

TROUBADOUR

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



Fall 2003

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ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OPENING THE GATES

New London ministry expands with a little help and a lot of faith

By **BETHE DUFRESNE**
Day Staff Writer

New London

WANTED: RADICAL DISCIPLES to carry on the tradition of St. Francis of Assisi, 13th-century champion of nonviolence and the poor.

Lodging provided within easy

walking distance of Superior Courthouse, public housing project for the elderly and disabled, Williams Park and Labor Ready temporary employment agency — motto: "Work Today, Paid Today."

Sacrifice and commitment required, but unseen rewards are potentially great.

No such ad has yet been placed by St. Francis House, an Episcopal urban ministry located at 30 Broad St. But with the renovation of a neighboring 19th-century dwelling, it is expanding both its mission and

See **NEW LONDON** page **A3**



■ *Dick Marks, a St. Francis House board member, sweeps the stairs at the Episcopal urban ministry's newly acquired house on Broad Street in New London Friday. Photo Jennifer Lynn Paige*

This article is reprinted by permission of "The Day." It appeared on page one on October 4, 2003

The Financial Picture: Brighter than We Thought

Both St. Francis and Dorothy Day were not ashamed to beg. St. Francis House has followed their example in our fund-raising efforts. We have simply asked for money, and people have given it. We are deeply grateful to all of our many benefactors. We didn't know how grateful until September, when our tax accountant filed our five year review with the IRS. (We passed, by the way, and are now a permanent nonprofit public charitable organization.) Since 1999 we have received \$36,000 in financial contributions! Of that amount, \$128,000 was from our family, and was used to purchase and renovate our original building, St. Francis House, at 30 Broad Street. Friends in the public contributed \$232,000, including \$12,000 a year from the Episcopal Urban Caucus, and two generous friends who contributed \$25,000 and \$63,000 each! Most of the money has come in small donations of \$25 or \$50 or \$100, or in two cases, \$5 a month! The first thing we want to say is **THANK YOU!**

Where has all the money gone? The capital fund project to buy and renovate the house at 32 Broad Street to expand the community raised nearly \$104,000. This has provided \$40,000 toward the purchase price of \$140,000. We also spent \$37,500 in FY 2002-2003, and \$27,000 in FY 2003-2004, beginning July of this year, for renovations. We still owe \$105,000 to Equity Trust for the purchase of the house and anticipate at least \$30,000 more in renovation expenses. So we are still begging — looking for an additional \$135,000 this year to finish the job.

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New London ministry 'opens the gates' with acquisition of house

From A1
its footprint in downtown New London.

Founded by the Rev. Emmett Jarrett and his wife, Anne Scheibner, St. Francis House doesn't offer religious or social programs. The founders' goal, in the tradition of the Catholic Worker movement, is to promote social justice by living amongst the poor, fostering dialogue and offering hospitality, help and hope.

At times during the past year, the addition of the house next door tested their strength.

"It was an awful winter," said Scheibner Friday, recalling how the pipes and even the sewer lines froze in their new acquisition.

The ministry's board of directors bought the near-ruined house, which had heat in just a few upstairs rooms, for \$140,000 in August 2002.

Having already managed the renovation of St. Francis House, also in bad shape when they purchased it for \$95,000, Scheibner was relieved to find a willing site manager in 30-year-old carpenter Arthur Lerner.

Lerner's wife, Emily, grew up in Lyme. Inspired by Scheibner and Jarrett, who are the national coordinators of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, the Lerner family recently moved back to Lyme with their baby daughter, Ellanora.

"Arthur has done a fabulous job" with the roughly 5,000-square-foot house at 32 Broad St., said Scheibner. It will have three apartments, and offices and gathering spaces downstairs. Its cracked shingles will soon be painted.

As for the roof, everyone is just praying for time.

Lerner has worked with a disparate, mostly volunteer crew, including board members, craftsman apprentices and people serving court-appointed sentences. Some of those working out their

community service sentences, said Jarrett, continued even afterward to volunteer.

Volunteers are still needed. But Friday was a day to celebrate the progress.

Fittingly, it was the calendar feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, whose radical challenge to the material early 13th-century Christian church became a model of sacrifice, simplicity, compassion and nonviolence.

Lerner, who was raised in the Jewish faith, shares those ideals. He and his wife also share Scheibner's interest in urban gardens.

Candidates for St. Francis House's new space, said Jarrett, are apt to be young people just out of college wanting a life of service, or retired people, whose children are grown, wanting to give unselfishly of their acquired skills and wisdom.

"Radical discipleship is key," he said.

With its large bay windows, numerous fireplaces, stunning staircase and remaining fine woodwork, the house will be an appealing place to live and work.

By design and necessity, the renovation has not been done to House & Garden standards. But "beauty is important," said Jarrett, and they have preserved whatever they could.

Scheibner and Jarrett will continue living next door at St. Francis House with their daughter, Sarah. They have a son, Nathaniel, who is in college.

In keeping with their vocation, they also welcome certain guests in their home for extended stays. Jody Mumley of Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., a chaplain intern at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, is living with them for six months.

Mumley, who used to live in this area, found St. Francis House through St. James Episcopal Church, where Jarrett is associate pastor.

"It's been a blessing, a safe

haven," said Mumley Friday. "These folks not only feed me, but feed me spiritually."

"This house is a busy house," observed Mumley. Every day is full of surprises, some good, some bad, and some merely ... surprising.

"Oh, Emmett," sighed Scheibner as she eyed a donated altar that had just been delivered to the front parlor of St. Francis House. The altar once belonged to a bishop.

It was a fine piece, but it was big, and the small parlor is mostly used for Friday night discussions, called "Clarifications of Thought," not religious services.

Although the two Broad Street properties have nonprofit status, St. Francis House has not applied for an exemption from local taxes. "That's an expensive choice," said Jarrett, but contributing to the city's tax base is one of their values.

Jarrett and Scheibner support their own family, and St. Francis House is supported by donations. The board of directors raised \$360,000 over the past four years, said Jarrett, including \$110,000 in the capital campaign to buy 32 Broad.

"It hasn't been easy," said board member Dick Marks of Silver Spring, Md., who is retired from the World Health Organization. In town Friday with his wife, Karen, he was sweeping floors in the new dwelling.

Another board member, Annie Brown, had donned rubber gloves to scrub an oven. She is a professor of social work at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Both Jarrett and Scheibner have been active in the peace movement, opposing the war in Iraq and promoting universal disarmament.

Little by little, they are creating around them a community.

"The call has gone out," said Jarrett. "Let's open the gates, and see who comes."

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Progress Report from 32 Broad Street

by Arthur Lerner

The last time I wrote the construction program of St. Francis House was just beginning. We have been working diligently. Over the summer we have built many things, which I would like now to report on.

Our greatest accomplishment has been the wonderfully eclectic team of lay volunteers, folks with court-appointed community service, and professional sub-contractors that has come together in order to get the work done. The relationships that have formed have been a joy, as people from each of those categories have become friends of St. Francis House.

Opportunities abound to get involved. I hope that as the weather becomes cold some new faces will appear to do the indoor work that lies ahead. In June we passed our rough inspection, which means that all the basic electrical, plumbing and heating work is passed and we are free to cover up the walls. Through the summer we concentrated on the second floor residential space and I am happy to announce that both the second and third floors are ready for residents.

Looking forward to the cold months coming, the big work is to finish the first floor office space. This will entail a lot of sheet-rocking. Towards this project we could use scaffolding, and work lights, if anyone has these things to lend. We are working towards having this phase done by the end of the year.

Meanwhile the last of the warm days finds us preparing to have the house painted. We are patching the siding where needed and plan to have the painting done by a professional.

So, this is where we are in our project of rejuvenating a beautiful old house for a beautiful new purpose. If reading this has only whetted your appetite, please come by and see it for yourself. And lend a hand!



32 Broad St. Site Manager Arthur Lerner confers with painters Rab Nawaz and James McNeil

The Financial Picture *cont'd from page one.*

These figures also reveal that it has cost approximately \$128,000 to run the house over the past four years: to pay taxes, insurance, fuel, utilities, publications, telephone, books, travel, etc. (The Scheibner-Jarrett household receives no salary for our work and pays for our own food, clothing, and all other personal expenses, including children's education.) So, we learn from these figures that it costs about \$32,000 a year to keep the House and the ministry going. This amount will no doubt increase when the house at 32 Broad Street comes into full use by the community. We'll have to heat, pay utilities and fuel bills, taxes, insurance, etc., for it as well as the house we live in now.

As Ed Rodman said at our October Board meeting, "Now we have a track record. We have raised serious money, and we spend serious money on our ministry." Ed thinks this should make it easier for us to raise more money. We hope so. We keep on begging, and hoping the picture stays bright, the work keeps getting done, and God is being glorified in everything.

Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF



Brrr.....aaahhh!

by Jody Mumley

Honestly, the thought of spending October 2003 to April 2004 in Connecticut to complete my extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education did not quite thrill me. The winters are hard in New England. I checked the Farmers' Almanac which predicts yet another harsh winter this year. Brrr....!

I love my little cottage in Ponte Vedra, Florida. I love sitting on my back porch enjoying the Florida sunsets and listening to the frogs, the birds, and yes, even the peacocks! But God's hand in my life during my CPE application process was so palpable that I couldn't ignore it: "my ways are not your ways, my thoughts are not your thoughts." God had something planned for me in New England this year that *only* He could have orchestrated!

After accepting the invitation to stay at St. Francis House I can see God's plan. A piece of good advice from my CPE supervisor was to make sure that I have a strong support system for myself while doing the CPE unit because of the intensity of the course. Not only am I doing CPE for these six months, I'm taking courses for my Master of Divinity degree and have readings and responses to complete as part of my ordination process. With such a huge load, I was afraid that I would keep my head for God but lose some of my heart. I prayed to be spiritually fed during these six months.

I knew my family and friends in southeastern Connecticut would be nurturing, but then God threw in a bonus! He placed me in St. Francis House. I can't begin to tell you all that St. Francis House means to me. I can tell you that I am being nourished spiritually and am learning many interesting and wonderful things here. I am grateful for that. God has made His plan clear in bringing me to St. Francis House.

Let me tell you something about "living in community" – the people, the neighborhood, and of course the house itself.



Jody Mumley and her study companion Otis in her sitting room at St. Francis House.

As New England sheds her autumn colors and goes quickly from sweater weather to downright cold, it is warm at St. Francis House. Living in community is like autumn colors that never fall. The house is a revolving door for community meetings, Bible study, clarification of thought and friends at St. Francis House, not to mention accepting folks like me into the "mix of colors." Fr. Emmett greets me every morning before Morning Prayer with a cheery "Good morning!" at the breakfast table. He is joyful and excited about the questions I'm asking. I've had to read a book called *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* and in many ways that describes me. We pray Morning Prayer every day from a Franciscan version of *The Book of Common Prayer* and I'm encouraged to stand at the podium to read Scripture as part of the group. Anne Scheibner and Mardie Chapman complete our usual foursome. Once a week we gather after Morning Prayer for community meeting centered on Bible study. I am learning quickly how fortunate I am to be living in this household. The discipleship of the community I am finding is a safe haven for spiritual development and experiences. Mardie, a local pastor, has many words of wisdom regarding CPE and is always an encouragement to me. Anne is one amazing woman! She glides around the house with the agenda for the day in her mind as she organizes the events of the week. And

believe me, that is no small task. Talk about being a house of hospitality! So much is happening in this house that activities need to be placed on the calendar so we all know which event is happening and when. Also, Anne was an organizer during the movement for women to be ordained in the Episcopal Church, for which I am especially grateful.

Both Emmett and Anne are magical storytellers. Often after dinner we will sit around the table and talk. Well, actually it's really me listening to them and reaping the rewards of their experiences. Both Anne and Emmett have their fingers on the pulse of the neighborhood and community at large. It is my hope they will soon be speaking to outlying churches about the lifestyle, the philosophy and the needs of St. Francis House. Richard Foster writes, "When the whole of our vision is filled with the Holy, petty selfishness is squeezed out. Perpetual God-consciousness of necessity eliminates self-consciousness." The community would do well to sit at the feet of these two. Their vision for the urban community is inspirational, built on faith and humility.

One of the courses I'm taking during my time here is "Urban Ministries." St. Francis House is located in downtown New London, next door to a large HUD apartment building, one block from the courthouse, and across the street from "Labor Ready" It is urban! The previous resident, Tupper Morehead, had the leisure to sit on the front porch with Otis the dog during his field education here. My introduction to the neighborhood was not so leisurely but just as powerful. I was driving home from work after closing at about 9:45 p.m. during the first week I was here. I stopped at a red light on Broad Street about two blocks from St. Francis House. No one was around except a couple crossing the street. After glancing at them I noticed that the man (about six feet tall) had the woman (about five feet tall) in a choke hold (his arm around her neck) and was shaking her. She pulled her head out of his hold and tried to get away. Honestly, my first thought wasn't very noble: "Great, my first four days in town and I have to deal with a domestic



abuse incident." My mind, body, and soul were so tired and I wanted to go to bed. But of course, no one else was around except me. And I'm not a gal who will let domestic violence happen without doing something about it. I rolled down my window. I asked the woman if she was okay. Did she need help? She gestured and told me in Spanish to call the police. I drove the two blocks home, called 911 and went back to the scene to make sure she was okay and that the police could locate her. Five police cars showed up in a hurry. They stopped the couple in front of the fire station. A firefighter who spoke Spanish said that the man had beaten the woman for about 14 blocks, that she had called out to other people on the street but no one would help her until I did. She was so scared and grateful. She cried in my arms, deep sobs from her soul. I held her and told her that no one should have to go through what she did. I held her until she was completely drained of her need to cry. That moment may have meant more to me than to Victoria. I was humbled. I confessed my moment of selfishness before rolling down my window to help this woman. After the police took her statement and arrested the man I took the woman home to get her car and then went with her to the hospital. Her face was red from being punched, her lips were cut and bleeding, she had bruises on her arms because he had been dragging her by the right arm.

Exhausted from a long day of prayer, study, work and living in New London, I went to bed knowing that for a moment in Victoria's life and my life there was peace.

Tupper had written that he became "aware that urban ministry is a ministry of presence." One cannot put one's head in the sand living at St. Francis House! I know that I am fed spiritually in St. Francis House and my concern about keeping my heart soft will be answered just through "living in community." At St. Francis House one's heart for God and others is both a necessity and a result of the experience of living together. This winter I will be warmed by the love, the hospitality, stimulating and



exciting conversations, and Fr. Emmett's fantastic cooking! Ahhh....!

We who live here, and all who come through our doors, know the meaning of the ministry of presence, and the presence of God's peace.

Jody Mumley is spending six months at St. Francis House while she does an extended quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, New London.



LETTERS

From the Rev. Carol Tookey, TSSF,
Farmington, NM

... I wanted to comment on your newsletter that you sent. Your vision for St. Francis House is very compelling. When my husband Les and I were out for our walk last week he asked me what I thought about it. I told him that if I weren't married and didn't have commitments here, I'd go in a heartbeat. He said he felt the same way. Not that we are in any way able to make that kind of move. But I believe your vision of community is the only way forward for people now. The old individualism is killing us off. Wendell Berry insists that the only true community is community in place – and I suspect that he's right – even though our Third Order is "community" of sorts. I really hope that you are able to find more people who will fit in with the vision you have articulated. And if you ever feel the inspiration to move out west, let us know.

Retreat At St. Francis House A Sermon for August 24, 2003

by the Rev. Gail Keeney-Mulligan

This past week, I stayed in a hermitage at St. Francis House in New London. My quarters consisted of a small bedroom, bathroom, kitchenette and study. There was no television, radio, computer or phones in the hermitage.

I slept 11 hours the first night and took a two hour nap the first full day recognizing that my first need was Sabbath rest. In addition to sleep, I said Morning Prayer every day at 8:00 a.m., in the chapel. I did my own prayer and meditation at other times during the day and focused most of my energy on listening rather than talking to God. I read four books on spirituality, mission and church dynamics.

In my listening, I heard God in so many ways. In the second day, after my anxiety about being away from my family and St. John's abated, I realized the grace of Sabbath time – God was very present with me in my sleep and in the quiet. It was like sitting with one's lover in a sacred space, simply mindful of his or her presence and enjoying the moment.

God spoke to me in my dog, Becky. I do not think it an accident that dog is God spelled backwards. I think our pets often convey God's undying love and faithfulness to us, as well as a demand for our presence and attention. As I would get out my calendar or start to balance my check book or call St. John's to check messages, Becky would stand in front of me and bounce and bark... a thirteen year old with arthritis in her hips, demanding my attention, for a walk, for some snuggling, play or food. She was God's instrument for calling me back to the present moment and the enjoyment of relationship. "I am here. I am now. Be here with me, really here!" she says. And so does God, every moment of every day. Much of the time, as I read, prayed or meditated, she just rested with me or watched me with her loving eyes, content to know that I am abiding with her. Judaism, Celtic Christianity and American Indian spirituality are all rampant with the acknowledgement of relationship to God through creation and the creatures of God.



THE URBAN NETWORKER

Fall 2003

THE NEW COMMUNITY

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

What is God doing in the world? What is Jesus "up to" in the Church? The Minneapolis General Convention made it clear that the Episcopal Church is "inclusive." What is it that we are to be included into? What is the "new community" that the Spirit is building in the Episcopal Church and the wider Christian family in the USA? What prophetic word does the Church have to speak to the cities of America and the world? What is the critical context of the work of the Episcopal Urban Caucus in the new global economy? What do we have to say today about racism, poverty, and militarism?

The Episcopal Urban Caucus does not deliver the "answers" to its members or anyone else. Following Jesus of Nazareth, we ask the questions that make the leaders of Church and State sit up and take notice. In "the new community" that is our emerging Church, we ask the questions that help us undertake "the mission of God" (*missio Dei*) in the world where God is already acting to establish saving justice and authentic peace?

Some things are clear:

- * Racism is not dead but metastasizing, taking new and more virulent forms as "the new majority" threatens the wielders of power across the planet.
- * The role of young people, in the Caucus as in the Church at large, is being recognized, and a new generation is arising among us.
- * Economic justice and community organizing are more critical than ever, and Baltimore offers us strong examples of work in classic urban arenas.
- * The most powerful nation in the world is imposing its will upon others through military power, and the poor in America are paying the price of war and recession while the rich get richer through tax cuts and reduction of human services.
- * It is clear now that peace is not one value among many but the essential requirement for the survival of the human community.
- * New wine is fermenting, old wineskins are bursting, and the Spirit is calling us, with others, into new relationships of resistance to war and repression and solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

Come to Baltimore February 18-21, 2004, and help us shape both the style and agenda of the Caucus as we focus our common mind on urban ministry, and a Church to work together in a world that craves a new community to lead God's people in their struggles for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

REGISTER NOW! The Assembly will be held at the Sheraton Baltimore North in Towson, MD, **Wednesday, February 18 through Saturday, February 21, 2004.** Reservations received by Friday, January 16, 2004, will be at the **early bird rate of \$250.** Registrations received after that date pay the **full price of \$300.** Hotel reservations single, double or triple are \$89 plus tax. **Telephone the hotel directly at 1-800-433-7619.** To use Klingerman Travel for airline reservations call **1-800-545-9154** and ask for Judy Steele.

WHITHER THE URBAN CAUCUS?

by the Rev. Canon Ed Rodman

The upcoming Assembly in Baltimore marks four years since I relinquished my responsibilities as Coordinator the Episcopal Caucus and those responsibilities came to rest at St. Francis House in New London, Connecticut. Now following General Convention I have been asked to reflect on this transition and offer some thoughts for the next step. As many of you will recall, the thinking that prompted the board to suggest that the administrative and coordinating functions of the Caucus be shifted to St. Francis House had to do with the hope that by incarnating our headquarters in a local ministry of social justice and reconciliation committed to living out as fully as possible the "Rule of Life" of the Caucus would help us gain a new perspective for the twenty-first century. Enough time has passed so that one can begin to see that while this may have been a good move in some respects, other issues and dynamics have emerged which require us to evaluate carefully the future of this experiment for the long haul. It is important to remember that the fundamental issue of this decision involved a five year commitment to St. Francis House for the dual purpose of helping that fledgling ministry get off the ground with some regular basis for support and at the same time provide the Caucus with a base of operations for a settled period until the next phase could be envisioned and brought into being. Thus we are at a point coming into Baltimore where we need to face the future squarely and honestly.

To begin with, certain things are clear and should not be tampered with but continually improved upon. They are:

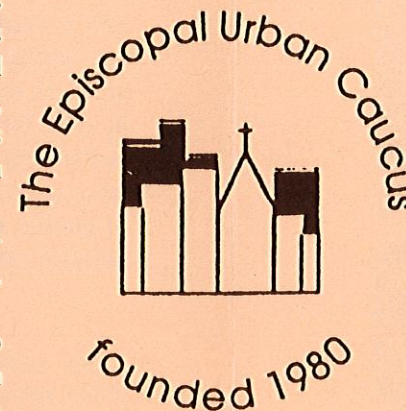
- The annual assemblies
- Participation in the Consultation
- Continuing the Urban Networker
- Encouraging periodic publication of issue papers

- Strengthening, but not changing the current board structure through greater participation by as broad a spectrum of the membership as possible
- Continuing our support and nurture of the Jubilee Ministries, the Episcopal Economic Justice Network and the Anti-racism program of the National Church.

These are all fundamental commitments that have grown out of our twenty-four years of existence and must be humbly celebrated and vigorously defended. At the same time, there are also some fairly clear challenges that we face as we look about us in both Church and society. These are:

- Re-establishing urban ministry as a priority in the life of the national Church, especially at the programmatic level.
- Finding and supporting creative ways to network for mutual support local urban ministries which are facing unprecedented challenges and stress, e.g., "Can a re-invigorated Church and City Conference be enabled?" and "What can we do to encourage the nascent re-emergence of an Urban Bishops' Coalition under a new name?"
- How do we honor and incarnate our stated commitment of reaching out to youth and young adults so that the next generation can find its way to becoming effective advocates for justice and peace within the Church?
- And finally, in the wake of the turmoil surrounding Gene Robinson and same sex blessings, how do we move beyond the media hype and hysteria and keep the Church on point regarding the rightness of full inclusion of all people on the one hand and the need to refocus our energy and resources to ministries of justice and peace?

As I was recently quoted, we do have better things to do and we need to move on seeking to respond to where God is working in the world and we need to be God's co-workers at a time such as this. This in turn raises the issues that the Caucus must weigh



A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR A JUST IMMIGRATION POLICY

by Br. John George Robertson, SSF

For the last generation or more, much necessary manual labor in the US has been done by workers who are in impossible situations. People who pick and prepare our food, wash our dishes and maintain our lawns and gardens (jobs that we definitely need done) live in a legal limbo. They are breaking US federal law when they do our work for minimum wage or less. They fear they will be deported, they work in very difficult and unreliable situations. They send millions of dollars home to support spouses, children and parents. We Americans have treated these brothers and sisters shamefully.

Many of us have become particularly aware of this situation because of the freedom ride from Los Angeles to New York completed at Flushing Meadow Park on St. Francis Day.

This summer, in a resolution sponsored by the Diocese of Long Island the General Convention of the Episcopal Church took a strong stand regarding the rights of all workers in the US. Resolution C033 states that the convention urges

that the Congress of the United States enact legislation to expand the temporary workers' programs to include all persons currently residing in the United States engaged in meaningful labor, as well as overseas workers offered employment in the United States through formal contractual arrangements in response to the labor needs of specific sectors of the economy; and

that such temporary workers receive such compensation and benefits for themselves and their dependents living with them that parallel those available to other legal residents such as the Federally mandated minimum hourly wage,

as it seeks to strengthen its organizational capacity and share the burden of living into and maintaining our legacy and calling. Some simple thoughts for your contemplation to be addressed by the Board and the Assembly in Baltimore:

- Has the time come when we need to re-think the administration and operational function of the Caucus? Is it realistic to expect that Emmett and Anne can run St. Francis House (which seems to be coming into its own after three years of struggle) and coordinate and administer all that we would like to do?
- Has the time come when we need to see a tri-partite leadership model emerge that addresses the three principal functions of the Caucus which I believe are
 - A. Maintenance, e.g., financial records, membership, communication and coordination of Assemblies.
 - B. Engaging in a more proactive and sustained advocacy initiative on all levels of the Church's life reasserting the centrality of urban ministry and its social justice components as the heart of the Gospel and not peripheral to the Church's mission.
 - C. Through our publications and strategic cooperation with others, e.g., the Consultation, can we fill the vacuum that the demise of the *Witness* portends?

If we are truly what is left of the "left" and see our calling ultimately as one of prophetic witness, how can we effectively structure ourselves to do this with vigor and renewed commitment? I believe the Caucus has faced similar challenges in the past and has found a way out of no way. Our genius lies in our resiliency, openness to new thinking and the willingness to take risks in Jesus' name. Please put your thinking caps on, examine your own reservoir of time, talent and treasure and bring all of that and yourself to the Assembly where we can begin to respond to the daunting agenda which flows from the answers to these questions.

Social Security, drivers' licenses, medical care and education; and

that based upon a specified period of residence in the United States, such workers have the option of adjusting to permanent resident status, which could lead to naturalization; and

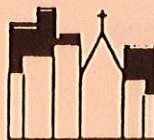
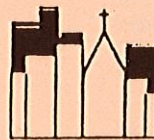
that this resolution be sent to concerned members of Congress and state legislatures as an expression of the Episcopal Church.

We can be proud that our church is on record.

While the Convention was meeting, a bill was introduced to the Senate (S1461) by Senator McCain and in the House (HR2899) by Reps. Kolbe and Flake that would change permanently the rules of immigration in the US. The Border Security and Immigration Act would guarantee that every worker in the US would have legal status, whether here now or coming in the future. This act also gives workers access to full citizenship if they so desire. Under this bill, workers presently in the country and workers who will come later will be given full legal protection, the right to build a life here and a future for their families. No bill is ever perfect, no bill will establish God's Justice but legislation does define the basic structure under which we live. This legislation would move us dramatically forward.

It is surprising to many that Republicans would sponsor such a bill. Indeed another group of more conservative Republicans have sponsored a bill that would give workers only guest worker status and not the opportunity to become citizens and raise their families here. But everyone is coming to see that, because of the aging of the US population, we will be admitting millions of new workers to do the work we need done. The question before this country now is will they be "illegal," "guest workers," or immigrants.

Guest workers come for three years or six years to work. They have legal status, they are covered by labor protections but



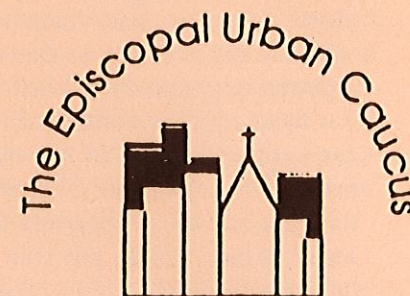
they must leave after six years. They cannot raise and educate their children in our country. Most of their children will be left behind in their country of origin. They are once again second class citizens in "the land of the free." Switzerland, Japan, and Germany all have these policies. This policy is shameful there and would be here; as shameful as keeping workers "illegal."

The US was built on immigration. Working people have come from every part of the world to contribute to the wealth of our land. They have been granted citizenship and have become a part of us. Surely future workers are owed the same opportunity.

Now is the time to act. Congress is in session and these Bills are in committee. Republicans are sponsoring them in a Republican-controlled Congress. Debate about the future of our immigration policy is happening right now, the bill is being "marked-up." Our elected representatives, whether Republican or Democrat, need to seize the moment and act in this session to pass a just immigration policy.

Brother John George Robertson, SSF, is a Franciscan friar who lives at St. Elizabeth's Friary in Brooklyn, NY. He is a member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

EUC ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 18-21, 2004 BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



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Keeney-Mulligan: continued from page 6

When I am connected with my dog, Becky, I am connected with my God.

God spoke to me in the out of doors in a very urban setting. Across the street from the hermitage is a day labor office, where men and women hang around all day waiting for work and waiting for friends who have been working and then they hang around through the night talking with one another. Living in a small and rural community as I do now, uneasiness had started to root itself in me about these strangers. But they smiled, spoke and often asked me about my dog and just made small talk. **They were connecting and they were God's reminder to me that there is rich community in contexts where life is hard.**

And again in the middle of this setting of concrete and asphalt, behind St. Francis House, is a community garden, with a dozen raised plant boxes claimed by people throughout the neighborhood and tended with loving care. Some are filled with daisies and others laden with tomatoes. **This serene space surrounded by the noise of sirens, vehicles, jack hammers, foot traffic and voices speaks of 'oasis in the desert', manna in the wilderness and the ability of each and all of us to nurture life and bear fruit in the seemingly most unlikely places.**

God had still more to say to me during the week of retreat in the labor that I was assigned in the old house being renovated next door for expansion of the ministry of St. Francis House. Arthur, a gentle-spirited Jewish carpenter, led me to a dark and musty basement where he piled a stack of old oak wood into my arms and his and then we ascended three flights of stairs to a small apartment under renovation. We laid the wood on the floor and stared at it. The pieces were old door and window frames and floor boards. They were splintered, scarred and banged up. They had screws and nails in them and layers of stains and paint. But we knew that the wood beneath them was beautiful. My task was to save what could be saved, to pull the nails, remove the splinters, scrape off the old paint and sand the rough spots smooth. At the end of the first day, about three hours of work, I was not a happy camper. My neck, in which I suffer degenerative arthritis, hurt a great deal

and my right arm and shoulder ached. I could not lift my right arm shoulder height and I could not sleep on my right side. This work was not fun, not easy and I was not satisfied with the end product in each of the boards I had done.

The second day, more rested, and more open to God's greater purpose in this, I became more attentive and present to my small and yet daunting task. God opened my heart and my eyes.

This banged up; scarred and splintered wood is us. It is me. It is you. It is St. John's. It is the Episcopal Church, it is God's world. This wood is not junk and it is not useless. Nor are my efforts a failure. I saw again the beauty in the Master's work. I saw in my hands working with the wood, God's hands working with God's people. My work was to be a laborer, bringing the true nature of God's work to the surface, to find under the scars and scratches, the splinters and paint, the beauty of God's creation.

I understood us, as the body of Christ, guided by the gentle Jewish carpenter, as builders, workers called to sand and restore that which is put into our hands. No, we cannot and will not restore to perfection what was created in perfection. That is the master builder's task. When we are done, we will still see nicks and scars and holes in the wood. But we will also see the beauty that is there and the value of each piece. In our work, as the Body of Christ, as carpenters working with the master, we can see again hints of what God created us to be and we can know that God uses us to frame the windows and doors of our world.

This beautiful wood is not only other, but it is you and it is me. And those around us are the community whose work it is to smooth our rough edges and help us to rediscover the beauty in which we are made. It is for example those who try our patience that are the ones who also teach us patience. The needy test our compassion. The hopeless challenge our steadfastness.

It took the solitude of this week to hear God's voice in the labor of the day. It took breaking out of the routine of everyday, to really hear God speaking to me.

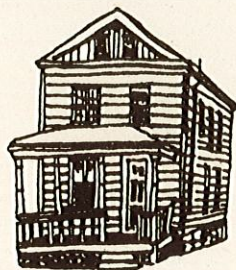
Becoming aware of these things in the second day, I fell in love with the task Arthur had given me to do and was sorry to have completed the task on the fourth day. I did not come away from the effort unmarked. I had a wound from the scraper on my wrist, a splinter under one of my finger nails and stains on my hands, along with the pain in my neck, shoulder and arm. I knew that, too, was a reminder that nothing God asks us to do in life comes without sacrifice. Love, is, in itself, sacrifice of I for other. As we work to address the scars of the world, we can expect to be scared. As we work to smooth out the rough places, we can anticipate resistance and we will feel the pain in our bodies and souls.

At the end of the week, as I came to pray in the chapel for the last time, I gave thanks for the beauty of the wood and stone from which our church is made, the clay from which we are made, and for the call to all of us to be Christ's hands and laborers in the work of restoring, healing, renewing, preserving the beauty and wonder of God's creation in all of us and in all that God has made.

I thank God for the nicks, splinters and scars that we bear, and the pain we share with one another and with the master carpenter, through which we are reminded of our dependence on God alone. We cannot make ourselves perfect and we cannot make one another perfect. "We are carpenters; not the master builder." (Oscar Romero)

One of our parishioners asked, "What do you do when you go on retreat, with no television, computer or telephone? What could you possibly do?"

Remove these things and God can finally get my attention, our attention, reminding me and us of who we are and whose we are and of how much we are loved.



LIVING AT ST. FRANCIS HOUSE- LIVING INTO THE EXPERIMENT

by Anne P. Scheibner

Thanks to the progress at 32 Broad Street, we are now ready for new people to join us! We can now accommodate 4-8 people as **residents** for 6 month to 2 year commitments and potentially longer periods as **partners**. Each resident would have separate living space but would participate in the prayer life, community Bible study, Clarification of Thought and work of the house as their primary focus. Sharing costs and dealing with issues such as health care and other long term issues would be part of our experiment together.

We can also welcome you for **retreat or sabbatical time**. Vacation or weekend retreats including pre-ordination retreats are possible using the Calvary Hermitage which includes separate kitchen facilities. Dick Marks came for a two-month sabbatical following his retirement. In all these instances the work of the resident focuses on his or her individual discernment processes. Spiritual direction is available.

Being an **intern** is an opportunity for seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate to live in community while fulfilling particular requirements of their training processes. Tupper Moorehead did a field placement this summer (see *Troubadour*, Summer 2003) and Jody Mumley is here now.

Please consider where you are in your own life and ministry and how being in residence at St. Francis House might be what you are called to do. We look forward to hearing from you.



View of St. Francis House's Community Garden located on the lower parking lot off Cottage St.

GARDENING PROJECT REPORT AND AREA FARM OUTREACH

A year ago we received a gift of specially treated lumber for use in making raised garden beds from the **WARM Shelter** of Westerly, RI. We hope soon to build a carport at 32 Broad to include raised beds and a green house.

But this May our seminary intern, high school and community volunteers including from the Alternatives to Incarceration Center, site manager and apprentice carpenter built beds at SFH. The Drop-In Learning Center and several other neighbors participated this year and are signed up for next. Our tomato crop this year provided the first delicious experience of St. Francis House tomato sauce and green tomato pies!

From a Clarification of Thought discussion on how St. Francis House can support non-violent practices, we are now posting what we are learning from our visits to area farmers on a new bulletin board at SFH. Look for future articles in the *Troubadour* as well.



IN CONVERSATION WITH CHUCK MATTHEI

This is the fourth and final installment of the transcript made from the tape of Chuck's February, 2002 talk leading off our "Living in Community" series. Chuck died in October, 2002 and we have been privileged to publish these reflections on his experience with Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, a life lived in community and voluntary poverty and this final portion which focuses on his work with developing sustainable agriculture and the questions the realities of farming pose for those of us with urban and organizational experience who want to reconnect to the land.

..... Different people came to the Worker and some were farmers, but most were not and John trained some of them if they wanted to become farmers. But there never was a plan, a training, a program, an organization chart that said we need this many farmers to produce this many hundreds of pounds of produce. It was just whoever came, whoever was willing and as much as they were willing. And then the food that wasn't eaten was shipped to the city. Was it a reliable supply? No. Was it helpful? Yes.

You have to decide what you want to do. You can always grow for the esthetic pleasure of it. You can grow and share what you have and make some contribution of useful, wholesome food and you can say we're actually going to produce x amount of food for this much of the community's food needs and generate this much income. And based on the experience of successful farmers, these are the number of personnel, this is the equipment: let's organize the endeavor.

The Catholic Worker never had it that together! So it has to do with choices, but not only choice of objective and style. There is also an inherent tension between that kind of productivity

and order and the commitment to hospitality and service. It's not easy to do both.

I spent a lot of years working on affordable housing and it's a very tempting vision to think that we can save money and make the housing cheaper by using lots of volunteer labor. Most non-profit groups have found that volunteer labor or job training does not match with cost effective production. It's often cheaper to pay the going rate to hire skilled builders to do the job and get the job done right the first time than it is to train young people or to utilize volunteers in the process. Now there may be other reasons to train people or to utilize the volunteers. I'm not suggesting that that's not as good a way to go. But I'm just saying you can't always do it all.

You may be familiar with Lanza del Vasto, a sort of "Fr. Gandhi" as he is sometimes called, who was the founder of an intentional community called the Community of the Ark in France which modeled itself in some ways on Gandhi's ashram and set up a discipline of life and labor and was also involved in larger social and political issues. They really were quite instrumental in mobilizing opposition to the French war in Algeria and did a number of things in social and political policy that were quite important in France.

The Community of the Ark was quite well organized and efficient, well managed and productive. They actually lived out Peter Maurin's vision of the self supporting, productive community on the land. They lived it out and made it work in a way that the Catholic Worker never did.

What we had in the Catholic Worker were hospitality houses in the country much more than we had



sustainable communities or productive farms. They had the other, but they didn't practice hospitality to the degree that the Catholic Worker did. That's not to say that they wouldn't have taken in somebody in need, but they didn't have 50 out of 80 people who were there largely because they had nowhere else to go or had serious physical, mental, substance abuse or other problems.

I remember one night at the local parish on the lower East Side when Lanza del Vasto was visiting the states that he and Dorothy engaged in a kind of public dialogue. They were talking about their respective experiences. It was kind of nice because what you had were the two dimensions of this vision (or the two horns of this dilemma!). You had one community that had realized the vision of the good life but at the cost of limiting its vulnerability and service. You had the other one which had thrown open its doors at the cost of never quite getting that other part accomplished.

I remember at some point talking about the difficulty of practicing that much hospitality while maintaining the order and productivity. Lanza del Vasto looked at Dorothy and he said, "Yes, the problem is that it's just so contagious" which I thought was a very graceful way to deal with the need or insanity which so many people brought to the Catholic Worker. He wasn't saying, "The problem is these crazy people." He was saying, "The problem is that it's just so contagious and the rest of us are so quick to succumb to the disruptive influence and temptations and that's why we have limited our exposure in that way."

So I just think you need to decide what your goals are in any particular situation and then you have to recognize that you may not always be able to do

everything in every place. I mean you could conceivably have a hospitality house that was predominantly defined by the spirit and practice of hospitality and then have an affiliated rural facility that was more defined by its productive activity. But to think that the two are going to be identical - in population, in management, in style - is probably unrealistic. So you want to be clear. What is it you're trying to achieve? What is required to do that and how much can you handle?

If the goal is to have a seriously productive agricultural operation then the first thing I would do is go visit several of the more successful farms more or less of the type that you are interested in. From our work at Equity Trust we could easily point to a number of them. Sit down and talk with those farmers and be serious about how many people, what kind of equipment, what kind of capital and what kind of acreage is required to produce this much food. You also need to think about the lifestyle and labor.

I noticed in your recent newsletter you set forth this vision for an expanded St. Francis House and there was a projection for acquiring a farm and reference to Community Supported Agriculture and the like. And, of course, our Equity Trust organization, among other things, is working with CSA's around the country helping them to acquire land and financing land acquisition, capital improvements and the like. So we have a lot of opportunity to interact with these farmers.

Most CSA farms in this country are not yet what I would call sustainable. They either haven't reached break even or they're operating on such tight margins that it's hard to believe that the

farm family will be able to stick it out for the long haul with the operation at the level that it's at even if they are able and willing to do it today. Are they at a point where they can carry it tomorrow? No, not yet. There are relatively fewer where you can say, "This looks like a sustainable lifestyle and a sustainable income." And that means that the farm has to be productive and not only support these folk today, but to anticipate their retirement and the transition to another generation.

If I were serious about an agricultural endeavor, I'd go look at some of the farms that have reached a certain threshold of success and sustainability. I'd talk with those farmers. I'll tell you a couple of things I've observed about those farmers. Almost every one of the people who've reached that level of success have an almost maniacal energy. *(laughter)* And these are not rich people. I'm talking about sustainability meaning that they've got to the point where they could keep it going. Any farmer could drop that farm and go into the traditional work force and double or triple his or her income *and* cut their hours in some other vocation. But at least they've built a farm that might work. So they work incredibly hard.

There are skills. They have developed agricultural skills. This is not a hobby. If they weren't trained for it or educated for it, they've gone and cultivated relationships with farmers and learned the craft.



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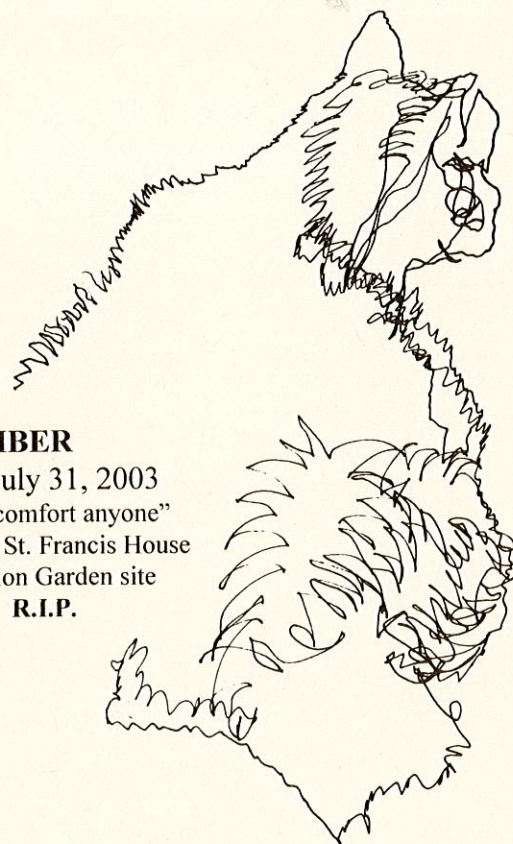
AMBER

c. 1989 - July 31, 2003

"a purr to comfort anyone"

Buried in the St. Francis House
Meditation Garden site

R.I.P.



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