000?*

Anne: By the time we got to the fall of last year, I was prepared simply to commit to the House and its future. I felt that I needed to apply the organizing principle of St. Francis House, namely "conversion of life," to some serious reflection and action on my own inherited and personal stock holdings. For the last 30 years I have used the modest income from the stock that I inherited to do the work I felt called to do. I helped start the Drop In Learning Center in New London, worked as national organizer for the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church, and made art – thanks to the freedom that those financial resources gave me. But my sense of the economy and of the way of life that Jesus calls me to has changed. The old economy that my parents and their parents knew was built on making things by machinery that people once made or grew for themselves – everything from clothes, to houses, to food. People had to leave their land and homes in "the old country" to make that economy work and that is how the Scheibners ended up at the American Velvet Company in Stonington. I won't try to discuss here what I think the implications of the new global economy are. Suffice it to say that Christians have always lived in the midst of Empire and been called to a different standard of life.

Continued from page 1.

I have concluded that St. Francis House is a long-term investment in the renewal of community in the New London area, and so for the first time in my life I am investing capital in the community instead of the stock market. More reflection will come later and possibly with other people wrestling with similar issues. It's an example of "acting [my] way into a new way of thinking." We have received two other gifts of stock as well, and that is what is covering the expense of rehabbing the first and third floors of the house.

There are two apartment units attached to the main house and members of Calvary Church in Stonington did a wonderful job sprucing up and furnishing one apartment as the **Calvary Hermitage**. Calvary parishioner Dorothea Gould died this year and left all of her furnishings to the church which the parish in turn shared with us. This apartment was ready for use by the board in May and has already been used by a Franciscan from Texas who came and helped paint the third floor. The hermitage will be available for those who come to work with us for short or extended periods of time.

Capital gifts continue to be welcome as well since there are other rehab projects including the garden and making a play area for younger guests in the house, as well as an additional rear apartment.

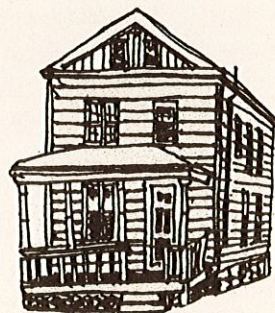
In addition to the capital being invested there is a goodly amount of sweat equity. About a dozen people have been involved in painting the former attic on the third floor where the children and Emmett and I will have our family space and bedrooms. Sarah and I laid and grouted the hearth for a gas log stove which will provide heat and anchor the sitting room in our family space.

Ed: How about the regular budget for the House and how are contributions used?

Anne: Last October the Board approved a three year budget of approximately \$42,000 a year. Thanks to the generosity of our friends all around the country we received \$39,572.50 in contributions (in addition to capital gifts) during our first year which ended June 30. These funds cover heat and utilities, taxes (we didn't try to exempt the House from contributing to the city's police and fire protection), printing and postage for the **TROUBADOUR** and food for various gatherings. What it does not include is any salary, stipends or medical insurance for us or for anyone who may join us. Emmett has been working two part-time jobs and we still have most of my private income. So we have been fine during this year of rehab and transition. By fall when we are moved in and may have others beginning to join the St. Francis House community, we will begin to discern how to handle food and medical expenses as a household.

Ed: The Board has committed to its own reflection on when and how each of us might make a sacrificial gift. What do you see as the House's needs for the immediate future?

Anne: We will be reporting to the Board in the fall about how things are going as we really begin to live here and continue to meet our neighbors. We are beginning to develop a list of things needed for the House. We hope that our friends who have contributed to this start-up year will continue to do so and that others will be moved to do so and explore their own sense of what "conversion of life" means.



WE'RE IN!

Some Rambling Thoughts by Fr. Emmett



July 8, 2000. WE'RE IN! The building officials came yesterday to inspect the renovated third floor living quarters and to issue a certificate of occupancy. We slept in our various bedrooms – the children on their new beds, Anne and I on a mattress on the floor – for the first time. We prayed together this morning and enjoyed breakfast and an early view of Wimbledon on the TV. How did we get here from where we were in March, the date of the last issue of the **TROUBADOUR**?

Anne and I attended the 20th Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus in Minneapolis early in March. The Board of the Caucus voted to begin the transition of Caucus administrative support to St. Francis House with enthusiastic energy from Caucus members and friends. We met with Ed Rodman and Diane Pollard, the Treasurer, in May and began the process. We will plan and promote the 2001 Assembly in New London from St. Francis House and share our ministry here with the national urban mission constituency next year.

Also in March, Anne and I served on a panel at the Diocese of Connecticut's *Jubilee 2000 Conference*. We spoke about St. Francis House and made a number of new friends in the Diocese.

The Friday evening scheduling of our bi-weekly **meetings for clarification of thought** proved far more popular than Wednesday nights. Attendance has been between 15 and 25 to hear Armando Gonzalez, Linda Powell, the Trident Resistance Network, Ken Leech, Emmett on Blake and radical discipleship and Anne on Jubilee and the land. We're already planning a fall-winter schedule, so suggestions of topics and speakers are welcome.

Emmett conducted Vestry retreats for Calvary Church, Stonington, and St. Mark's Chapel, Storrs, the latter at St. Francis House. He also joined the **April 4 Coalition** as a witness for peace and justice in Hartford on the 32nd anniversary of Martin Luther King's martyrdom.

In connection with the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, Emmett spoke on St. Francis House at a meeting of the Brother Juniper Fellowship (New England Tertiaries) and attended a meeting of the Anglican Franciscan Peace and Justice Group in New York City. He stayed at St. Elizabeth's Friary in Bushwick and the meeting was at Maryhouse, the Catholic Worker house where Dorothy Day lived her last years. At the conclusion of the day, he celebrated Mass for the Franciscan group and Catholic Workers who were present in Dorothy's chapel. It was awesome!

Anne had a retreat day at the Mercy Center in Madison, CT, to prepare for her talk on land and the Jubilee. She also participated as a delegate to the Connecticut Diocesan Convention which elected two new suffragan bishops: Jim Curry and Wilfrido Ramos, both friends of St. Francis House.

She has continued to be the coordinator of renovations and boss of painting crews on the renovation of the House. Anne looks forward to finishing that task and being free to begin to meet neighbors and make connections for St. Francis House in New London.

Nate and Sarah finished school and are enjoying their vacation. Sarah will begin 5th grade next year at nearby St. Mary's School, and Nate will continue at the Williams School on the Connecticut College campus. Each has chosen the color-scheme for his and her bedrooms upstairs and helped to paint them. I think they're looking forward almost as much as I am to being settled in one place.

OUR FRIENDS RESPOND

Some of our friends, Franciscan and others, heard of our moving in via the Internet, and responded immediately:

How wonderful that you and the family have reached this milestone in your journey into ministry! God bless you all. **John Snyder, Austin, TX**

Congratulations on "being in." I look forward to getting caught up with you at the next Episcopal Urban Caucus. We are also moving forth with some sort of "vision" in the pacific northwest.

Diane Aid, Kent, WA

What wonderful news! Is there anything we on the [Anglican Franciscan Internet] list can do to assist you in your ministry? Will keep you and yours in my prayers.

Don Josephs, Waldorf, MD

Praise God! Look forward to seeing you!

Bill Lowndes, Snellville, GA

Beginner's Mind

*Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 2:4)*

After it empties itself, it begins:
A solitary duck churns steadily
Across Lambert's Cove towards Quanaduck.
A cormorant turns its sharp head
Right to left like a submarine's periscope,
Then dives to escape collision. Soon the surface
Of the water is still again. Like a mirror,
It reflects the scudding clouds on the surface
Of the sky's blue screen. Beginner's sky.

Emmett Jarrett



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