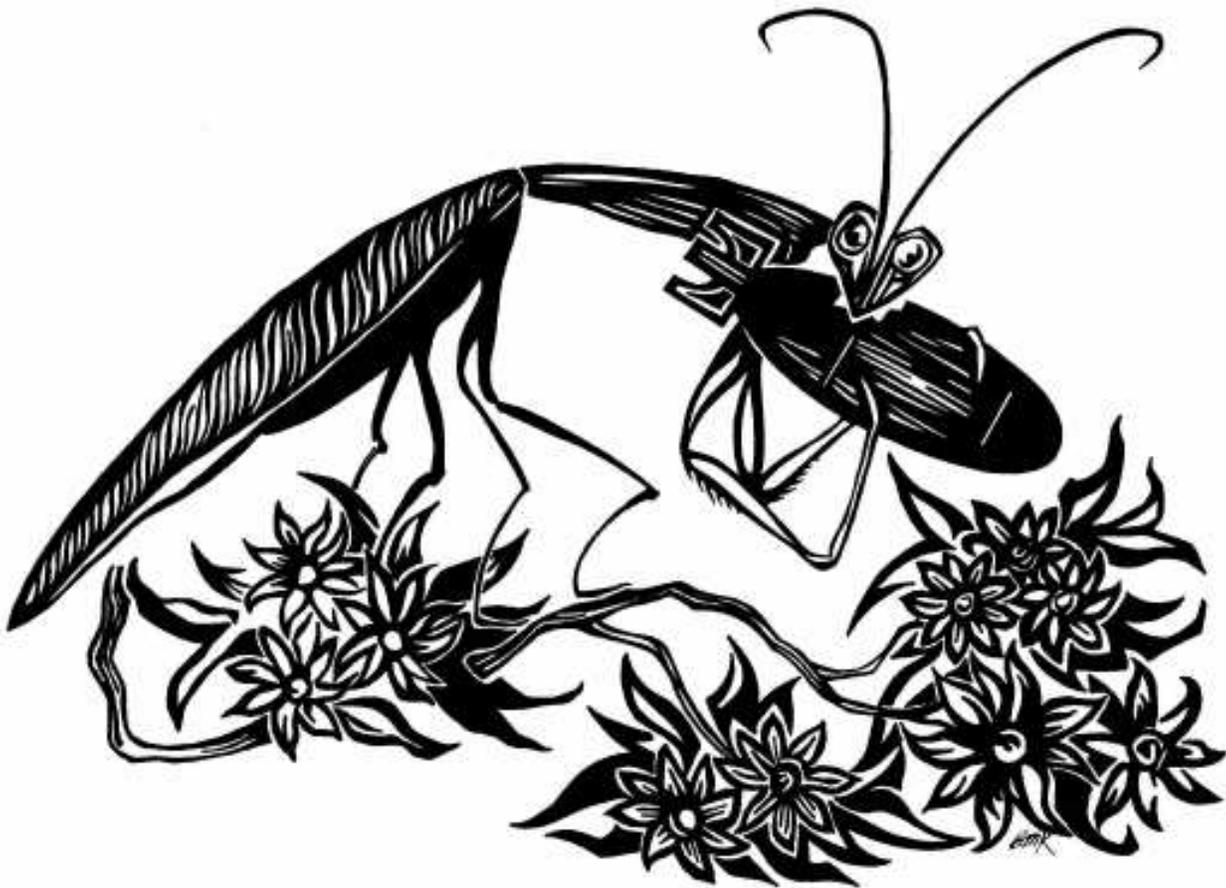


THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE
ST. BRIGID HOUSE

What does God require but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly... Micah 6:8



*Bomb Eating Mantis
Bless O Lord the bomb eating mantis
Quietly feeding among the blossoms
Sufferer of chronic indigestion*

words and art by Brian Kavanagh

SUMMER 2006

THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published bimonthly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics, and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are not a "tax-exempt" agency. We do not accept government funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We are not paid. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, doucot@sbcglobal.net and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Morliana Evans, Sarah Karas, Angela Thomas, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE KIDS

WHO COME TO THE GREEN HOUSE

- ☺ Khari and Kiana received the John Jackson Memorial Scholarship award for leadership at their 6th grade graduation.
- ☺ Shaniece, in 5th grade, received an award for leadership from Dr. Morris.
- ☺ Angel and Latiqua's artwork is being displayed at the Wadsworth Athenaeum.
- ☺ Jose is doing great with his foster family.

ST. MARTIN'S WISH LIST

- ☺ fresh fruit, granola bars, trail mix and real juice for the kids
- ✚ prayers and workers for peace
- ♥ your continued financial support

ST. MARTIN'S CALENDAR

✚ Please join us on **Tuesday, September 5, October 3 and November 7 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.



TEARS

Ammon Allen - Doucot age 11

Tears never shed
are in my head.
Always held back
but now I crack.
Here come the tears
flowing like years.
I grow older.
I grow bolder.
With my goals set
the wiser I get.
All the pain
keeps me sane.

To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1918

ARE WE FAMILY?

Christopher J. Doucot

As it approached the stop sign the legato grumble of the firetruck's jake brake sounded like the lowest note of a church organ moaning a dirge. The diesel induced cadence gave voice to the grief within another truckful of firemen who had come to be with their mourning brother. Thirty six hours earlier this now broken man was with them in the firehouse when the call came over the radio that two boys had been shot, one fatally. The address was his own- the dead boy his only.

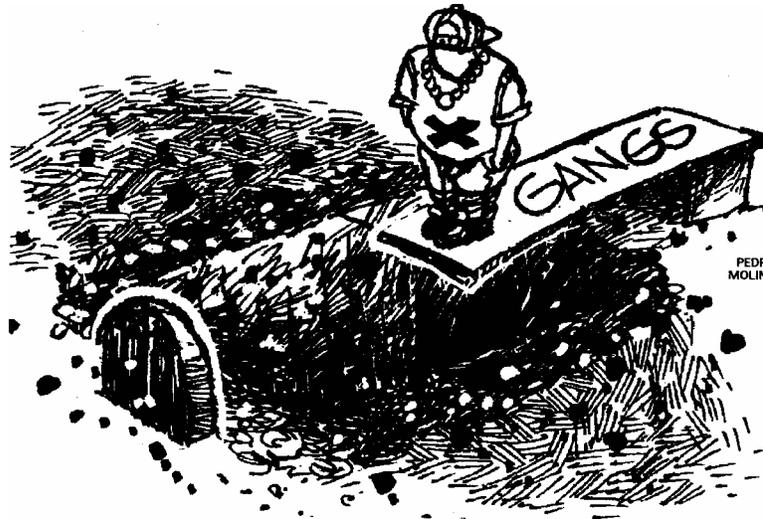
With heaving chests and heavy hearts they were embracing when the speakers, mounted on the grade school across the street, came to life with the school's anthem: Sister Sledge singing "We are family. I got all my sisters with me...."

A pall of despair hangs over our neighborhood. Parents with adolescent sons, myself included, are on the verge of panic. The reassuring rhythm of the crickets chirp has been silenced as the calm of many nights is now plundered by the menacing rhythm of gunfire. A 15 year old boy has been murdered on his stoop because of the apparent mistaken association of the victim with a local gang who stole a bicycle from another gang and wrote the name of a third gang on the bicycle before leaving it in the territory of the gang from whom it was stolen. Madness!

With each shooting plenty of people are asking "What can be done?"; while few ponder what has already been done to get to this place. There is also a mounting chorus, heard in waiting rooms across the region and read in letters to the editor, that is a variation on the theme that Hartford is a lost cause. Friends and family question the sanity of those who remain here.

Frankly, the current crisis in the city is due in large part to all that has moved out of

Hartford. The factories and retail outlets have moved out and taken their jobs with them. Most of the white community and much of the middle class minority communities have also moved out taking with them their money, stability and successful adult male role models. Almost all of the property owners have moved



out leaving behind absentee owned property that is often uncared for, sometimes squalid and frequently abandoned for years on end.

It seems to me that the violence we are now experiencing is the predictable result of the anger, despair and despondency felt by the young people, particularly the teenage boys, here. The lyrics of the school anthem unwittingly points to one facet of the problem: a song celebrating family seems to have no place for sons, brothers and fathers.

The men of this neighborhood are literally beaten and broken by a society that expects nothing positive from them and places almost no value on their lives. Just days after our neighbors murder a half dozen white cops with guns drawn chased down a black man who eventually surrendered without a struggle. Once he was passively laying on his belly, in our driveway, the police decided to kick him a bit. We've seen this sort of behavior by the police before as have just about everyone in the neighborhood.

There are very few successful men in our neighborhood for the boys to emulate. The majority of men in the neighborhood are unemployed. Many fathers and older brothers are in prison, many more are on probation. There are homeless men and broken addicted men on our corners. Many of the neighborhood kids never knew their fathers and grew up in poverty on the wages provided by their mom's fast food or nursing home jobs or on state assistance. With this sort of future before them half of the middle school students in Hartford see no value in spending what little time they expect to live in school and they eventually drop out before graduating high school.

And then there are the older teen aged boys who have the bling. These boys have gold chains, a new bike, maybe a car, money in their pocket, and they belong to a crew, a posse, or a family ie. A gang. To a 12 year old kid these "families" appear to offer so much more than their biological families are able to provide or the society at large is willing to offer. Through the sale of drugs (disproportionately to suburban customers) the gangs control an alter economy which is the only economy that these boys believe they will have access to. The gangs offer the kids a place in society where they feel wanted, respected, valued; where they feel they belong. They offer kinship, camaraderie, and support. And really do we offer a meaningful alternative? Do we make black teenage boys from Hartford feel welcomed in our suburban swimming holes? Our stores? Our schools? Or even in downtown Hartford? (Recall the recent Hartford Police Memo instructing officers to question black men in downtown who were not wearing business suits.)

(PLEASE SEE FAMILY, P4)

ARE WE FAMILY, CONT.

The steps we must take include: on demand drug and alcohol treatment, job creation in the neighborhoods and downtown, improved public transportation, a lower student/teacher ratio, and increased staffing, programming and outreach of the community centers. The boy who was murdered on our street lived across the street from the J.C. Clark Elementary School. Like every other school in the city this past Memorial Day weekend, the school was closed. The city schools belong to the community. A wise investment would be the creation of jobs for adults and youth by opening the gymnasiums, cafeterias and theaters/ auditoriums on weekends, over the summer and in the evenings. Children in our neighborhood already depend on the school for 2 meals a day during the school year surely they would benefit from healthy meals when school is not in session. Children here also have extremely limited access to the cultural offerings downtown so why not invest in touring productions, musical performances and movies to be shown in the school auditoriums. Likewise, there are very few recreational facilities in the neighborhoods, I guarantee that if the gyms were made available for basketball and double dutch they would be filled to capacity. These sorts of endeavors can create community where none exists and strengthen those that already do by bringing together young people and adults to work, play, eat and enjoy culture together. The cultural activities would expose the young people to a world beyond the neighborhood and the basketball could expose them to communities beyond the neighborhood if intercity leagues were developed similar to the C.Y.O. run activities sponsored by the church in the not too distant past.

Not to be lost in the conversation must be

an examination of where the guns are coming from. Anyone can see that arguments once settled with fists now end up in shootings. The ready availability of guns to children is a scandal for which we should all be ashamed. Just how easy, and inexpensive, it is to get a gun is shocking.

The children here are growing up in a pressure cooker. Many of their parents were



just children when they were born. The poverty, the unemployment, the abandoned buildings, parks in disrepair, the crowded classrooms, the drug dealing and drug addiction, the violence, the police abuse, the scarce opportunity for employment; it all adds up to a cauldron of dysfunction which only increases in intensity with every passing generation. Honestly, is it any wonder when tragedies like the recent shootings happen? We are so quick to point our fingers at the kids while we conveniently fail to examine what role, active or passive, we play in poverty and violence of Hartford.

Over and again we've heard adults who have not experienced the trauma these kids have that they need to "find Jesus". What the heck does that mean to these kids? I think we should turn the statement around and tell these folks they need to find Jesus where he is being scourged by poverty and crucified by gunfire. We say find a child here victimized by poverty and hear the word of God speak to you

by listening to them.

How can we expect the 13 and 14 year old kids who attended their third or fourth funeral of a classmate this year this past Saturday to pay attention in school the following Monday? How can we not expect them to alternate between rage and despair? And when it seems that all other segments of society have either let them down or abandoned them how can we not expect them to create a society of their own? which is precisely what the gangs are.

This brings me back to the firemen. These men and women are family. Their bonds of trust in each other are literally forged by fire as they risk their lives saving others. In a burning building they need to know without a doubt that they will be there for each other. That level of trust cements this group together so strongly that they are there for each other all the time and everywhere creating a camaraderie that spills over beyond the workplace.

The boys, and girls, of our neighborhood are living in a burning building and yet nobody is coming to save them, and they know it. The shared experiences of: growing up in poverty, of seeing your dad addicted, or imprisoned, or unemployed, or humiliated by the police, and of burying friends has forged bonds amongst these kids as tight as those of firefighters. We call them gangs, they call them families. We call it drug dealing, they call it a job. We call it going to school, they call it a waste of time. It's time we began speaking the same language. The gangs and their affiliated violence are the ultimate expression of the larger dysfunction of a society that does not value the lives of the children here and thus does not invest in a future that includes them as integral, valued members of free society.

Sure we invest in ball yards so that less than 1 in a 100,000 can entertain us. But unless we make real investments of time and money in their present 1 in 2 will continue to end up in the prison yard and many others will prematurely end up in the graveyard. Ω

NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES

Rex Fowler

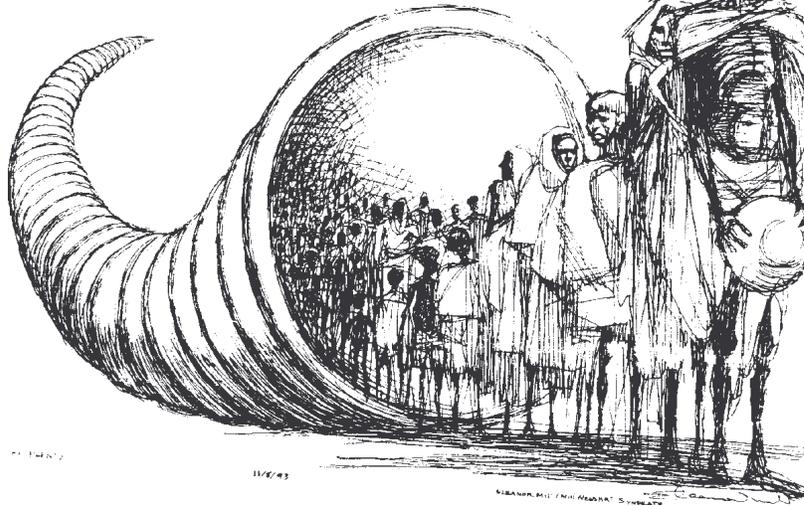
Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God. – from the sayings of Agur, quoted in Proverbs 30: 8-9

The Bible doesn't tell us much about this Agur guy, but I bet he had a hard time fitting in whenever and wherever he lived. He definitely doesn't fit in much with Solomon, the guy who wrote most of the rest of Proverbs. Solomon was a good God-fearing capitalist who had mastered the fine art of accumulation. Agur with his 'give me only my daily bread' prayer is sort of the antithesis to that Jabez guy who everyone was falling over a couple of years ago. Remember Jabez? The guy in the Old Testament who basically asked for God to give him more and more and more. And apparently God did it!

I like Bible guys like Jabez and Solomon. Good success stories. Agur, on the other hand, annoys me. I want bread in my freezer not just for today, but for next month and next year. I want to believe I can have more of everything – money, food, clothes, you name it - & *not* actually forget who the Lord is.

So I had a hard time recently when I traveled from Hartford to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone, about the size of South Carolina, is situated in sub-Saharan west Africa. According to the United Nations it is one of the poorest countries in the world. The annual income of the average Sierra

Leonean is about \$250. Life is very fragile in Sierra Leone: it has the highest infant mortality rate in the world – over 30% of children born in the country die before they reach age 5 – and the average life expectancy for adults is a mere 42 years of age (it's 78 in the US). Jobs are few and far between. People in Sierra Leone do not assume there will be bread available for them every day.



Much of the instability in Sierra Leone – and in other African countries – is the result of a brutal civil war that in SL's case lasted nearly a dozen years and ended only about four years ago. All wars are brutal, but this one was especially vicious. As rebel forces plundered the country, marching from the eastern border to the west coast capital of Freetown, they burned villages, forced children to become gunmen, murdered tens of thousands of innocent civilians, and cut off arms and legs of thousands of others. Now four years after UN peacekeeping troops quelled the rebel mayhem, the six million residents of SL are just beginning to dig out from the rubble.

During the war the population of SL's

largest city, Freetown, more than tripled as those from the countryside fled to the capital city, hoping to find security there. There are over a million people now living in Freetown, where I spent the majority of my time. The city is ill-equipped to handle the recent rapid growth – electricity has been sporadic since the war and is off more than on; water isn't safe for consumption but rarely runs through the city's pipeline

system anyway. Ditches double as sewers.

Rumor has it the city has a fleet of two garbage trucks providing sanitation services to residents, but you'd have a hard time proving there were any at all – huge piles of trash line city streets, waiting for someone to eventually light a match to them. The putrid smell of burning garbage is constant and inescapable.

I went to Sierra Leone to work with an organization called Hope Micro. Hope Micro is a microfinance institution (MFI), one of many now operating in 'two-thirds world' countries. MFIs like Hope Micro provide very small loans (typically between \$50 - \$100) to individuals allowing them to operate small businesses and hopefully earn a modest income to support their family. Borrowers come together to form themselves into 'solidarity groups', consisting of five individuals seeking financing for their respective businesses. The group essentially guarantees the loans of the individuals. If one member struggles, the others band together to keep the loan payments for their group current.

(PLEASE SEE NEITHER P7)

IS GETTING THE GUNS OFF THE STREETS REALLY THE ANSWER?

Cliff Thornton

Certainly keeping guns out of the hands of criminals is a great idea, as far as it goes. Unfortunately it's not as simple as some make it seem. First of all there are some 200 million guns in America; couple that with a strong demand among criminals for guns and one begins to see the problem.

So who has all these guns? Places with the highest rate of gun ownership tend to be rural and small-town. But gun crime in these areas is low. The gun crime is taking place in our cities. Why? In rural and small-town America, family structures are largely strong, and these communities are often more stable and unified. So, the problem of violence in American inner cities seems to have less to do with the fact that guns are available there (as are everywhere) than with the fact that so many families are dysfunctional, and that so little sense of community can be found.

What particular group in these inner cities is largely responsible for the shootings that have become so common there? After declining for several years, the black teenage homicide rate began soaring upward in 1987. Guns were not more available after 1987. What did happen in the late 1980's was that the drug war suddenly intensified. In the late 1980's the popularization of crack cocaine produced an unprecedented media and political determination to fight a "drug war" in the United States.

The "war on drugs" has lived up to its name by producing a genuine war in inner-city America. The black market created caused an epidemic of violence in cities across America. Lured by the large potential for profit in the black market created by prohibition, large numbers of poor, jobless black youth got into the drug business. Since drug dealers are likely to be carrying large sums of money, they are at serious risk of robbery. Since they cannot rely

on the police for protection, they must, to survive, protect themselves. When drug dealers engage in commercial transactions with each other, there is no Uniform Commercial Code and state district court for resolving disputes about the quality of goods sold. Disgruntled buyers, unable to complain to the Better Business Bureau or sue, often resort to violence. Similarly, the addicts who sell drugs often end up consuming the drugs which should have been sold; or stealing the cash



received in payment. Higher-level dealers, having no legal means of debt collection, frequently resort to violence.

For those unfortunate enough to live in one of the "war-zones" created by drug prohibition life deteriorated considerably. Neighborhoods were ravaged by drug dealers shooting it out on the streets. Many families fled. Police raided houses making arrests and damaged properties in the process. Houses were abandoned only to be occupied by squatters using and selling drugs. Families fell victim to the drug war as fathers were locked up for drug use. At times the police have also escalated the violence with unnecessary force and unjustified shootings.

As neighborhoods deteriorated so did schools. Disputes settled with horrendous violence, often involving guns, became commonplace. Of course young, aggressive youth who sold drugs to survive in these war-zones bereft of jobs became its first victims. Inner city black teenagers killed each other at higher and higher rates.

Reducing inner-city black male teenage homicide requires a direct attack on the social ills which cause so many young people to grow up believing that their own lives and the lives of others are worthless. Since severe drug prohibition has not reduced the supply of drugs in the inner cities, why would one expect that gun controls will reduce guns in the inner-city? Legislators must consider not only immediate steps to get juvenile criminals off the streets, but to begin addressing the social ills that breed juvenile crime.

The problem before us is reducing the motivations for juveniles to arm themselves. Convincing inner-city juveniles, or adults, not to own, carry, and use guns requires convincing them that they can survive in their neighborhoods without being armed. We must convince them that society's usual agents of social control, the police, can be relied upon to provide for personal security. So long as this is not believed to be the case, gun ownership and carrying in the city will remain widespread. The police are perceived as the enemy by many black teenagers. Because police have been charged with the impossible task of making the city drug free they are viewed as a sort of occupying army.

Several studies have shown a direct link between increases in police anti-drug activity and increases in property and violent crime. Most recently a study was released by Le Moyne

GUNS, CONT.

economists Shepard and Blackley of over 1300 counties in the United States over seven years. They say that their findings suggest that “the recent focus on marijuana law enforcement has been counterproductive for addressing non-drug crime. By removing the legal restrictions against possessing marijuana and ending its sale in the underground economy, the results indicate that fewer burglaries, larcenies, and motor vehicle thefts are likely to be committed.

A similar result also holds for marijuana sales with respect to the incidence of arrests for homicide and hard drug possession.”

We need to do four things: get the repeat violent offenders of the streets, work to curb the supply of illegal guns, end drug prohibition, and encourage economic opportunities for those inner-city youth most at risk. The relationship between these things is at once strong and vague. For instance, if we were somehow to be successful in seriously reducing the illegal guns brought into the state that

would only serve to raise their prices causing increases in burglaries to steal guns locally, increased smuggling, more crime to get the money for the now higher-priced guns; overall increasing the crime we’re trying to reduce. Only by simultaneously attacking all the sources of the problem at once can society expect to see any benefit. To do only some of these things will, more than likely, only make the problem worse. Ω

NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES CONT.

Loans are paid back over 4 – 6 months and no future loans are available for any of the group members until each member’s loan has been paid in full. Hope Micro has a default rate of less than 2% on its portfolio of over 11,000 loans in Sierra Leone – a rate better than a lot of US banks.

I spent a lot of my time in the Freetown markets, interviewing Hope Micro’s clients. Despite the fact that Sierra Leone is predominantly a male-dominated Muslim society, about 90% of Hope Micro’s clients are women. Fatimah was one woman I met in a Freetown market where hundreds of small booths were lined up one next to another along both sides of a wide, red clay pedestrian walkway. Fatimah looked to be in her early 30’s and told me she had three children between the ages of 6 and 10. The father of her children was in and out of the family’s life, not unlike many other men in the society. For two years now Fatimah had run her own business selling palm oil, a staple ingredient in Sierra Leone used for cooking about everything it seemed. With

funding from Hope Micro, for a few dollars each Fatimah would buy five gallon containers of oil from a palm oil wholesaler (another Hope Micro client), and sell them in the market for about 20% more.

With a proud smile Fatimah told me



how the profits from her business had allowed her to provide for herself and her kids. This year she was able to afford the tuition and buy required uniforms allowing all three of her children to attend school.

She was able to move out of her parent’s crowded metal shack that had housed the extended family since the war. She had no savings, no health insurance or retirement plan, no accumulation of anything. But at the close of our conversation she shared with me the accomplishment for which she seemed to take the greatest pride: now she was able to buy food to feed herself and her children *every day*. Before she started her business she said this would be her prayer every morning when she woke up – *God, help me today to feed my children. Just take care of us today God.* And with a gleam in her eye that comes only from the wisdom of trust and experience, she added *‘And He has done it.’*

When he was asked to teach his disciples what and how they should pray, Jesus himself prayed, “Father. give us *this day* our daily bread. .”. Agur. Jesus. Fatimah. May some day I be worthy to join their ranks.

(More information about Hope Micro can be found at WorldHope.org, or contact Rex Fowler at R.Fowler@HartfordLoans.org.) Ω

NOTES, CONT.

all been in predominantly white wealthy suburbs. This hopelessness and embrace of drugs and violence is not an affliction known only in the North End. No one is fleeing the suburbs for safer ground, because until we tackle the underlying causes of such spiritual death there is no safe ground.

Our faith in God's presence in each other has been empowering us to do some literal building of the Kingdom. We had a wonderful weekend with some of our older teens filling a dumpster at Ahimsa with the remnants of a cabin that is being torn down to be replaced with a new counselors cabin. We are very grateful to the Woods family and Woods Restoration who are doing the bulk of the fund-raising and framing for the new cabin. This is part of our renewed commitment to try and keep our kids close to the community as they approach the high risk years. We give thanks to Jim MacBride for getting us all going on the rehab of an old cabin for this years counselors (and Nancy MacBride for giving him the time to help us so much). We also began work on our Teen Queen garden behind St. Martin House. I was absolutely floored by the energy and motivation the gals displayed in hauling dirt, moving paving stones, planting, with joy, cooperation and great love. When we were all set to put up the table and chairs I became overwhelmed with the 1000 piece assembly required after I said "wow, we might have to wait for Chris to help out with this part", Kiana Davis grabbed the 20 page instruction manual out of my hands and said..."NO WAY...I CAN READ DIRECTIONS" and proceeded to supervise the entire job.

In other goings on: Sarah has been traveling back and forth to

Northampton to work on her documentary about Francis Crowe and Juanita Nelson (2 of the greatest women peace-makers on Earth). Chris and I celebrated our 14th wedding anniversary in May and Brian attended his 45th High School reunion in Meriden. We were amazed that he was able to leave the World Cup games long enough to go, and amused to learn, upon his return, that he spent the bulk of his time there watching



the game in his host's living room!

We all enjoyed Ammon's baseball season. He won 2 trophies (most improved player and #1 regular season team). Chris was assistant coach and will be taking over as head coach next year. Micah continues to be the greatest fisherman in the family (sorry Chris). The streets in Hartford are even more dangerous now that Morliana Evans has gotten her driver's license. We are still working with her on raising money for

her tuition if there is anyone out there who can help out.

In the moving around department, we have said goodbye to our guest Jen. If she accomplishes getting her diploma by the fall she may be rejoining us while she attends community college. Ganiatou will be heading to Eastern University in the fall but still coming home to be with the community on some weekends and during school breaks. George Rishmawi, our beloved Palestinian peace pilgrim, is back and forth between Hartford and New London. Gwen, an Americorps/Notre Dame volunteer with us for 8 weeks, has been a blessing to the after school program, and will be helping out at the Green House all of July. The Green House will be open to kids on Mon, Wed Thurs and Fri. from 2:30-5:00, and Saturday mornings, if anyone has the time and energy we really need summer volunteers! Angela will be taking over the supervision while Sarah and I are at Camp. We have promised to pray for patience and energy for her during our morning prayers at Camp Ahimsa; we hope she Brian and Mo will do the same for us!

Our former guest and community member Marisol was married on June 16th. The wedding day began at St. Martin House. Chris and I were honored to "give her away" at the ceremony. We totally enjoyed being Padrino and Madrina to our God daughter Ellie over the weekend. Marisol was a beautiful bride and her husband Carlos is a love! We enjoyed seeing the expression on the after-school kids faces when Maid of Honor Sarah Karas came down the front steps of St. Martin House in her long pink gown looking like a gorgeous princess from the 'hood. Corey Fitch tearfully asked her if she was getting married. When she said "no silly", he grinned broadly and said "that's good, cause if you were....that means you would

be leaving”

In the peacemaking department, the heart continues to hunger for the promised reign of justice. We were horrified to learn of the suicide of three of the hostages at Guantanamo. More horrifying even, was the comment of the General

lead us.

I can only think of our friend and neighbor who Sarah had written about in our last issue. A homeless addict, he was beaten to death on the streets a few weeks ago. When we heard the news of his brutal death, I could only thank God

Kavanagh to oppose the torture detention camp in Guantanamo. People like Dan and my 87 year old mom, Mickey, who was arrested at Electric Boat saying “NO” to nuclear weapons, are the true heirs to the patriots who declared 230 years ago: “That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends [the unalienable Rights to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness], it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it,”

Thank God patriotism lives on in heroes like them who recognize the distinction made by Hartford hero Mark Twain who wrote: “Loyalty to country always. Loyalty to government when it deserves it”. Pray for us as we begin our hot and busy summer, and may you all have a chance this summer to

feel God’s peace for you and your families! And please remember our rather empty food pantry ...because hunger never takes a vacation!Ω



Signe Wilkinson

in charge who was quoted saying that their deaths were “an act of asymmetrical warfare”. With that kind of leadership and absolute refusal to acknowledge the humanity of the victims, one can see that the massacres occurring in Iraq are not the acts of a few rouge soldiers. These atrocities are in fact the end of a process where young people are trained to perceive their fellow human beings as non human. We know that this is the exact opposite of what we are told by Christ. We are made in the image and likeness of God. We know that there is that of Christ in everyone so we continue to witness on behalf of love, life and peace at the U.N. and Electric Boat (where the USS Hawaii was recently launched at the price of 2.5 BILLION dollars). We try to speak to the sin of that amount of money being spent on death machines in the face of so much human suffering when in the courtrooms where our civil disobedience/divine obedience

that we were blessed enough to offer him a tiny measure of comfort in his life of poverty and suffering. I was grateful too...to be given the gift of Grace that allows us to look upon the face of God in a young man’s suffering eyes.

Lastly, we give thanks for our beloved Father Dan Berrigan, whose 85th birthday we were honored to celebrate with him and a host of Catholic Workers and peacemakers from around the country. It was a great night as I got to talk with one of my first heroes (Kurt Vonnegut). We partied till dawn! (Jerry Berrigan Jr. you owe us one night of party). Dan married Chris and I in 1992. He has been a spiritual beacon of hope, joy, art, love poetry and peace for all of us as we struggle to live out our Gospel faith in a culture addicted to fear and materialism. He celebrated his birthday by getting busted at the U.N. with our own Brian

DO YOU SEEK MIRACLES?

listen - go
draw water, hew wood
break stones -
how miraculous!
Listen; blessed is the one
who walks the earth 5 years, 50 years,
80 years
and deceives no one
and curses no one
And kills no one
On such a one
the angels whisper in wonder;
behold the irresistible power
of natural powers -
of height, of joy, of soul, of non
belittling!

- Daniel Berrigan

Notes from De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen - Docuot

It is July 3rd and we are sitting at Ahimsa taking a break before summer camp starts. Ammon read a 300 page book in one day. Micah and Chris have been fishing since sunup, and I read a book, a pile of junk magazines, have had a few great walks in the woods and have almost completed my ever present "to do list" for summer camp. Now I am supposed to begin "the House article". I always procrastinate and am the main reason Scott "Snuffy" Schaeffer-Duffy at the Worcester Catholic Worker usually beats us in getting a newsletter out. Well, Scott, consider this one a happy anniversary gift from me. The Worcester Worker celebrated it's 20th anniversary this weekend. We wish them God's blessings for the next 20! They always have a special place in our hearts because Scott was the matchmaker who fixed Chris and I up back in 1991. We spent the first months of our married life in community at the Worker. Scott and Claire have led the way for a new generation of Workers who believe that you can raise children to be happy, healthy, beautiful disciples in a Catholic Worker House.

It is always a psychic adjustment to shift gears here in the middle of the woods. God is present in the lush cool surroundings in a very different way than in the city. Ahimsa camp today is

a very different place than it will be in a week when 10-20 campers arrive. At first I find the quiet distracting. I also think I have developed a bad habit of running around at top speed so as to avoid all the nagging feelings of despair and sadness that have enveloped me since the shooting sprees in Hartford began in late February.



Paul Lachne

One of the hardest things for me to comprehend are the not so subtle insinuations from some well meaning friends and family that maybe we should not be raising our children in the North End; that it has become too dangerous. What about Keyanna and Rafael? David and Mary? How could we leave them behind if we were to flee in fear for our own safety. Are my son's and the other kids here not part of one family? Aren't they all God's children? To our well meaning friends I can only respond with the words of our founder Dorothy Day "What right has any of us to security when God's poor are suffering." While I am frustrated by parents who allow their children to drop out of school and run amok all night, I am more frustrated by a culture of fear that refuses to address the core issues. Where do the guns come from? Why are younger and younger children finding it so easy to take a life. Why is there such radical hopelessness among our young people? I also like to bring peoples attention to the fact that death comes almost as frequently and horribly to wealthy white suburban children. All of us have read in the newspapers about the drunk driving deaths, ecstasy overdoses, and stabbing deaths at underage keg parties. Shooting sprees like the Columbine killings have

(SEE NOTES P.8)

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