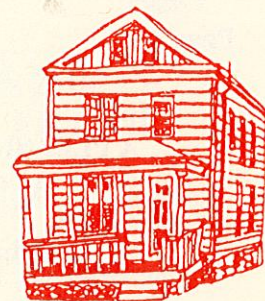


TROUBADOUR

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



BROAD STREET BLUES: A Reader in Radical Discipleship ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLICATION AND ORDER FORM IN THIS ISSUE

Francistide 2010

Vol. 12, No. 1

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BROAD STREET BLUES

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

ALMOST ANY AFTERNOON or evening you can find one or more members of the St. Francis House Community sitting on the front porch of 30 Broad Street, New London, Connecticut, engaging our neighbors as they stop for conversation or simply nod and walk by. After prayer, this is the most important "ministry" of St. Francis House.

- + Today a man stopped for a few minutes on his way to make coffee for a 6 p.m. AA meeting at the United Methodist Church up the street.
- + A week ago another man who is banned from the homeless shelter for beating up his girlfriend stopped and talked to a community member until early in the morning with many tears.
- + A friend who has been sober for several months and hopes to go on the 2010 Pilgrimage for Peace often comes in the morning, not so much for the prayer service as the companionship.
- + A woman who is organizing tenants in the highrise next door often stops by to give or get news of the neighborhood.
- + A young woman who lived with us for six months after college a few years ago often comes for community Bible study. She asked me to pray for her to find more room for God in her busy life working as a methadone maintenance counselor.
- + The United Methodist Minister who organizes all of the Pilgrimages for Peace that St. Francis House participates in comes regularly, as does the young man who guided the renovation of Victory House and co-founded F.R.E.S.H. New London which every summer provides access to healthy fruits and vegetables for all our neighbors in the senior highrises.

We know addicts and bankers, lawyers at the nearby courthouses, defendants and crime victims, social workers and volunteers at the food co-op across the street, schoolteachers and kids on their way to or from school, elected officials and police officers, clergy and secretaries, shopkeepers and petty thieves -- "all sorts and conditions" of people who only have two things in common: they are created in God's image and likeness, beloved of their Creator no matter what they have or haven't done; and they are our neighbors. These individuals, and many more like them, are not only our guides and teachers for life and work at St. Francis House, they are the faces in which we see the face of Jesus. That Face is reflected, we hope, on the pages of *BROAD STREET BLUES: A Reader in Radical Discipleship*.

A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE!

by Robert Middeke-Conlin

I've always wanted to live by the ocean. Growing up in west-central Wisconsin, I've always been fascinated by what was exotic to me: the ocean. We had plenty of water to enjoy; Wisconsin is especially blessed with many deep and wide river valleys and I fondly remember tubing down a particularly wide and low portion of the Eau Claire River as a teen. But for some reason the ocean and sailing ships have always fascinated me. I think it must've been the prospect of adventure and reading the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a kid.

My fascination with the ocean and my background in a land of river valleys is probably what drove me to study ancient Mesopotamia at Yale; a land between two great rivers, a trade emporium connecting the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean with the West. Studying the Ancient Mesopotamians is the study of a great civilization of farmers and merchants who traversed the rivers and canals of what is modern Iraq, and partook in trade with the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean in search wealth and opportunity.

The Ocean is one of the attractions which draw me to New London. Running along New London Harbor in the morning, where the Thames meets the Sound, reminds me of my time years ago when I was sent to Monterey, California, to study at the Army's language institute. I love the smell of the ocean air, the breeze, and the sounds in the morning as the ferries come and go. I like just walking along Bank Street and experiencing the feel of a city by the shore; I like to people-watch, explore shops, and have a bite to eat. New London is truly a delightful town.

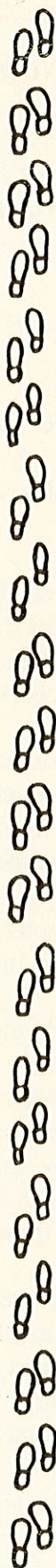
However, it's the people that brought me to New London, specifically the homeless population. Running in the morning and exploring in the evening I see this segment of New London's population. Some fit into a stereotype of homelessness, but most would be difficult to

designate as anything but the average citizen just trying to get by and enjoying a morning or evening. I meet all types of people on my morning and evening treks through town: A young man just out of high school on his own for the first time, a thirty year old trying to scam me out of a few bucks, a disabled, forty-something man who has driven freight since high school and now must find something else, and yes, a few who suffer from alcoholism. I could compare these to a kid going to college, a crooked politician, a laid off factory worker, and a few of my friends at the VFW post which I frequent in Fairfield County where my wife is a pastor at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Georgetown. These are people from all treks of life who could use a little help!

I am one of two volunteer coordinators at the New London Homeless Hospitality Center on 19 Jay Street. Alyssa, the other coordinator, and I work at the center as AmeriCorps Vista volunteers. We, like so many other Vista volunteers across the country, receive a very modest living stipend (105 percent of poverty level) and our task is to create a sustainable program that will continue unfunded and unaided by the government after we are gone. We will work one year out of a three year grant; our goal in New London: to increase the staff at the Hospitality Center's capacity through volunteers and I must say it is a rewarding job.

The will of the people is there, as are the resources. New London is doing its best in trying times to alleviate, as much as possible, homelessness and all the problems it can cause in the area. Further, many of those we encounter daily need just a little help in order to get out of their current situation: assistance with some paperwork, a few bucks to help with a security deposit, or simply to know what resources are out there to find work or affordable housing. Many problems are solvable without social workers but with a little help from volunteers.

Further, there is paid staff, at the Hospitality Center and elsewhere, which can help with more difficult situations. Building a rapport with the



those who come to the Hospitality Center, informing and encouraging them to seek this aid, can and will make a difference. This too can be met by volunteers. In addition, the effect of the staff at the Hospitality Center can be expanded dramatically by volunteers who are willing to take on some of the more basic responsibilities of the staff, such as being at the front desk which is the first entry point to the Center, or by assisting with evening set-up at the Shelter thereby giving staff time for in depth contact with guests as needed.

I need to thank St. Francis House for allowing me to stay with them this year. Prayer in the morning prepares me for my day. Evening meals with the good people of the House helps me unwind. Yet there is no pressure to participate in anything the House has to offer; they accept that my job needs to come first and that it is important to myself and my community. Perhaps this is partly due to St. Francis House's relationship with the Hospitality Center: Fr. Jarrett sits on the Board of Directors and St. Francis House was vital in starting the New London Homeless Hospitality Center five years ago. Without St. Francis House, not only would my time as a Vista be significantly more difficult, it might not exist at all! All those who stay or have stayed at the shelter would probably be on the streets or in the woods. All who frequent the daytime center would likely be around the community, some disrupting local businesses, others drawing on public resources, paid for by taxpayers. And all who have used the Center to get out of homelessness might still be on the streets today! We, as a community and I as an individual, owe St. Francis House a giant Thank-You!

I have my work cut out for me. But this work is very rewarding, both for myself and for the wonderful community in which I gladly call home. I have much support in the community and specifically with St. Francis House to perform my task which I joyfully take on.

Bob is resident at SFH during the week. He can be reached at HHC 860-439-1573.

GROWING SEASON 2010: THE MANY FRUITS OF F.R.E.S.H.

by Mary Kate Glenn

Each year, as I've worked on different farms, it seems I ask a question that sets the tone for where I head to next. Last year, while working on a Community Supported Agriculture farm in Colorado, I posed a question to those around me as we weeded strawberries – how can local organic food be available to people with low income? It was a great discussion that followed. It must have carried us through at least two beds of strawberry plants that were swimming in a sea of bind-weed.

Now I find myself on the other side of the country living at St. Francis House and working with F.R.E.S.H. New London. I'm learning the answer to my question while working with the urban high school students of the F.R.E.S.H. youth crew to bring local organic produce from our two acre farm to lower income neighborhoods.

The first day we brought our first big harvest to sell through the mobile market is a time I will always remember. If you're having trouble imaging our mobile market, think "farmers' market meets the ice cream truck"! I wrote to my Dad about how it went:

"It was so fulfilling to see the fruits of three and a half months of labor go to the hands of people in need of food, healthy food especially. Three and a half months of our planning, tilling, weeding; muscles straining, pushing through the heat, the cold, the rain, the wind; the bliss of watching green things flourish, the hope that wells up before the first harvest, the slow dance of falling in love with the soil: feeling it dry, laying on it in the rain, up to our wrists in it planting, coming home covered with it, worrying, wondering, learning from it....

Now it's taken the shape of cucumbers, onions, cilantro, green beans, collard greens.

Now it's taken the shape of a zucchini in the hands of an elderly woman in Section 8 housing. She picks it out of the bin on the back

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ANNOUNCING BROAD STREET BLUES

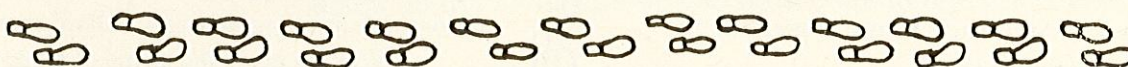
It was not until the Vol. 7, No. 2 issue of the *Troubadour* in 2005 that we began publishing what we called "Broad Street Blues" as a "regular column about things going on at St. Francis House, our Broad Street neighborhood, and the city of New London..." It would probably be fair to say that it took us that long being here and being immersed in the impact on our neighbors of homelessness and the elimination of the Social Services Department, of war and and many other events great and small to understand the blues "as an expression of anger against shame and humiliation." The *Troubadour* was also the place where we articulated signs of hope documenting the early days of urban gardening through FRESH New London to our own understanding of community life as articulated by such friends as Ken Leech visiting from the East End of London to Chuck Matthei of Equity Trust who was then living at the Peace Farm in Voluntown.



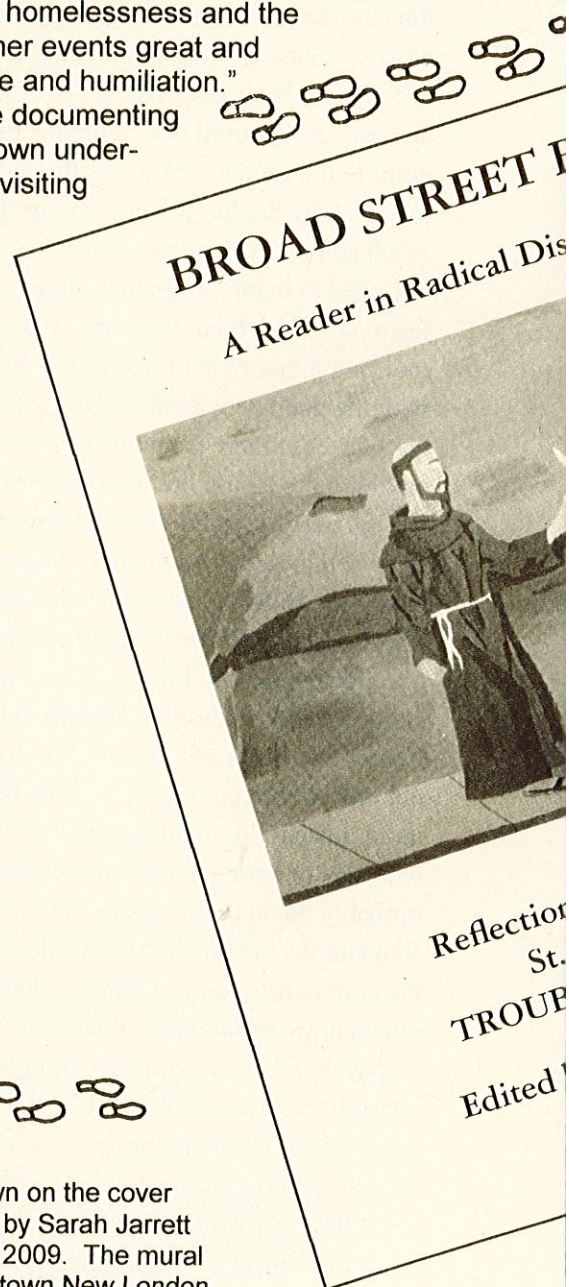
When we started thinking about what to call this 320-page collection of articles from the *Troubadour* at first we thought about "Greatest Hits from Our First Ten Years" but then we realized it really was a chronicle of our development as disciples and that the overall context of our entire time in New London was that of **Broad Street Blues**. The articles and poems are arranged chronologically in the following sections: **The Vision, Franciscan Spirit, Community, Resistance, Homelessness and Hospitality, Radical Discipleship, Friends, F.R.E.S.H. New London, Peace Pilgrimage**. There are also 8 pages of photographs.



The painting "St. Francis Comes to New London" shown on the cover of **Broad Street Blues** was a gift to St. Francis House by Sarah Jarrett on the occasion of our tenth anniversary celebration in 2009. The mural of the Wyland whales on Eugene O'Neill Drive in downtown New London is in the background.



Order form is on the inside back cover of this issue. We look forward to sharing this new publication with you and having you share it with your family, friends and colleagues. As always, thank you for your support!



S: A READER IN RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

What happens when God mixes together two aging Episcopal Church leaders and their coming-of-wisdom children (a teen and a fifth-grader) with St. Francis of Assisi, Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, the homeless of a blighted city, and a stream of searching pilgrims to engage in an experiment with the radical truth of Jesus?

Broad Street Blues is the remarkable record of this unlikely community (spanning heaven and earth) as they take Jesus seriously. Their journey into the truth, when everything and everyone in the world is at stake, is a revelation of hope to us all.

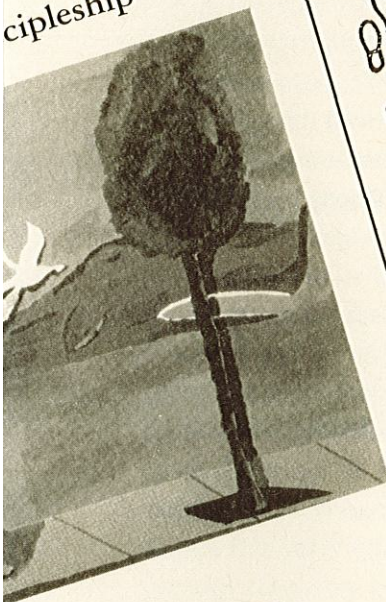
Jim Douglass

Catholic Worker and author, *JFK and the Unspeakable*



BLUES

discipleship



...s and Articles from
Francis House
TROUBADOUR 1999 - 2010
by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF
and Sarah Jarrett

The move from Rectory family life in an Episcopal parish to the radical welcome of St. Francis House was not so big a leap as one might suppose. For this family, it was a natural progression of deepening faith, seeking truth and the courage to live daily as a community of social change. **Broad Street Blues** not only relates the experience of one answer to a prophetic calling, but invites everyday Christians to explore their own Gospel yearnings and the call to discipleship. This book will be useful for individuals and groups who aim to deepen their discipleship, and also for pastors who must assist their congregations on the discipleship journey.

The Rev'd Margaret R. Rose

**Co-Director of Mission, The Episcopal Church Center
New York City**

The spiritual energy of St. Francis of Assisi and Jesus of Nazareth leap off the pages of **Broad Street Blues**. This inspiring work illustrates how human life can be transformed from aimlessness and despair to hope and purposefulness. The vital connection of prayer and action is made real -- a "must read" for 21st century Christians.

Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF

**Former Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas
The Third Order, Society of St. Francis**

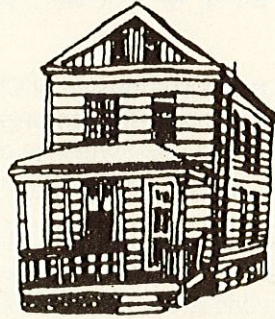
We have been more than blessed over the past 12 years to share the journey of radical discipleship with our friends Emmett Jarrett and Anne Scheibner as they left home to follow God's call to the "far country." New London, Connecticut, is the place for their experiment in truth as they set down roots there to pray and celebrate sacrament, to create family, with their own kin and the others who came, to welcome the poor and oppressed, and to take their particular stand against the domination system with all its war-mongering and death-dealing expressions. They have learned to sing the blues on Broad Street: Ah! the Lord's song in a strange land! They shout the amazing grace of God and dance their Franciscan joy. Thankfully for all of us, they have documented this faithful journey with their intermittent journal the *Troubadour*; and now we enjoy the fruit of their collected writing as **Broad Street Blues**.

Read and be amazed. Read and give thanks. Read and be encouraged for the journey. Here are ordinary people who have done an extraordinary thing. Are we not all called by Jesus to do the same? Their journey enriches our own and we are deeply grateful for this fruit of their labor.

Murphy Davis and Eduard Loring

Founders and Partners in the Open Door Community
The "Protestant Catholic Worker" in Atlanta, Georgia





Friday Night Meetings for
CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT
FALL - WINTER 2010

*WHEN THE MODE OF THE MUSIC CHANGES,
THE WALLS OF THE CITY SHAKE* Plato

- Sept. 17** DICK LOURIE - "Blues" - Saxophone and poetry
- Oct. 1** MARY KATE GLENN and OWUSU SLATER -
Musical saw, guitar and drum
- Oct. 15** BEN and NANCY PARENT of the Rivergods
- Oct. 29** EMMETT JARRETT - "Troubadour" - Poetry
- Nov. 12** TBA
- Dec. 3** CAROLYN PATIERNO and KIT JOHNSON - Vocals and piano
- Dec. 17** ED RODMAN - Wrap Up: New music, new rhythm, new year?

**5:30 Evening Prayer and Bible Study; 6:00 Supper;
7-8:30 Music and discussion**

This fall/winter series is an experiment with a slightly different kind of Clarification of Thought. Usually the leader of each evening gives a short talk to present the theme or topic under consideration. This time we will incorporate music into that reflection and see where it takes us both individually and as a community.

ST. FRANCIS HOUSE CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

5:30 Evening Prayer and Bible Study; 6:00 Buffet - Bring a favorite food to share!
7:00 Bring a song, story, poem, picture, instrument to share!



**ORDER FORM FOR *BROAD STREET BLUES:*
*A READER IN RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP***



Number of copies @ \$15 per copy _____ plus \$5 postage and handling.

Check or money order enclosed for \$ _____

If \$15 is a hardship, please send us whatever you can and we will send your copy.
If you can contribute something over and above \$15 to help distribute the book
more widely, we thank you in advance!

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Address _____

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Thank you very much for your interest and support. Let us hear your response!

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Continued from page 3

of the truck, and it brings a big smile to her face as she remembers cooking zucchini with nopales (cactus pads) as a young woman. She tells this to the high school students working the market, some of whom have talked of grandparents they've never met in Puerto Rico, Honduras, the Dominican Republic. In Spanish, the woman tells them her memory, and they listen politely. Whether or not they are scandalized by the idea of eating cactus, they don't show it. Some of them are learning what the difference is between cabbage and lettuce. Some tried eating fresh green beans for the first time as we harvested them in the early morning. Most of them are not accustomed to eating vegetables, let alone the traditional foods their parents or grandparents ate. We are all disconnected from the healthier, simpler, more just ways of eating that our grandparents once knew.



And so there's something stirring about the symbiosis that flowers in the ten minutes that the woman holding the zucchini spends by our mobile farm stand. The youth help to bring her (and countless others in the community) half-priced fresh organic produce each week that she would otherwise not have access to. She in turn is bringing them access to a connection with the past, with her knowledge, with her culture, that many of them might otherwise not have."

Mary Kate Glenn is the Assistant Farm Manager of F.R.E.S.H. New London. Readers of the *Troubadour* will remember Laura Burfoot and Arthur Lerner's accounts of the early days of F.R.E.S.H. which last year celebrated its fifth birthday. In addition to the farm production taking place at the Waterford Country Day School site, F.R.E.S.H. also has a thriving community gardening site near the corner of Broad and Williams Streets.

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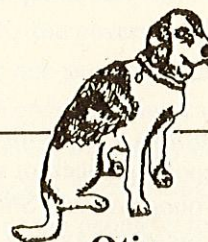
Robert Middeke-Conlin, "A Pleasure to Make
Your Acquaintance!"

Mary Kate Glenn, "Growing Season 2010:
The Many Fruits of F.R.E.S.H."

Clarification of Thought Schedule
Fall/ Winter 2010

Order form for *Broad Street Blues*

Center Section: Publication Announcement
for ***BROAD STREET BLUES:***
A READER IN RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP



Otis

"The St. Francis House Dog"
1995 - 2010

Otis came to St. Francis House in 2000 from the Conn. Humane Society in Quaker Hill. He was a regular at Morning Prayer and an active participant in our "ministry of presence" on the streets, the park and our front porch. He had a keen nose for both how to get into the refrigerator and also for when members of the House were sick and needed a foot warmer. His soulful eyes were a witness to the truth of God's presence in all creatures both great and small.