

THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE
ST. BRIGID HOUSE

"If you want to follow me first sell what you have and give to the poor..." -Jesus



If you live alone, whose feet will you wash?

LENT 2009

-St. Basil the Great



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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, Sarah Karas, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

☪ Thank-you for your steadfast support of our work. Your gifts of talent and treasure along with your prayers keep our doors open, our wells full, and our spirits buoyant. Thank-you!

☪ Friends, during each of the last ten years we have distributed farm fresh organic vegetables grown at Holcomb Farm courtesy of a generous donor. Unfortunately the farm has significantly raised its price and our benefactor has lost his job so we have lost our share. It is only March but folks are already coming to our door asking for the vegetables. If any one has extra garden produce to share and/or if anyone has access to another local farm we are hoping to again make fresh vegetables available to our neighbors.



☪ Can we make one last petition? On June 1 the lovely Sarah Karas will be leaving the Hartford Catholic Worker to pursue a career in film making. Her moving on leaves a significant hole in our community that Jackie, Brian and I cannot fill. Previous calls for live-in community have not borne fruit. If anyone is interested in helping out after school, helping with cleaning on Tuesdays, helping with minor repairs and maintenance please contact us. If anyone is interested in exploring a live-in internship at the Hartford Catholic Worker please send us a letter telling us about yourself. **Please pray for us.**

St. Martin's Calendar

✦ Please join us on **Tuesday, April 7, May 5, and June 2 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.

🌍 Please join us on Saturday, April 24th from 10 until 2 for our annual earth day cleanup, cookout and field day. We'll provide gloves, bags, hamburgers and hot dogs. If you would like to bring drinks, salad, a side dish, flowers or bulbs, or a field activity we would be very grateful!

🕯️ Our vigil for an end to war continues on **Friday's from 11:30-12:30** outside the Federal Building on Main St. in Hartford. Please bring a sign and join our call for an end to the American military occupation of Iraq.

KINGDOM READY PROJECTS

Christopher J. Doucot

"Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great." (Ps 104:24-25)

So does the Psalmist rejoice in admiration at the wonders of God's creation. Regrettably, God's creation is far from virgin. Over the millennia we- God's most potent creation- have tarnished the glory of creation. Layers of pollution: litter, deforestation, radioactive waste, smog, open pit mines, sludge "ponds" and more, obscure the beauty of God's original handiwork much like 500 years of candle soot hid the brilliance of Michelangelo's original strokes. Though we have forever left Eden we are now in the bosom of the Kingdom. Impervious to our efforts to hide it by poverty or destroy it by war the Kingdom awaits and endures. Still, this world doesn't look much like any kingdom of our imagination.

I am reminded of the old Cozy Spot soul food restaurant on Barbour St. For half a century this joint was operated by Wilson and Evelyn Roberts. The plate glass

windows held back a jungle of Pothos, ivy, and spider plants which completely cloaked the dining room within. There was no sign above the door. Above the counter were posters of Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson and John Kennedy and a sign which read: "Don't ask for Mr. Credit. He is dead and gone- and we don't miss him." Mrs. Roberts would serve ice-cold old-fashioned root beer from a forty year old

chest freezer and then put her chin in her hands while she rested her back. Meanwhile Mr. Roberts was in the back cookin' up collard greens, fried chicken, corn bread, black-eyed peas and the like. Patrons ate what was prepared for the day which always included the most sinful sweet potato pie baked fresh by Mrs. Wilson each morning. The Cozy Spot did a steady business but was never crowded. Every day the younger residents of the neighborhood walked by this magical place lost in time unaware that living history, and a slice of culinary heaven, was in their midst. Sure, there were plenty of signs that the Cozy Spot was there- like all the satiated diners who were in on the open secret and, come on, who can't smell good fried chicken a mile away? But lacking a formal sign above the door most of the block never entered this nirvana to taste the ambrosia served within. We are just as oblivious to the Kingdom.



There's no point waiting for God to erect a fancy marquis or place an ad on the flashy I.c.d. billboard on I-84 to announce the grand opening of the Kingdom; Jesus took care of that long ago. Still signs of the Kingdom abound: from the intricate delicate spider web reflecting the morning dew to the indefatigable will of the salmon to return to their birthplace, from the glee of a child gliding past on their first success-

ful bike ride to the gentle caress of an aging grandma we are surrounded with signs that we dwell in the presence of majesty.

The great mystery of the Kingdom is that simultaneously it is "already but not yet". The task before us is to do away with the "not yet" so as to make the "already" more obvious.

To begin we simply need to "love our neighbors as ourselves". Kingdom revealing, world transforming love is not a sentimental hug nor even sincere expression of affection but honest hard work. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "He (and she) who plants and he who waters are equal, and each shall receive his wages according to his labor." The harvest of this gardening work will be the flourishing of God's Kingdom. So, in line with Paul's reminder to the faithful of Corinth that "we are God's fellow workers" (1Cor 3:8-9) and

President Obama's call for "shovel ready" projects to resuscitate our economy, I offer the following "Kingdom ready" projects for your consideration.

A hallmark of poverty is isolation. Poor people are isolated geographically, culturally and socially. Poverty is also

intertwined with education, health care, and nutrition. Our schools, re-imagined, could be the catalyst to transforming our neighborhoods and overcoming this isolation. Why are these buildings, the center of every neighborhood unused after 3 and on weekends? If these schools hosted adult literacy, G.E.D. and other adult classes, after school hours the adult

(SEE KINGDOM READY, P4)

KINGDOM READY CONT.

literacy rate of Hartford would surely rise above the current 41%. Our neighborhoods are full of hungry and/or poorly fed people that could gather for dinner at the school cafeteria. Kids chillin' on street corners or veggin' in front of TV and computer screens could be shooting hoops and jumping Double Dutch in our underused gyms. And finally the school auditoria could be venues for local performing artists and for film screenings. Our neighborhood schools ought to be hubs knitting community by filling bellies, forming minds, strengthening bodies and nourishing souls.

The current work of our schools is a herculean (and hopefully not a Sisyphean) task. Large class sizes overwhelm teachers, frustrate those ready and able to learn and fail those with special needs. By creating a nationwide Teacher's Corp with the goal of tripling the number of *certified* teachers-committed long term professionals and not simply well meaning recent college graduates looking for a holdover year or two before entering the business world- would enable class size to shrink to a scale where each child would have a bounty of attention and instruction.

Our city has hundreds of vacant lots and abandoned buildings. not to mention decrepit ones full of children. With the foreclosure crisis this is an exploding problem plaguing every American city. These properties are an affront to the people who live in and around them. If their owners are unable and/or unwilling to care for them to the extent they might if they lived in or next to them then they should be seized by the state using eminent domain. Dilapidated buildings that are beyond repair and architecturally uninspired should be torn down. The resulting lots, along with existing vacant lots, could then be put to multiple uses.

Fifty years ago the Federal government used eminent domain during Urban Renewal to replace "blighted" downtown neighborhoods

with tourist and commercial development. In doing so they destroyed mixed income

neighborhoods and further concentrated poor Americans in ghettos.

One of the resulting micro-ghettos was Nelton Court- a despicable housing project a block from the Hartford Catholic Worker that is reminiscent of some of the neighborhoods I've visited in Baghdad. One of our volunteers told me this week that she burst into tears when she brought one of our kids home to this awful place. Why is it that if puppies were housed there the CSPA, PETA and the general public would be outraged, but with families living there we aren't?

New home construction combined with just and creative financing could entice middle income Americans back to our neighborhoods. Retail will follow them back, just like it did when they fled to the suburbs, providing jobs and enhancing the quality of life for all neighborhood residents. Other vacant lots ought to be permanently deeded as parkland. Some could simply be an acre of trees; given that upwards of two-thirds of Hartford children have asthma the shade and cleaner air provided by the addition of thousands of trees would be immeasurably beneficial.

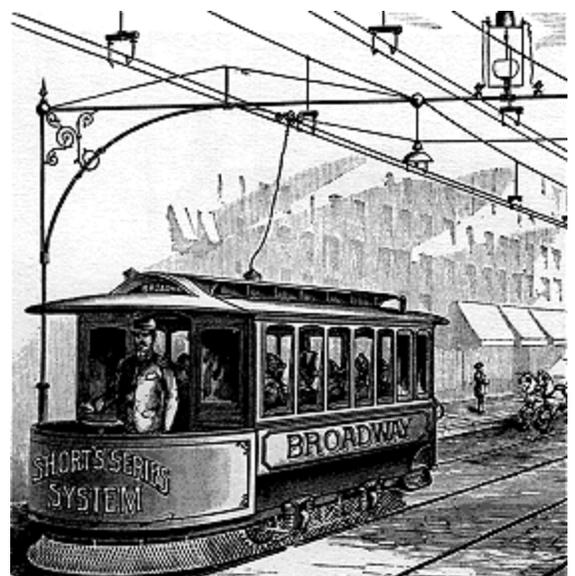
Here's another idea, a modern update on Micah and Isaiah's prophecy that we ought to beat our swords into farm tools (Is 2:4): let's beat our nuclear submarines built in Groton and our military helicopters built in Windsor Locks into trolley cars. In 1900 America was the envy of the world with an extensive trolley system that connected rural and urban with a web of trolley lines that was unparalleled. By 2000 trolleys exist only in museums (two here in CT!).

Over the past century trolley rails have been paved over by our tax dollars to make way for the automobile. The problem with this, aside- of course- from the pollution and dwindling oil supplies, is that if you don't own a car these roads and

highways are much less useful than the trolley. Restructuring transportation from a public and mass transit system to a private and individual user system expedited the flight of the middle class from our cities, critically harmed our environment, created moats around our downtowns, and further isolated our poor citizens from society at large. Albany, Capitol, Wethersfield, Farmington, Blue Hills, and Maple Avenues; Main, Trumbull, and Broad streets among others are public ways that benefit the car-owning portion of the public far more than they do the public that live in the neighborhoods around these roads.

Rather than waging a Pyrrhic battle of road widening these streets ought to be reduced in width by two-thirds, eliminating one lane of traffic in each direction and most on street parking. The reclaimed lanes could thus become new beds for trolley lines that extend out into the first ring suburbs with a parallel tree and shrub lined bike lane. Thousands of workers could be paid living wages to meticulously dismantle the submarines and helicopters and thousands more could be employed to build and maintain the trolley system.

I'm running out of space so I'll just briefly mention a couple of other ideas that would be in my stimulus package. I would invest in a small bicycle factory for the city along with a velodrome and bmx track. Colonel Pope invented the bike here in Hartford. Cycling is affordable, fun, healthy and a potential



alternative to commuting by car. It could be a signature of our city. Wouldn't you rather live in a place known as the country's cycling capital rather than its filing cabinet?

I would commission a new CCC- the City Cleaning Corps providing jobs to folks that are otherwise "unemployable" to pick up every scrap of litter, clean graffiti, paint murals, maintain bus shelters, and plant flowers in every corner of every city. I would likewise commission a Corps of Urban Park Rangers to blaze trails, lead hikes, facilitate workshops on the natural world, and provide a safe presence in urban parks like the forgotten treasure we have in Keney Park.

And here is one last idea. Every day I drive by the former "Mount Trashmore" the landfill on the north Meadows that is now being capped. Every city has a Mt. Trashmore; they will be with us for generations to come. Some, like Boston, have properly capped them and turned them into improbable oases of nature. This altered topography of trash is now one of the highest points right on the banks of the Connecticut River. This mound could have a number of novel new lives. An aviary could be built atop it filled with birds from around the world. While outside it could become a destination for birders seeking to spot indigenous fowl. (I've seen eagles on the river in Hartford) A modest kite factory could be built on site and the top could be a kite flying park with annual festivals attracting kite flyers (we need a word for them) from around the world. Maybe it could be an outrageously awesome sledding hill in the winter and a go-cart hill in the summer? Maybe it could become a green power plant dotted with windmills and solar cells that could generate electricity along with the methane that our garbage below will belch for a century.

Before you finish scoffing at this as tomfoolery beyond our financial capability keep in mind that the various "bailout" and "stimu-



lus" plans approved over the last year amount to \$8 trillion dollars (that is a 631 mile high stack of \$100 bills!) (CNN) and that we have been spending \$16 billion a month (*Washington Post*) for several years now to fight wars and undo God's creation in Iraq and Afghanistan

I'm guessing that the poet of Psalm 104 lived by the sea. A psalmist sitting on the stoop of St. Brigid House would likely muse about the sky which last week was filled with a winding river of birds. Tens of thousands of harbingers of Spring flowed from horizon to horizon riding the jet stream South- an aviatic torrent. Perhaps the bounty of the Connecticut River, soon to be bursting with snow melt from the North and brimming with Herring, Striped Bass, and Shad riding the incoming tide and warming water from the Sound, the Hudson, and as far away as Chesapeake Bay would have provided inspiration.

If I were the Lord's lyricist here in north Hartford I would marvel at the living "things innumerable" in Keney Park: the cathedral pines, the mighty oaks, and the smooth trunked beeches which create a seamless canopy for eagles, owls and hawks to roost upon and for squirrels to dance across; beneath this ceiling with which even that of the Sistine cannot compare beavers busily

build dams, coyote saunter, deer traipse, and fox scurry; at the edge of this metropolitan forest great blue herons glide to a statuesque pose aside the bridge across a modest pond which will soon be transformed into a outdoor nocturnal concert hall when the schools of pollywogs transfigure into an army of frogs. The most magnificent of God's creatures gathers not as a herd, flock, school, nor army but as a beloved community every afternoon in our backyard: grade school, middle school, high school and university students, boys and girls, retired folks and professionals, housewives, Black folks, Brown folks, White folks and Caribbean folks, some are rich, some poor, and others just get by. Separately we each reflect God's image but gathered as a community a mosaic portrait of God begins to be revealed. Oftentimes unawares of the celestial forces coalescing with our terrestrial designs we nonetheless glimpse the face of God each time we gather.

Some of us call God Yahweh, others prefer Allah or Jehovah. In the old days He (definitely a he back then) was known as Adoni. My relationship with God has grown less formal over the years and so these days I prefer nicknames like Saniah, Sasean, Corey, Catherine, Octo, Edna, Steve and Jim. I see God all around me in this beloved community that gathers in a funky green house within a forlorn neighborhood. If you come by I'll introduce you and perhaps the sound of His voice, or maybe the melody of Her giggle, will inspire the muse in you to marvel at the beauty hidden here. Ω



R.I.P. PETER DEMOTT: GENTLE ROCK OF PEACE

Jack Gilroy

Our brother veteran, Peter DeMott, of Ithaca, New York died after falling from a tree he was trimming on February 19th, 2009. Peter, a Marine veteran who served in Vietnam (1969), later joined the US Army and, completed a year study at the Army Language training school in Monterey, CA. After four and half years in the Army, Peter returned home and completed his college degree.

By the late '70's, Peter had a transformation from his childhood and military indoctrination. He later noted that: *"While in Vietnam I attended Roman Catholic Mass regularly and on occasion would go to confession, as I had been brought up to do. As a dutiful young Marine who followed orders well, I had no idea that my work in Vietnam was helping to bring about the deaths of some two million people there, maim and displace countless others, and severely damage and degrade the local environment. That sad realization came to me only much later."*

Peter discovered the Catholic Worker movement in Des Moines and his conversion process from militarism to pacifism began to take root. He noted: *"The Catholic Worker taught me many things I'd never heard before: pacifism, nonviolence, voluntary poverty, personal responsibility for contemporary injustice, and service to Christ in the person of the victims of military and corporate violence and greed. The Catholic Worker also introduced me to nonviolent civil disobedience and its history and practice in our country. A process of conversion had begun in me, as I began to question authority and realize*

the need to make myself as marginal to evil as possible. My arrest at an arms bazaar was the initial outward, visible act of my conversion."

At that arms bazaar he met Fr Roy Bourgeois. Their action at the Rosemont, Illinois Arms Bazaar in February of 1979, welded Roy and Peter. They became life long friends. Years later, Peter, deeply



involved in Plowshare activism and working to support his family, still found time to join Roy in actions at the US Army School of the Americas at Ft Benning, Ga.

By the mid 80's, Peter had married Ellen Grady, another Plowshares activist, and was raising a family. Peter's brother in law, John Grady and others (including myself) were arrested in 1985 at the Seneca Army Depot for climbing the fence into the nuclear weapons depot to deliver petitions to workers to cease and desist in their cooperation with the evil behind the nuclear program.

It was there that I first met Peter. He told me about ramming a Trident Sub with a truck (Groton, CT) a few years before. As a high school teacher, I very much wanted

him to speak to my students. They were terrific kids but like Peter, and most Americans, they had been indoctrinated in the goodness of United States weaponry and American wars. I called Peter and asked him to come into my public high school social studies class.

Peter and Ellen, parents of young children had vowed to not be part of the tax support for American wars and weapon making. Financial survival was a bit easier in Ithaca where Paul Glover, a creative peace activist, had developed a money system for Ithaca residents called Ithaca Hours. Much of the work that Peter did roofing, painting, installing gutters, trimming and cutting down trees etc. was paid in Ithaca Hours, an actual home town

currency that could be used in stores and for services. The day Peter showed at my classroom door he was a sight to behold. Peter, the loving and gentle rock of a man, had rugged features. To add to his stern look that morning was his well worn attire of paint tainted cap, shirt, pants and boots. He cut quite a different figure from the usual corporate type speakers invited into classrooms.

I introduced him and briefly told the class he was opposed to nuclear weapons and war in general. Initially the students were quiet as they focused on this strange looking dude. To get things going, I asked Peter what he was doing to make known the dangers of nuclear weapons. Peter

answered with a question: "You live in a community that could be called mid sized, right? Well, the new Trident has 240 missiles that can be fired into 240 independently targeted cities anywhere in the world. Any mid sized city would be totally destroyed, all living things would be killed from the fireball, the falling rubble, the shock, the radiation."

"But that's the enemy" one boy called out. The boy's response was what Peter expected. He used the session as a Socratic question and response time with the students posing questions and Peter allowing them to answer key questions themselves. One session didn't convert them from righteous Americans willing to obliterate the enemy of the month but Peter DeMott left them with a lot to reconsider. By the end of the class time, much more than statistics had been taught. It appeared that at least some of the students got the message loud and clear—nuclear weapons poised to kill millions of people are criminal and those who design and plan their use are the core crime makers.

When finally asked what he was going to do about nuclear weapons, Peter said he was a spiritual man and felt that prayer was his number one action, but that action sometimes speaks louder than prayer or just words. He told them how he went to Groton, CT in September of 1980 for the launching of another Trident ship of death. He felt he had to do something to make people more conscious of the evil and terror of nuclear weapons. So, when he saw a navy van with keys in the ignition and doors open, he got in, locked the doors, started the engine and proceeded to ram the rudder of the Trident. It was only after a number of smashes of the rudder that Navy Shore Patrol broke the windshield and pulled out Peter, the submarine disabler.

"Did you go to jail for that?" asked a student. "Yes, I did for one year." "Would you do it again?" "I already did." said

Peter. "I helped disable a another Trident in 1982, along with the woman who is now my wife."

Since that classroom scene twenty four years ago, Peter DeMott did not stop; except for time in jail or prison. When the build-up for our most recent war on the people of Iraq began in the fall of 2002, Peter and family attended marches, demonstrations, and vigils. Two days before the attack on Baghdad, Peter, two of Ellen's sisters, and a family friend poured vials of their own blood on military posters and a US flag at the Ithaca Army and Marine recruiting station. They were tried in Tompkins County Court and the result was a hung jury.

However, the Federal Government indicted them, and the media now called them St. Pat's Four (their action was on March 17th). They went on trial a second time in Binghamton, NY. It was an amazing trial, the only one of its kind in the United States. All four defended themselves but had counsel (led by Loyola University Professor, Bill Quigley). The passionate, eloquent, logical and truthful testimony of the St Pat's Four prevailed by defeating the

conspiracy charge of the US Government. They were found guilty of obstruction of justice (cost of blood clean up of floor and washing of flag—a claim by the government that there was \$500 in damages, hence, a felony) and all four went to prison for four or more months.

Most years, Peter DeMott was full time busy doing laboring jobs to support his family. He could recite dozens of verses of Shakespeare by memory, sing songs of the Wobblies, the Depression era, and the labor, civil rights, anti-war movements. Peter was not afraid of hard labor. He died in the process of supporting his loved ones, doing hard work in sub freezing temperatures high above the ground.

Peter and Ellen teamed to raise loving children—Kate, Marie, Nora, Saoirse. All have been and will continue to be embraced by blood relatives and their extended family from the peace city of Ithaca to Catholic Worker Houses around the world to Veterans For Peace friends, who, like Peter DeMott, learned long ago that war and violence does not work. Ω



Peter DeMott and Ellen Grady

NOTES CONT.

many times had to face very difficult and unpopular decisions but did so with grace, gaining the respect of many. He loved his family very much and will certainly be missed by all. So while this season of darkness and retreat has brought much suffering it has also brought many gifts. I have only to look around our house to find pockets of new growth full of color and hope. Last week we had an amazing group of young women from Ohio Wesleyan University visit. This group of seven, very enthusiastic volunteers, chose to spend their spring break not in Cancun or some such place but rather in good ole Hartford, Connecticut with us here at the worker. We knew that a week's time would be too short to build relationships with the neighborhood kids but we did put them to work with projects around the two houses and took the opportunity to educate them about Hartford, the work we do, and we encouraged them to make connections between privilege, inequality and opportunity in our country. It was nice to have their fresh energy in the house, Riley especially appreciated the company during the day, and I had fun getting to know them and reminisce about college. So thank you all very much, come back anytime! The UCONN students are back and in full swing. Some of our children have been watching the basketball teams play at the XL Center and feel all special when the players wave to them from the bench, recognizing them from our house. The UCONN students have also initiated a "Teen Night" at the Green house on Wednesdays. Teen Nights are part hanging out and part learning life skills. They talk about all kinds of things from



good nutrition and cooking to good hygiene, exercise and living an overall healthy lifestyle. As always, the kids love having them around and their presence has created a bridge from our neighborhood to the campus of the University of Connecticut. And now we have so many students volunteering that we are packed full on Saturdays! The Salvation Army has allowed us to use their gym during our Saturday program so that we can spread the crowd out a bit and has been GREAT for rainy days when the kids can't go outside. Two other really helpful groups of volunteers have been the East Catholic and Northwest Catholic High school volunteers. Each year the students have to do service hours at a local organization and we get a new group of students through this time of year. I myself began volunteering at the Catholic Worker my sophomore year at Northwest Catholic and I am still here today! They help out with the tutoring and tend to be the best tutors because all the math and grammar the children are learning is still fresh in their minds, unlike myself who needs a text book for the text book. The other day the East Catholic students hosted a bunch of the Green House children at their school. They bought them a pizza dinner and then sat with them to watch the spring musical "Hello Dolly!" Kristi Gillespie and Laurie Janecko are the two campus ministers that organize these students- and we thank them for that! Along with the many volunteers that have given their time so generously we have also been blessed these past few months with food donations. Our pantry

has been piled high and we have been sending the kids home with bags full of food. So please keep the food coming, it is so helpful during this time when people are losing their jobs and are having a hard time making ends meet. Thank you to all those who tirelessly collect food for our pantry and snacks for our shelves. It is always welcomed and very much appreciated! Writing about all this food reminds me of a dinner guest we had here about a month ago. Guess who...Henry Sunday! Yes, the Henry Sunday! You may remember him as the young man from Nigeria who stayed with us for a while. He was in the States for surgery and physical therapy after losing his leg in an automobile accident back home. He then returned to Nigeria and was in another horrific accident, this time in a bus that went over a cliff. Many of his fellow passengers died and others severely injured. He was one of the few that survived with only a few bruises! For a longtime we lost track of Henry until one day he showed up at our front door here in Hartford! He has returned to the states on a student visa and is currently enrolled at Capitol Community College. We had him over for dinner the other night and we commissioned our guest from Togo to teach us how to make really spicy chicken West African style for him. Success! We all burned our mouths off! It

was very nice to see him doing so well and we are glad he is back for a while. So I know we are always talking about all the work we do and then all the work we do on top of that but we do get out every once in a while. The other night Chris, Jackie, and I went to see a one lady play about the life of Dorothy Day at St. Joseph's College, a fundraiser

for the two houses. The woman who played Dorothy had been wanting to do a play about her ever since she first discovered acting and has been perform-



ing this particular play for about 20 years. It was nice to see many of you there and we would like to thank the Catholic parishes of West Hartford for organizing the event. And finally a bit about all of us. The boys have been getting into music. Each now owns a guitar (Ammon an electric and Micah a electric bass) and you can hear them plucking out tunes in their rooms now and then. Now this might bother some people but I grew up in a house where there was always music playing and jam sessions in our basement most evenings so I have actually been enjoying this new development. It makes me want to get my old saxophone out, maybe we can get Jackie's bird on lead vocals. Soon Micah will be taking a trip to Argentina with his school (many thanks to the Rosenberg Fund for Children for their generous assistance) and

I know he is really looking forward to it. Chris has been doing a lot of work on building the curriculum for his CCSU class "Race, Class and Gender." Jackie has been doing a lot with the Voluntown



Peace Trust as it moves into its latest phase of development. And Brian is glowing after a weekend trip to visit his family in Maine. I will leave off with this e.e. cummings poem in memory of Peter De Mott, a great lover of poetry and in anticipation of Spring:

i thank You God for most this amazing day; for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes (i who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birthday of life and love and wings: and of the gay great happening illimitably earth) how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any— lifted from the no of all nothing— human merely being doubt unimag- inable You? (now the ears of my ears awake andnow the eyes of my eyes are opened) Ω

“Slowly, I began to understand what Peter Maurin wanted: We were to reach the people by practicing the works of mercy, which meant feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner, sheltering the harborless, and so on. We were to do this by being poor ourselves, giving everything we had; then others would give too. Voluntary poverty and the works of mercy were the things he stressed above all. This was the core of his message. It had such appeal that it inspired us to action- action which certainly kept us busy and got us into all kinds of trouble besides... I am so convinced of the rightness of his proposals that I have walked in this way now for over thirty years.” -*Dorothy Day*

A Case for Utopia

Peter Maurin

*The world would be better off
if people tried to become better,
and people would become better
if they stopped trying to become better off.
For when everyone tries to become better off
nobody is better off.
Everyone would be rich
if nobody tried to become richer,
and nobody would be poor
if everybody tried to be the poorest.
And everybody would be what they ought to be if
everybody tried to be
what they want the other person to be.*



Notes from De Porres House

facebook.



Sarah Karas

Status: Sarah is Not on facebook but instead typing this house article.

Please pardon the reference but we, with the exception of Brian and Chris, have become a little obsessed with Facebook at our house. Of course we all haven't reached the level that Ammon has where he attaches a rubber band around his head in order to hold the phone in place over his ear allowing him to talk and type to his friends while updating his Facebook page. Although it has been a great way to keep in touch with friends that are far away or whom I haven't heard from in years. Although I will warn you, it can be very addictive and should be used sparingly. Our friend George Rishmauci from the West Bank

sent us pictures of his new born son via Facebook. He was born around the same time as Morliana's daughter. Yes you read correctly! Morliana had a baby girl, on January 30th, named Destani Rose. Poor Morliana was in labor for over 36 hours but now she has the cutest little baby (and I am not just saying that because I am her auntie). Morliana is very happy and it is so wonderful to see her as a mom, Lord knows she had all that practice working with the kids at the Green House. We wish Morliana the best and I am looking forward to seeing little Destani grow. Speaking of which, Spring is just around the corner! Already the daylight is staying longer and the weather getting warmer. As I sit here typing I can't help but feel a sense of anticipation and joy for the coming season of new life, especially after the long, cold, grey days of winter. This Winter seemed especially difficult for many of us here in the house and in our neighborhood. Each one of us at different times battled the flu or had a persistent cough that seemed to hang around weeks after being ordered out by jugs full of grapefruit juice, emergen-C and cough medicine. Many friends of ours either lost their jobs or are worried that they might. Many are looking for places to live and have moved in with



Destani Rose on her first day

relatives. At church, during the prayers of the faithful, folks speak out about the increase in those lining up to receive food from FoodShare and other organizations feeding those in Hartford. And most recently, with this cold winter, came the passing of our dear friend Peter De Mott. He died suddenly after falling from a tree that he was hired to take down. Jackie has been friends with his family for over 20 years and they were my "family-away-from-home" while I was in school at Ithaca College. I like our friend Stephen Kobasa's description of Peter: "a man whose joy was always clear." Peter had a huge heart full of love and courage. He spent much of his life fighting for peace and justice and

(PLEASE SEE: NOTES, P8)