

THE Round Table

Winter
1993

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." — Peter Maurin

 Free Sandwich #300 Rent	GRAND AVENUE #300 Rent	CHANCE 	GAS Company  Rate Increase	DELMAR Rent \$300	 Just Retreading
Phone Company  Rate Increase	<h1 style="text-align: center;">HUMOR...</h1> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; transform: rotate(-15deg); display: inline-block;"> CHANCE \$200 Do not collect Taxes. Refuse to pay back war </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; transform: rotate(-15deg); display: inline-block; margin-top: 10px;"> FREE CLOTHING Community Chest </div>			Lindell Rent \$400	
Florissant Avenue Rent \$200				WATER WORKS  Rate Increase	
CASS Avenue Rent \$200				Portland Place Rent \$400	
Electric Company  Rate Increase				Light Rail '93  Rate INCREASE	
GO TO  #10	17th Street Rent \$100	Hogan Street Rent \$100	Income TAX Refuse to pay 0% of war tax	Community CHEST 	Collect subsistence you pass 

WHY (NOT) THIS ISSUE?

Another "Humor" issue? Why not? After all, there is pain and despair in countries like Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovnia, a \$4 trillion deficit, and visible collapse of our cities. We suffered through a presidential election. In addition, we faced Advent and Christmas in a society that was relieved by an increase in commercial spending.

Are these events to laugh about?

No.

Laughter, a sense of humor, and wit are basic gifts we are given to help us reveal ourselves. Like many gifts, if they are used with an intent of violence, they will destroy. If they are used with a sense of vulnerability and love, they will create joy.

Are we funny? Risking this issue has been rather like diving into a pool. The dive may be great, it may have gotten the diver in the '96 Games. But, imagine coming to the surface only to realize the swimsuit is gone. The situation is embarrassing, because after all that careful work and practice, the dive has left the diver exposed and vulnerable to a scrutiny by others that one never intended. And, of course, they laughed.

The first dive into this issue was made by Ellen Rehg, and her not-so-typical review of the Bible. The review is followed by (although not necessarily in order), a witty song parody written with joy by Mark Scheu. Phil Runkel adds a personal historical perspective of the Catholic Worker Archives. Barb Prosser and Phil Heagney contribute a national agenda that may be warm and familiar to some. For a nice break, you may want to browse through the photos of Karen House's 15th Anniversary--the best darn barbecue Hogan Street has seen. The mysterious Ann-Arch offers some mannerly advice to help one out of those sticky Worker situations. Larry Willard takes on a more serious note with the coming of the Messiah in the guise of the poor. Mary Ann McGivern recalls some very special (and humorous) moments. Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff offers a wonderful review of the events in El Salvador. Last, but not least, Becky Hassler discusses the simple joys of Sunday nights at Karen house. Not all of these articles were written with the intention of being humorous. They are nevertheless, poignant and revealing. We let ourselves go and would hope that you do too. When we cease to laugh, we give in to what is evil.

If you get bored, I suggest you invite a few friends over for Monopoly.



- Kris Dennis

Cover graphic for
The Round Table
by Kris Dennis

the St. Louis Catholic Worker Community

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THE BIBLE

by Ellen Rehg

Although the Bible has been in circulation for some time, it has never, to our knowledge, been adequately reviewed. This is perhaps due to the fact that, speaking for Catholics, it has so rarely been read. The Bible is one of those classical works of literature, like the collected works of Shakespeare, that people know certain quotes from without having actually read it all the way through. The task of a good review is to introduce the content of a book to its readers and comment upon its strengths and weaknesses. This then, will be the focus of this review.

A first warning to the prospective reader: the Bible is actually two works, or "testaments": the original story and the sequel, which we might title, respectively, "God" and "Son of God". These works are sufficiently distinct from one another to warrant separate comment.

The first testament suffers from many problems that will prove a trial to the reader, not the least of which is, as Woody Allen said, "a totally unbelievable main character." Secondly, the very nature of the work is in doubt. Is it fiction, non-fiction, science-fiction, or yet another of the plethora of how-to manuals that are presently flooding the market? Perhaps this kind of confusion is inevitable when a series of authors puts together a work, which seems to have been the case here. At any rate, the main author or editor has never surfaced, leaving these questions to the discretion of the reader.

Unfortunately, the title of the entire opus provides no clue as to its nature. "Bible" is Greek for

"book". Imagine a movie entitled "Movie" or a play called "Play". The authors either suffered from a deplorable lack of imagination or an equally deplorable sense of pretentiousness.

The general theme of the first testament is the struggle for recognition by the main character, God. This character has many nicknames, "Yahweh", "I Am", "Wonder Counselor", "Prince of Peace", etc.: It may be that his various appellations contribute to the confusion surrounding his identity. Actually, even the



Ellen Rehg has recently announced her engagement to Bill Miller, also of these pages.

gender of this character changes periodically, as when God is given a female nickname. It is no wonder then that the other characters in the book have trouble recognizing this God-person.

This difficulty in being recognized seems to stem from a unique disability of God's. In an interesting twist on the theme of blindness, it is not that God cannot see, but that God cannot be seen by others except in some metaphorical form. The tribal family she approaches and attempts to build a relationship with sometimes experiences her as a voice, sometimes a cloud or at other times as a burning bush. She makes a great effort to communicate with others despite her visibility



disability. Indeed the reader comes to have great sympathy for God in her often futile and poignant attempts to be recognized and loved.

Of course, the way God keeps switching the type of relationship he/she seems to desire of the clan, it is no wonder that they are confused. At times God acts very parental, other times God expresses her jealousy like a wounded lover. The possibility of a romance between God and her people is hinted at -- then God comes on like a social worker, (or should I say, Catholic Worker) promising to care for all the poor and outcast of the community. This God character never misses a trick, and is consequently very hard to keep up with. But all along, he laments that all he really wants is to be loved. God's hopes for a meaningful relationship are usually dashed, however, as his prospective lovers forget the promises they made to God when they needed his help and begin to stray as soon as they no longer seem to need that help. Another obstacle standing in the way of a relationship is the mortality of God's lovers. God keeps outliving them. (I believe this may be why, in the sequel, God finally wises up and finds a lover with the ability to live as long as God does.)

This general theme is developed unevenly through a complex narrative involving, as Cecil B. De Mille's films used to say, "a cast of thousands". The first mortal characters, Adam and Eve, are introduced in some detail in the first few pages. A beginning is made

in developing their characters. Their fatal flaw is a lack of integrity - they tend to blame others for their own faults. This foreshadows problems in their marriage which bear fruit in a domestic tragedy in which one son murders the other. This "Dynasty"-like story line is abruptly dropped, however, and Adam and Eve's family is literally washed away in an all-too-convenient literary device that wipes all traces of them from the story.

The story line that follows bears a slight resemblance to *The Wizard of Oz*, in that it consists of repeated attempts on the part of the nomadic family to return home. Their home is a piece of real estate bordering the Mediterranean Sea which God had asked

*Presenting Jesus' life
from four perspectives
gives the second part
a kind of post-modern
flavor...*

the people to move to. Incredibly, God often fails to provide accurate directions to this land. Furthermore, the land in question is mostly arid and desert-like despite God's portrayal of it as "flowing with milk and honey". It is apparently such poor land that they are constantly experiencing droughts and famines. Here God comes across like one of those salespeople who try to sell you lake front property in Florida that actually lies in the middle of a swamp. This could explain why the people inevitably leave the area again several generations after they have torturously made their way there.

Part I ends with the clan defending their land against foreign invaders and bemoaning "the way we were" in their relationship with God. The sequel focuses much more specifically on one character, Jesus, who claims to be the son of God. Jesus is fully versed in the trials of God's relationship with the clan but nevertheless also attempts to build a relationship with them. Needless to say, he is no more successful than his parent. Today we might diagnose Jesus and God as suffering from a kind of co-dependency. They seem to choose the wrong people to get involved with. By the end of Part II, Jesus widens the field of his prospective lovers and friends from the members of a single clan to include the entire human race. Whether or not this maneuver will be successful remains to be seen.

In closing, I can readily recommend this work, although I advise the reader to skim the battle scenes in

the chapter entitled Joshua, since they become tedious. I might also point out that for some reason, Part II contains four accounts of roughly the same story, the life of Jesus. It can be reasonably inferred that there is meant to be, however, only one and not four separate characters named Jesus. Presenting Jesus' life from four perspectives gives the second part a kind of post-modern

flavor, like those French novels that play around with perspective. If you really enjoy this work and are sorry to turn the last page, do not despair. The last few pages set the stage for yet another sequel, "Return of God." Apparently all the loose ends of the story will be wrapped up then. ✦

cut on the dotted line

KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE!!

There's not much time left before the thousand points of light kindly and gently fade from view. Many stalwart believers fear that these inspiring signs of our national character may never be seen again.

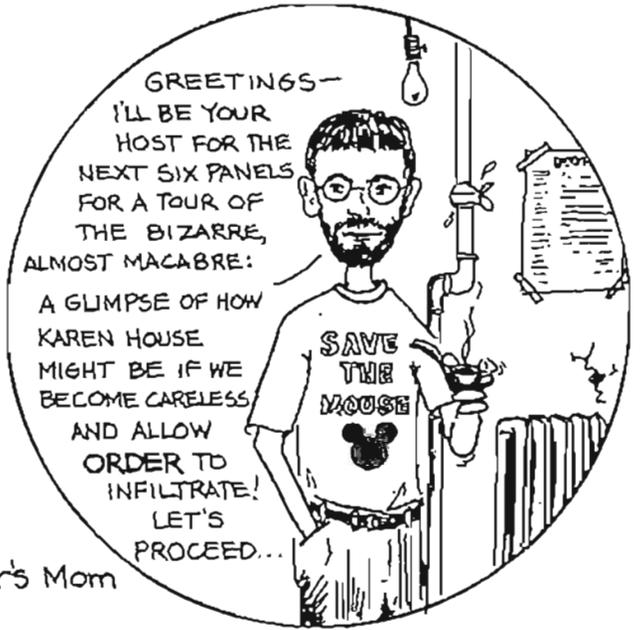
But, we're determined not to let the legacy of the last 12 years be pushed aside, and we know we're not alone. Help us send a message to our Nation's Capitol by checking each box below that describes your commitment to keep THE DREAM alive:

- I will lobby the Post Office to issue a set of stamps honoring the great savings and loan executives of the 20th century.
- I will spend a year of my life selling Dog Millie's autobiography door-to-door to raise money for the national vice-presidential archives and research library.
- I will spend at least one hour a day thinking of names for the new St. Louis entry into the National Football League.
- I will remain out of the loop and will only shop at the Galleria.
- I may smoke, but I will never inhale.
- I will remain steadfastly convinced that only men bear a close physical resemblance to the person of Christ.
- I will contribute \$5.00 per month from my earnings to keep the Star Wars program fully funded.
- I will make sure that the bathroom faucet at my workplace is always dripping as a daily reminder of how God intended economics to work.
- I will never wear a spotted owl costume at Halloween.
- I will use only old growth timber in my fireplace.
- I will write to my representative in Congress at least once a month demanding that Panama give our canal back.
- I will continue to believe that the Evil Empire is alive and remains committed to the goal of burying capitalism through the sinister introduction of fluoride into America's natural water supply.

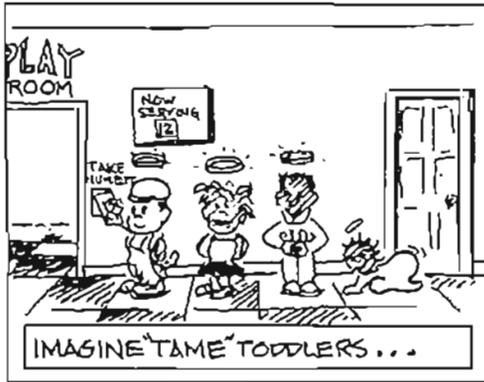
Barbara Prosser and Phil Heagney, who co-direct the DREAM ALIVE movement, are script writers for the nationally syndicated NPR program, "Car Talk". When not on tour, they live in St. Louis.

The Karen House Chronicles*

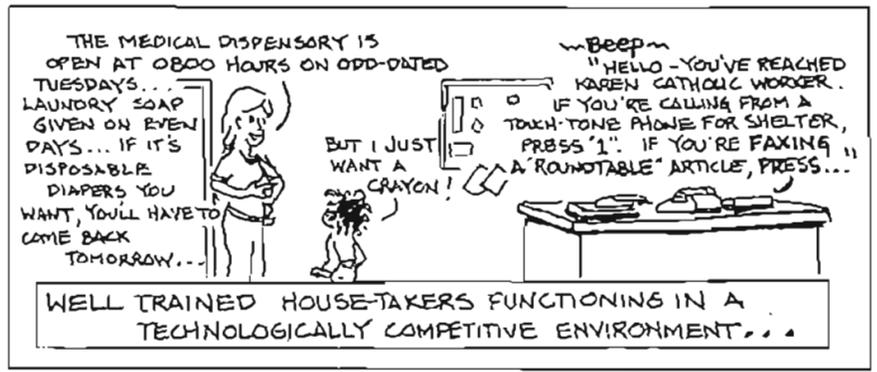
"... a path from where we are to where we'll never be..." Peter's Mom



GREETINGS—
I'LL BE YOUR
HOST FOR THE
NEXT SIX PANELS
FOR A TOUR OF
THE BIZARRE,
ALMOST MACABRE:
A GLIMPSE OF HOW
KAREN HOUSE
MIGHT BE IF WE
BECOME CARELESS
AND ALLOW
ORDER TO
INFILTRATE!
LET'S
PROCEED...



IMAGINE "TAME" TODDLERS...



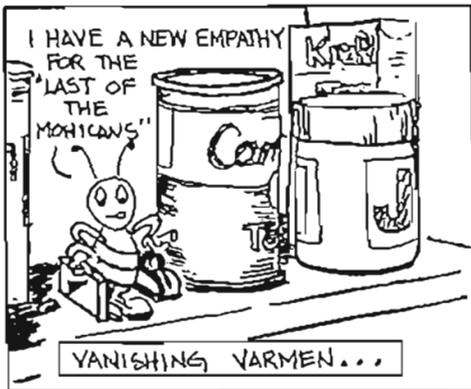
WELL TRAINED HOUSE-TAKERS FUNCTIONING IN A TECHNOLOGICALLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT...



EXQUISITE DINING (NOT TO MENTION MATCHING SILVERWARE)...



IMPECCABLE ACCOMMODATIONS...



VANISHING VARMEN...



AND A TOP-OF-THE LINE FASHION OUTLET!



THANKS FOR JOINING ME ON THIS HYPOTHETICAL JOURNEY. IT'S NICE HOWEVER TO BE BACK TO THE OLD TRIED AND TRUE METHOD OF "ORGANIZED CHAOS"
P.S.—THERE ARE SOME HOUSE-SHIFTS STILL AVAILABLE!

* ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL CHARACTERS OR SITUATIONS IS PURELY INTENTIONAL.

INQUIRIES ON THE ART OF LIVING

by Ann-Arch

Dear Ann-Arch,

I live at a Catholic Worker shelter and we consider hospitality one of the most important virtues, yet I am often in a quandary as to the most hospitable way to proceed in these less than regular circumstances.

For example, somehow we often come up short on one or other of the vital utensils for serving meals. If we run out of coffee cups, for instance, is it best to resort to a sugar bowl? Or perhaps a cereal bowl? Or a plastic glass? I would hate to feel I was doing the wrong thing.

Concerned

Dear Person,

The solution to your problem will require some quick thinking and value judgements each time this situation arises. That is unfortunate but graciousness is not automatic.

What you must do in each case is determine what is most important to the comfort of your guest. With regard to coffee cups, for instance, the highest value is a brim that will prevent dribbling. A sugar bowl that has a lip where its cover can rest will not be appropriate. There was a time in the 1950's version of modernism when sugar bowls were quite streamlined, and many of these will suit your purpose well, though they do tend to be painted some unnatural color on the inside.

The other vital factor in coffee cups is protection to prevent burning one's fingertips. On this matter there are two options: handles on the utensil, or failing that, one may wrap the cup in a small cocktail napkin that will insulate the visitor's touch. I suppose you will

respond that you have no cocktail napkins... In which case the whole process begins again. Since the issue here remains your guest's comfort, you want something pliable, yet not so large as to be bulky. A folded paper towel or napkin will do. If you do not have these, Ann-Arch does not want to know about it.

Your last resort, if there simply are not enough substitutes, is to cheerfully inform your guests that what is available will be used in turn and properly cleaned between uses. This is presented as something fun, a party game, in keeping with the most fundamental rule of hospitality: one provides one's best without apology.

Dear Ann-Arch,

Why do you not use titles in referring to yourself or others? Isn't this a major rupture with the great traditions of your trade?

Startled

Dear Person,

Yes, my practice of avoiding titles is a major rupture with the long history of mainstream etiquette. As an anarchist, I do not hallow from mainstream traditions. I am, nonetheless, following the centuries old tradition of our dear friends, the Quakers. (Please pardon the pun, it must be the stress of writing my first column.) In this tradition the lack of title does not indicate lack of respect, but rather emphasizes the profound equality of all persons. Respect is maintained by use of both first and last names. This, you will note, is still a far cry from the current practice of taking very little care to learn both names that identify a fellow human being. Anarchism is not sloppy.

Ann-Arch lives in the heart of each one of us.



Ada Bethune

Dear Ann-Arch,

My problem is perhaps beyond the bounds of etiquette — it is a liturgical issue with important philosophical ramifications. It has to do with roaches at Mass.

In our simple but elegant chapel, we pray sitting on the carpet. From time to time a roach will stroll out of the woodwork and make its way across the room. The comfort of others seems to require some response on my part, yet to kill a roach — and during Mass — seems quite unsettling for all involved and a violation of Gandhi's understanding of nonviolence. I am also concerned it could leave an unsightly reminder of the event crushed into the carpet.

What do we do?

Anxious

Dear Person,

Ann-Arch is hurt that you feel etiquette is somehow divorced from these deeply human liturgical and philosophical questions. Without its roots in that rich soil etiquette would be nothing more than rules wielded in an exercise of elitist power.

Obviously, crushing the roach into the carpet is not an acceptable solution for the reasons you so clearly name. The alternative that meets the delicacy of the situation is to have a tissue of some sort close at hand. When the roach appears one must pick it up with a great show of delicacy and feeling and wrap it inside the tissue. Making a show of sealing the tissue carefully will prevent the suspense of everyone wondering when and where the roach might re-appear.

Once your hand and the tissue are out of sight and mind, you must nonetheless, crush the roach firmly and quickly. You may then discreetly put the tissue in your pocket. This may seem a violent and heartless response, but it is necessary to prevent the further and

worse outcome of the roach crawling down your sleeve or up your chin. If roaches were not so small and sneaky this would not be necessary. Ann-Arch cannot change the nature of roaches.

Dear Ann-Arch,

As a good anarchist and pacifist I participate in actions of nonviolent civil disobedience from time to time. I am always careful in these situations to uphold the highest standards of etiquette.

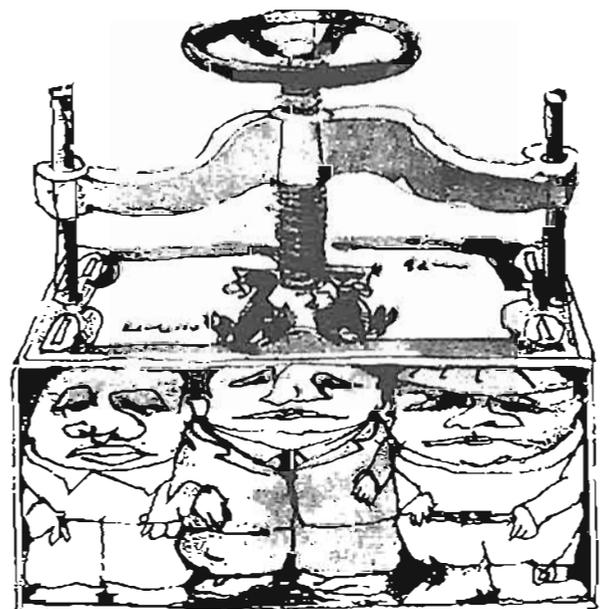
A problem arose for me recently when the week after an action I was introduced to my arresting officer at my godchild's First Communion. We were both startled to be facing each other socially. She mumbled something inaudible and turned away fairly quickly.

What could I have done to make this situation more comfortable for both of us? Is it proper to refer to our previous acquaintance? Isn't that equivalent to talking about business at a social occasion? Yet to deny having met seems even more rude.

Obedient

Dear Person,

You are correct that the worst outcome is for two people to deny knowing each other. As soon as you noticed your partner's discomfort you should have warmly extended your hand, smiled without a trace of irony and said, "Yes, I believe we have met." Then you need to quickly and firmly change the subject so that neither of you is forced to explain where or how. If someone is so persistent as to inquire, you may smile vaguely and not answer. Or you may give an inane response that accomplishes the same purpose. "I believe it was several weeks ago. I don't quite remember," should be obscure enough.



Dear Ann-Arch,

Your great collaborator, Miss Manners, has said that the only word that may be spoken through a bathroom door is "Fire!" I appreciate the sensitivity of that general guideline. The problem is that for some reason at our house of hospitality one often rushes in and is seated and, um, occupied, before realizing there is no toilet paper. I don't know why there is so often no paper, but it happens a lot. We have tried everything to prevent the problem but we are defeated. Is it not okay then, to call through the door to ask for assistance in getting paper?

Waiting

Dear Person,

You are trying hard to win Ann-Arch's sympathy but in vain. Sympathy does not cover a multitude of sins. No, you may not call out from the bathroom short of serious illness. The solution to your problem requires a change of habit but it is not difficult. You must carry some tissue in your pocket or sleeve so that you are always prepared. Ann-Arch prefers the small pocket

packs of kleenex because they are easy to carry and stay clean. This solution is practiced by missionaries the world over.

Dear Ann-Arch,

I admit that I am a relative newcomer to anarchy, but I find anarchy and etiquette to be rather opposite endeavors. How do you explain your passion for both?

Confused

Dear Person,

Oh my dear!

If you think about it for just a moment your confusion will clear. Try substituting "personalism" for "anarchism." It is obvious. Both etiquette and anarchism are based on a fundamental belief in the absolute value and dignity of each human being and on the profound responsibility of each person to carry society forward as she can where she is. One wag has said that anything the Bible does not cover, etiquette does. That has been my blessed experience.



IF JESUS WAS A CATHOLIC WORKER...



Larry Nolte

BENEATH THE DISGUISE

by Larry Willard

You answer a knock at the door.

“Who is it?” you ask.

“Jessie,” he answers.

You pause a few seconds before asking, “Jackson or Helms?”

Then what is perhaps the scariest thought of all enters your mind: What difference does it make?

My wife, Kathy Lass, and I volunteer as housetakers about once every proverbial blue moon. If we've learned nothing else from our occasional contact with Karen House, we've learned that there's virtually nothing “funny” about anything associated with it. Call us crazy, but seeing hungry people forced to ask for sandwiches of American cheese on three-day-old Wonder bread ain't a real knee-slapper in our book; and something tells us that watching women who are about as ready to be parents as most of us are to be thermo-nuclear physicists, struggle (or seemingly not even try) to raise children, won't exactly pack 'em in The Comedy Store. So if there's a sure-fire giggle-getter at Karen, it is well disguised. *Very* well disguised.

Which is not to say there's never a light moment. I know for a certainty that Teka, Mark and Pat each has at least one genuinely funny and “strange but true” story they that would be glad to share with any interested party. But since I have no such accounting, I want to tell you about a dream I had a couple of years ago.

I had been skimming a nifty little book on mysticism I'd recently bought at a garage sale when I ran across a story on the Kabballah, or Jewish mysticism. The story contained more misinformation than fact, which hardly surprised me since the story was written by a non-Jew who, to his credit, prefaced his explanation with a disclaimer. As a matter of fact, the writer probably did a better job than I, a marginally practicing Jew, could have done. But he had some things right.

Both Jewish legend and mysticism (not Torah) tell us that the world will be perfected when The Messiah comes to earth from Heaven. S/He will come when and only when, the prophet Elijah precedes Her/Him with a report indicating that humanity is in fact ready to be redeemed. In a nutshell, Jews believe that our task is to help insure a favorable report. We don't need to do anything extraordinary really, just observe as many of the 613 positive commandments as we can. Piece of cake, right? Well, when enough Jews do that, and “enough” is a matter of considerable dispute*, Elijah will descend in the guise of a poor person, test the waters, compile a report and return to Heaven on a magnificent white horse.

The Dream: My wife, our cat and I are sitting comfortably in our decidedly middle class apartment in our middle class neighborhood watching our newly-purchased remotely-controlled television when a knock on the door grabs our attention. We open the door.

Larry Willard, raconteur, heroically volunteers to take house for us on many major holidays.



Illustration by AMINAH BRENDA LYNN ROBINSON, from *Elijah's Angel*, by Michael J. Rosen

“Good evening, folks,” the gapped-toothed black man says. The cat begins to act more strangely than usual, as if she were a four-month-old instead of a four-year-old.

“Hello,” my wife says. (She’s the friendly one.)

“Lookie here. I ain’t meanin’ to ‘sturb y’all, but could I stay wit’ y’all jus’ for tonight?” He is pointing to the mezzuah on our doorpost with an arthritic finger. My wife and I only stare at each other. After several seconds, I blurt out a response that reveals both my intelligence and my approach to life: “Huh?”

The man smiles now. “Don’t be put off, folks. See, it’s like dis here. I had me a job a real good job up til a few months ago, but, you know, things happened. Ya unnerstan’ what I’m saying?”

My wife and I are still processing the man’s introduction to our lives. He, on the other dirty hand, appears to be telling a tale he has told many times.

“I know what yer thinkin’,” our visitor says softly, “you think I’m jus’ hustlin’, you know, runnin’ some game. But lookie here, alls I want is some place to rest des agin’ bones ... jus’ for tonight. Come da mornin’, I’m gone.” After what seems like a very long pause he adds almost sotto voce, “Please folks?”

Something about his plea strikes us.

“Excuse us for a couple of minutes. ok?” my wife asks.

“Whatever you say,” he says with a smile.

We close the door and search each other’s face for an answer. After what feels like an hour but is actually just a few seconds, we both start to speak at the same time.

“What do we do?” my wife asks.

“I don’t know,” I say with a shrug.

We go into the kitchen and begin to prepare a “Karen House lunch” of a Swiss cheese sandwich, apple, pickle, some peanuts and a carrot. After putting the food in a brown bag, we look at each other in silence.

“How do we know...,” my wife begins, but I cut her short.

“We don’t.”

“At least we do know we’re not hurting someone,” she says softly. But we both know that is not why we are Jews; not hurting another person is the very least of our mandates.

We return to the door, bag in hand and refusal of this stranger’s request on our lips. Upon opening the door we observe his absence.

We hurry down the stairs hoping to catch him. As we exit our building, we see no hint of the man and begin to return when we are startled by the sound of clippopping on pavement. Our eyes follow our ears and we see a split second’s worth of simply exquisite white tail disappear around the corner.

For better or for worse, I have not had this dream recur. I do, however, have a recurring dream ... but it involves a specific Sunday afternoon at the old ballpark on Grand and Dodier in the early 1950’s. I’ll bet a Kabbalist could have a lot of fun with that one.



* This is by no means anything more than a thumbnail intro to Jewish mysticism. For more info, please research Kabbalah, mysticism or works on the topic by people like Tom Merton and I.B. Singer. But consider yourself warned it isn’t easy or comfortable reading. Good luck!

*We close the door
and search each
other's face for an
answer.*



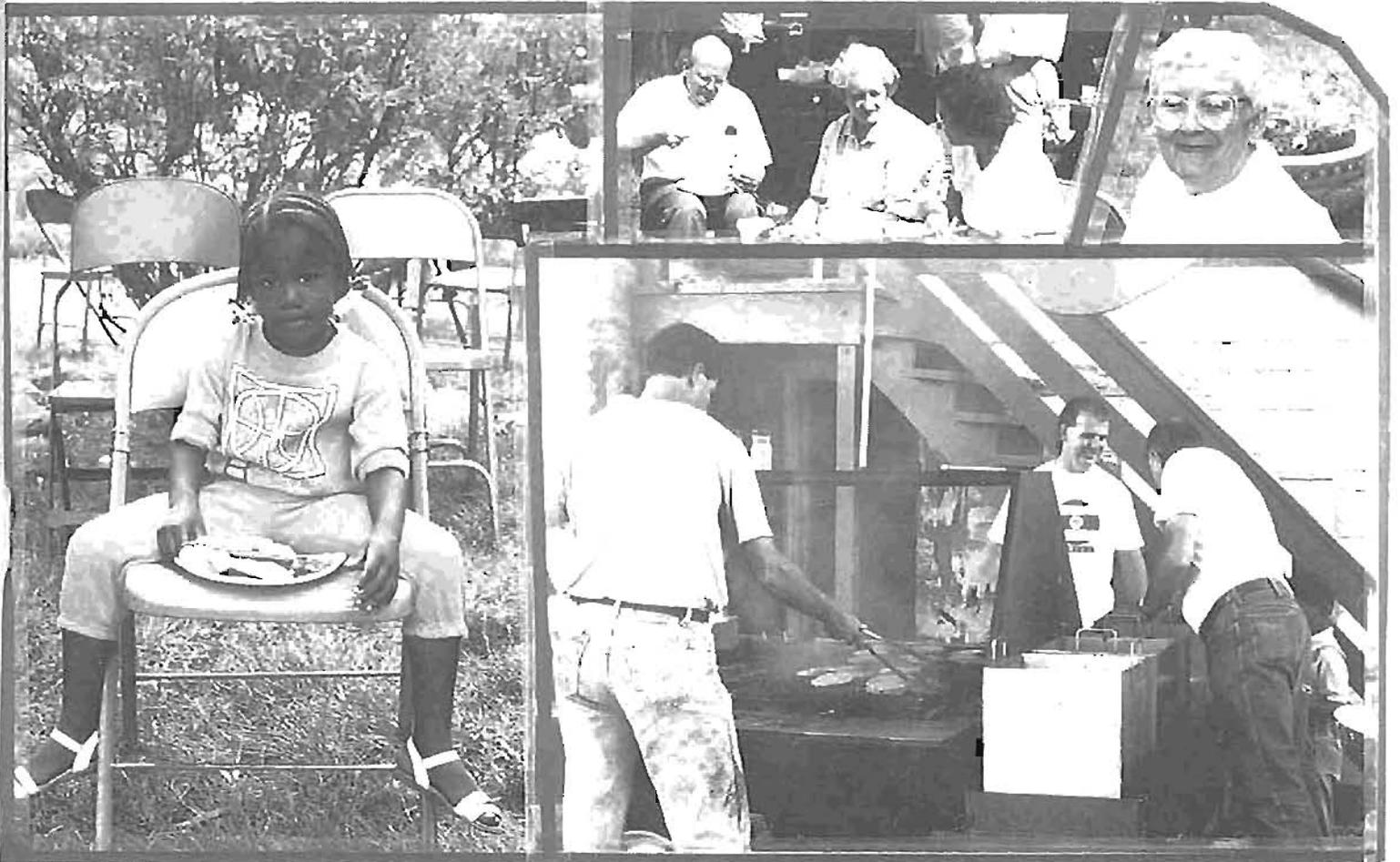
"Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet too, even with a crust, where there is companionship."

D. Day





The 15th Anniversary of Karen House



THE MEMORY OF THE MOVEMENT

by Phil Runkel

[This article is edited from Phil's remarks at the 15th Anniversary of the St. Louis Catholic Worker.]

On March 5, 1957, the recently appointed director of libraries at Marquette University, William Ready, informed the Library Board of "the possible culmination of negotiations to bring certain collections to the University," which somehow had survived for seventy-five years without an archives. To Ready, possessor of a diploma in Archives and Paleography from the University of Wales, this state of affairs clearly called for redress at the earliest possible moment. Among the potential donors he solicited was Dorothy Day, whom he had met when she spoke at Stanford University during his tenure there. Ready recalled in his autobiography that, "She made a disciple of me, and the more I saw her as the years went by the more I became sure that I was in the company of a saint."

For her part, Dorothy had reasons other than the presence of an admiring librarian to be favorably disposed toward Marquette. The dean of the College of Journalism had provided moral and material support to

the Worker movement in its early days, and several of his students had been active in the Milwaukee Catholic Worker community before the Second World War; one of them (Nina Polcyn Moore) remained one of Dorothy's closest friends. The university's Jesuit ties did not hurt either, as she thought highly of that order. Marquette also benefited, given Dorothy's inclination to behave impulsively at times, from being the first archival suitor; when more prestigious institutions came calling over the next decade, they found that they were too late.

However the decision was reached, Dorothy readily agreed to send her papers and the records of the New York Catholic Worker community to Marquette, and the first shipment arrived in March, 1962.

Dorothy's principal contact at the University was assumed by William D. Miller of the History Department, who as a young academic some 10 years before had been introduced to the movement through discussion meetings at the Memphis Catholic Worker. Recognizing the significance of the Worker papers and the need for a scholarly history of the movement, Miller had written Dorothy as soon as he learned of the records' arrival to request permission to use them, which was promptly granted. A lengthy correspondence and close friendship ensued. Consequently, when Miller left the university in 1968, Dorothy started sending her papers directly to him, for transfer to the Archives after he had examined them. Although this arrangement produced some rather awkward moments, it enabled the Archives to obtain material which Dorothy might otherwise have discarded. The historian also aided the Archives by urging Dorothy and her colleagues to regularly transfer office records to the repository without a prior culling of the material. This the Workers faithfully



Joe Angert

Phil Runkel, lovingly maintains the Catholic Worker archives at Marquette University.

proceeded to do though Dorothy expressed some qualms in a Christmas, 1973 note to Father Hamilton:

Dr. Miller kept telling me to send "everything" to the Archives and as we answered mail we just bundled up the mail and sent it on. I have been thinking. We have put you to a great deal of unnecessary work. We should have eliminated a lot of useless material ourselves. But I was blindly following Dr. Miller's advice. And now I repent and apologize.... From now on I'll use discretion and lighten the load.

Before she had time to act on her good intentions, the archivist hastened to assure her that the burden was a welcome one.

When Father Hamilton retired in 1973 at the age of eighty, he was succeeded on an interim basis by Paul Gratke. Although a Protestant, Gratke was much closer to the Catholic Worker in his political and social views than his predecessor, and he adopted a more activist stance where its records were concerned. Specifically, he sought to negotiate a new contract with Dorothy Day opening non-confidential materials to general use, and to expand the collection to incorporate records of other Catholic Worker communities (of which there were approximately forty by the mid-1970s), letters from Dorothy that were still held by their recipients, and oral history interviews focusing on Dorothy's pre-Catholic Worker years, for which documentation was lacking in the Archives.

Paul Gratke broached the contractual matter to Dorothy when he visited her in the spring of 1974 and apparently obtained her verbal consent to the removal of restrictions from all but her private and family correspondence (her journals and diaries had yet to be turned over to the Archives). He also discussed the records project at this meeting and during a second visit with Dorothy the next year, and mentioned it several times in writing as well, at first to no response. By January, 1976, however, she had become fully aware of the project's Rockefeller connection, prompting the only display of Dorothy's usually controlled but formidable temper in her long association with the Archives. She wrote Gratke that, rather than accept any foundation support, the Catholic Workers would keep their papers from then on. During a phone call which the archivist placed upon receiving the letter, Dorothy repeatedly interrupted his reading from a prepared statement, reiterating that she didn't "want anyone connected with the Catholic Worker to touch any Rockefeller money." Two weeks later, Gratke informed her that the application had been withdrawn. (Several months before, Dorothy had written Dr. Miller, "Sometimes I wish I had never started this archives business. I feel at times as though



I were being skinned alive, flayed. I suppose I deserve it." She then apologized for her "petulance," the result of a "cold in the head.") Whatever hopes may have remained for a new contract vanished with the receipt of Dorothy's statement of November 23, 1976, giving as her "said wish that... all such papers and materials known as the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Archives be closed until 25 years after her death."

The statement proved to be Dorothy's last word on the subject; she died four years later without having responded to Gratke's plea for a clarification of her intent. Fortunately, the Archives soon found a friend in her newly-appointed literary executor, Stanley Vishnewski. A member of the New York Catholic Worker community since 1934, Stanley had become by virtue of his long tenure and personal inclination the movement's "archivist and historian in residence." While keenly aware that the misuse of sensitive documents in the Worker papers could produce a distorted picture of the movement and bring harm to the individuals whose confidences were betrayed, he came to see that sizeable portions of the collection could be opened and to trust the archivists' discretion in making these decisions.

This informal understanding was strengthened by Paul Gratke's successor, Charles Elston, and by yours truly, who assumed responsibility for the Catholic Worker Archives in 1978, and it formed the basis for the present relationship with the New York community following Stanley's death in 1979.



Joe Angert

Now I will direct my remarks toward some continuing challenges and concerns relating to the acquisition of records, the quality of documentation, use of the Archives and my own involvement as a self-described "fellow traveler" in the movement.

*...all of these papers
might be more useful
in the fireplace or for
mulching the garden.*

... A member of one of the west coast communities reported "disagreement" among his associates "as to the worth of being, so to speak, etched in stone." And more than a few Workers could probably identify with the veteran Worker archivist who wrote that he had "feelings that all of these papers might be more useful in the fireplace or for mulching the garden."

Also to be reckoned with is the nature of the Catholic Worker as a "movement," not an organization with "headquarters" and "branch offices." This characteristic has been more in evidence, perhaps, since Dorothy's death. As the Catholic Worker is not a "franchise operation," I am guided in my recruitment work by how the communities define themselves. If a community signifies its desire to be considered a part of the Catholic Worker family, that is enough for me. What complicates things a bit is the reluctance of some groups to declare themselves one way or the other, owing in some cases to the attitudes of members towards the institutional church. Also there is the matter of change in a community's identity over time, whether entering the Catholic Worker family or leaving it. A group with one or more members with Catholic Worker ties may start as a Catholic Worker community or declare itself such later on, but drift away, if not formally disassociate itself upon its departure. Others may take the "Catholic Worker" out of their name because of some unorthodox practice, such as claiming tax-exempt status.

Another concern is the quality of the documentation that has survived and found its way to the Archives. If the planned or inadvertent destruction of records poses a challenge to the archivist, so too does the antipathy of most Worker communities to the creation of certain types of records in the first place such as the memoranda, minutes, and case files which are routinely produced by more bureaucratized social agencies. In a paper in 1939, Sister Gita observed, "The spirit of the Catholic Worker seems to be hostile to the keeping of any accounts of note." As a result, while the

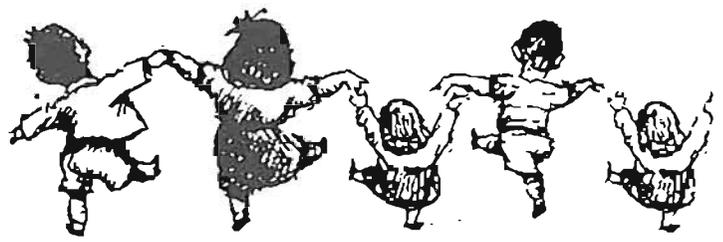
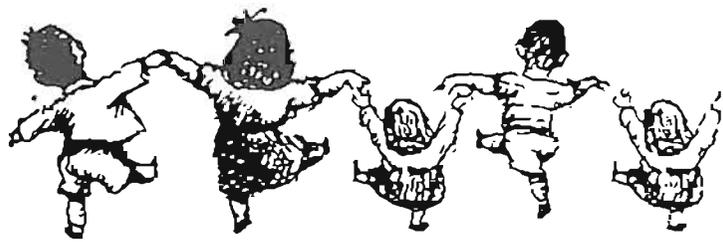
Worker's involvement in anti-war protests is reasonably well documented in the files (for example), as are the responses of those readers of the Catholic Worker newspaper who were sufficiently motivated by agreement or disagreement to write a "letter to the editor," much less can be gleaned from the Archives concerning everyday life in a house of hospitality. Most Workers, it seems, are simply far too busy trying to do the works of mercy to spend much time telling posterity how they are doing them. However admirable this may be, it certainly makes the task of a Worker historian all the more difficult. Indeed, some Workers seem to believe that the essence of the movement lies forever beyond the outsider's grasp. Those scholars who have attempted studies of the Catholic Worker have been charged by their Worker judges with failure to bring the Worker past, and past Workers, to full-blown life, or with giving undue attention to certain Workers whose prominence in the newspaper's backfiles did not accurately reflect their contributions to the movement, while ignoring or slighting those more deserving of recognition.

Fortunately, a number of communities are keeping "log books," which will provide valuable information on the interaction of Workers and guests, and Workers' perceptions of guests' problems and needs. Another potential means of documenting the Catholic Worker is through the private journals of community members. (Although one wonders how many possess Dorothy Day's diligence in this regard.) Oral histories, such as those recorded by Diane Mowrer and by R. Troester for her forthcoming book, Voices from the Catholic Worker, are also important, especially for preserving the stories and reflections of those not given to "writing it all down." But the guests' perspective is missing from the files, for the most part.

Use of the Archives is also a concern. Actually, the Catholic Worker Archives has been one of the most

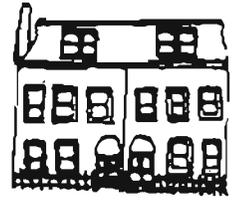
heavily used collections during the past 15 years. At least 17 books and unpublished dissertations based on archival research have been produced during this time. Several more are in progress. The collection has also been consulted for documentary, theater and movie projects concerning Dorothy Day, and there is increasing use of our holdings of videotapes of television programs on Dorothy and the Catholic Worker, which may be borrowed and in some cases purchased at cost.

Finally, there is the matter of the archivist himself. I have gradually become more and more involved as a "fellow traveler" of the Catholic Worker, attending meetings and demonstrations, forming friendships with Workers. I recognize potential risks of such involvement, to impartiality (in dealing with users, and in cases of intramural disputes involving Catholic Worker communities) and perhaps to my identity and even sanity, as well. But these are outweighed, in my opinion, by its benefits to the archival program and, more importantly, by what it has meant to me as a person. I need only think back to October, 1977, years ago. By then I had been rejected for employment by upwards of 200 libraries, archives, and historical societies, and there wasn't anything promising in sight least of all a temporary CETA position in the Marquette University Archives. I applied, though, and wonder of wonders, managed to get the job, which eventually became permanent. As a result, I've crossed lines at the Nevada Test Site and SAC headquarters, conspired with Peace Planters in Missouri, distributed the Catholic Worker at Union Square on May Day, and washed dishes and chopped vegetables at some of the best soup kitchens in the United States. I have also met some of the finest people one could ever hope to know. As the song goes, "Who could ask for anything more?"



FROM LITTLE HOUSE

by Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.



We laugh a lot at the Worker, although much of the humor is difficult to explain. Often there's irony, like when a woman tells us on the phone she has absolutely no other resources, is given a room at Karen House, stays an hour, and then decides she does have other resources. Or if a mentally ill woman makes an acute observation, we laugh at the ironic juxtaposition of sound reason with irrational behavior.

Incongruity is funny: the case of imitation caviar we got from the food pantry; a hundred pounds of fresh shrimp when an industrial freezer failed; and silk dresses that came to the clothing room (we may laugh, but we like these things). Repetition is funny, too, even the second floor toilet that flooded the food storage room regularly for years. An oft repeated joke by any who has poured sour milk on their cereal or in their coffee more than once is how hard it is to remember at other homes that it is rude to sniff the milk.

Our laughter in the midst of bizarre suffering has the quality of mild hysteria, not denial of the suffering or a failure of compassion but momentary refuge from horror like the little boy who saw the picture of St. Francis as a man kicking birds, that same little boy who later died from child abuse. Virginia once described life at Karen House as severe chronic stimulus overload, an ironic juxtaposition if there ever was one.

I spent an evening remembering things that have made us laugh and have tried to write them truthfully, with respect for all those who have lived at the Worker. But I don't know if the reader will find these stories funny.

I remember that an old woman named Barbara threw hot soapy water with bleach on another old woman named Elinor, only Barbara missed Elinor and the water landed on BJ, who was helping Elinor get dressed. Then Barbara tried to throw Elinor down the stairs; but other guests came running from all directions and pulled them apart, the guests proud of themselves for the intervention. The guest consensus was that Elinor deserved what she got because she was a difficult woman and that Barbara had spunk but was crazy; meanwhile BJ kept saying, "Elinor didn't get it, I got

it." When it was all over, everybody laughed (except Barbara and Elinor) and retold the story for months.

Another old woman, Margaret, was a real charmer, a clear thinker, and truly spunky. She walked out of a nursing home in Kentucky with a ten thousand dollar cashier's check pinned to her bra and caught the Greyhound to St. Louis because the staff of the nursing home treated her like a child. By the time she got here she had walking pneumonia and was confused. The police brought her to Karen House and we put her in a large room with three other women. (We didn't learn about the money for weeks.) The next morning one of the volunteers took her to the clinic. Margaret was hard

Our laughter in the midst of bizarre suffering has the quality of mild hysteria...

of hearing and spoke in a loud voice. In the waiting room at the clinic she explained, and the whole room listened breathlessly, how one of the women in the bedroom used a electric stimulator for sexual arousal. "It looked just like a hair dryer," Margaret said. "I thought I'd seen everything in my lifetime. Didn't think there were any surprises for me. But this was."

The second year of Karen House I took house on Christmas night and one of the guests, Judy, tried to kill herself or said she had taken enough pills to kill herself. I called the ambulance and she refused to go to the hospital so the medics called the police who handcuffed her. When Virginia came home (the rest of the commu-

Mary Ann McGivern, SL, still provides graceful commentary on KWMU, 90.7 FM, Monday afternoons at 5:30 PM.

Joe Angert



Mary Ann at
15th Anniversary
Party.

nity must have been out of town) I told her about it and then together we locked up the house, discussing guests and Christmas and things to do tomorrow. We were going upstairs and Virginia said, "I'm so tired I could kill myself," and I said, without missing a beat, "Go right ahead, dearie." Virginia said, "You're turning in your badge?" and we both began to laugh uncontrollably. We collapsed on the stairs laughing and all the tension and fear for Judy and horror of the night eased and I went to bed and slept.

Just two years ago the Little House was plagued with a series of burglaries. Pat, Karen, Ellen and I met to devise a security plan. To get discussion started, I suggested we list ideas and strategies without considering cost. Ellen said promptly, "Well, if cost isn't an issue, how about implementing full employment and adequate housing."

Many homeless people spend their days at the public library. Sometimes, when I go there, former guests greet me warmly and loudly and librarians glare as if I'm the cause of the disruptions. I find that funny. But last winter I saw Pat, a very disturbed woman, at Walgreen's. She was bundled in a coat and I was a little confused myself and thought she was another, equally disturbed woman. I greeted her and asked about her children. "Why, Sister Mary," she said very loudly. "How could you lie like that? You know I don't have children." And she trailed me through Walgreen's while I gathered aspirin and deodorant and batteries, ignoring my apologies, and repeating (loudly, of course), "Sister Mary, I didn't know you lied. How could you tell a lie like that?" Even as it happened and people stared, I knew it would make a good story.

Last and sweetest is my memory of Don, an alcoholic my own age who had little capacity for self-preservation and was as mild as a kitten except when he was mad. That afternoon Don had been put out of Karen House for swearing and shouting. He was sitting on the back steps. I drove into the yard with Dean and the dog Fleetwood to pick up Sharon and BJ who had done the

house laundry. Don asked if he could come over to the Little House.

I said, "Don, you can't come over to our house to escape when you've done something bad here and then expect me to give you a sandwich."

"I know," he said, "but its cold out here. I could sit on your front steps in the sun." So I said okay, get in the car, with Dean, Fleetwood, BJ, Sharon, all the house laundry, and me, the driver. Don sat behind me as we drove the two blocks home. We slipped across Mullanphy Street and as I looked in the mirror before I opened the car door, I saw police lights.

"Everyone stay here," I said and got out and said, "What's the problem, officer?" I knew I had just run the stop sign on Mullanphy and that I didn't have a rear license plate.

The man said, "You don't have license plates."

"Oh," I said, let me look. (PAUSE) Well, I know there's a plate in the front."

He came around and looked at the plate on the front. "Let me see your license, Ma'am."

"It's in the house." I pointed to the Little House. At that moment discipline broke and everyone began piling out of the car. Don got out on the driver's side, between me and the officer. I prayed, Don, don't get angry.

Don said very slowly, "Sister Mary, would you do me a favor?"

I thought, Don, I'm going to make you two huge bologna sandwiches, and I said, "Don, if you go over and sit on the steps, I'll make you a sandwich" and BJ and Sharon and Dean and Fleetwood trooped by with all the laundry.

The policeman looked at us all. He asked me, "Do you really live here?" I nodded. "Do you have a driver's license?" I nodded. "Do you promise you'll write Jefferson City and get a new license plate?"

"Yes," I said, and he got in his car and drove off, never mentioning the stop sign I'd run. †

WITH A LITTLE BIT OF LUCK:

A Catholic Worker Parody by Mark Scheu

The Lord above made us to help our neighbor,
To share our food and clothing without moan,
The Lord above made us to help our neighbor,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
When they come around you won't be home!

The Lord above made us to help the needy,
To give them shelter, sure and quick and soon,
The Lord above made us to help the needy,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
When they need a home there'll be no room!

With donations we have sweets in plenty,
So we could share, with those who ask for some,
With donations we have sweets in plenty,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
You can eat your fill before they come!



They're always asking for some more,
But with a little bit of luck you'll say "tough luck!"

The Lord above gave us the works of mercy,
So one could think, of those besides oneself,
The Lord above gave us the works of mercy,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
You can leave that work for someone else!

Your fellow Workers are always very loving,
As you're in anguish, they're saying: "Have a nice
day,"
Your fellow Workers are always very loving,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
As they help you out you'll slip away!

They're always throwing goodness at you,
But with a little bit of luck you learn to duck!

The Lord above gave us Dorothy and Peter,
Whom like scripture, everyone will quote,
The Lord above gave us Dorothy and Peter,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
You'll be absent as the others do!

The Catholic Worker's made of saints and martyrs,
And the martyrs must endure the saints,
The Catholic Worker's made of saints and martyrs,
But! With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
I'm prepared to say a saint I ain't!

With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck,
With a little bit of luck he ain't no saint!
With a little bit of bloomin' luck!



Mark Scheu longs for the time he spent in the Beartooth Wilderness this summer with Ann Kinsey.

FROM LATIN AMERICA



by Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff

It was a powerful thing to be in El Salvador for the quincentenary remembrance. The Indians, those en Dios, have struggled for five hundred years for land, a safe environment, economic and social justice, human rights—truly, for their very existence. The struggle, la lucha, as we all know so well, has cost dearly in lives and ecological disaster. I recently read that El Salvador rivals Haiti for the worst ecological conditions in the hemisphere. And this is coupled with a population density (250 persons per km²) equalled in the world only by Rwanda, Africa. One can see and smell the facts of these statistics.

On October 8, 1992, Carol Giles, Mary Jane Schutzius, Toni Temporitti and I disembarked in San Salvador to begin a bit of a pilgrimage to familiar and unfamiliar sights trying to see if "things were different." In many ways, Yes, but...

The young soldiers with M-16's are gone from the airport and the roads; the roads (such as they are with potholes and debris) are open for travel; the graffiti reflects the diversity which always existed under the pall of repression; the laborers for justice work with more freedom but the fear is not completely forgotten. Posters proclaim commitment to the Peace Process and call each side to compliance. Martyrs are remembered, but the daily struggle to survive is the overwhelming REALITY one cannot ignore.

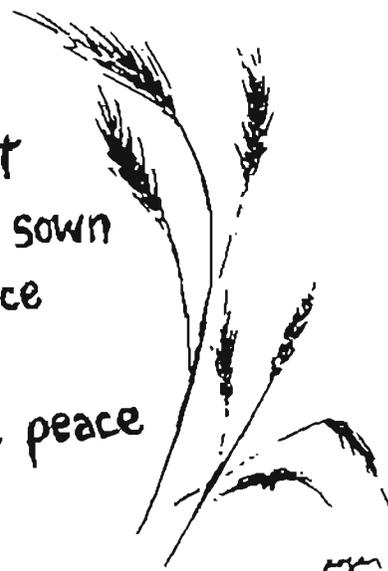
We were able to see Ann Manganaro and her work with the health promoters in Guarjila and Chalatenango. She seemed so much more relaxed and is so loved! Ita Ford's niece, Miriam, a nurse practitioner, has come to live and work in Guarjila with her husband. The people of Guarjila were so gracious in their welcome and their care for us. We found "Maria and Julio" who lived at Immanuel Lutheran Sanctuary in 1984. They now are proud parents of three sons and are working with Lutheran and Episcopal church agencies. We discussed the environment with Ricardo Navarro who lived in St. Louis in the early 80's and helped found the solidarity movement here. We shared the work of women struggling for life and dignity in so many different ways.

As this is being written, the final days for completion of the agreements draw to an end. Will the forces be demobilized and given land or employment? Will the perpetrators of the massacres and human rights violations be named and removed from positions of power and influence? Will the goals of economic and social justice, for which the war was fought, become national priorities? Will environmental recuperation move into the center of consciousness? Will the NEW EL SALVADOR remain a possibility?

I am only cautiously hopeful when I look at El

The harvest
of justice is sown
in peace
by those
who make peace

— James 3:18



Salvador from the point of view of the US. The Third World is not really "on the agenda." Perhaps well-placed acts of humanitarian aid or service will be offered, but I am not convinced that there is the will to support or encourage the kinds of real changes needed. Our associations are with the same people who led the years of oppression and repression. How can we expect change?

Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff teaches music and theology at Nerinx Hall, is the mother of two, and is a long-time Central America activist.

The IVA (value-added tax) which was passed in September increased the cost of living 20% with the potential price increase on many products of 35-40%. The International Court of Justice ruled that 112 of the 168 square miles of territory involved in the Honduras-Salvador border dispute be awarded to Honduras, a sparsely populated country. Many wonder if the political considerations (these areas are considered "guerilla territory") overrode the long-term consequences for El Salvador. Representatives of the Military were on the news while we were there, trying to "put a spin" on what was being uncovered in El Mozote, the scene of a brutal massacre of over 1,000 civilians in 1981. These all seem to reflect the dying effort of the old regime to

block efforts to bring about the justice which will bring true freedom and peace.

Our work here is not over, even though it often feels like it. People are still being taken and killed (there were three incidents during the weekend we were there); the personal costs of government decisions are tremendously high; the trauma remaining from the years of war cannot be measured. We must not abandon the ACCOMPANIMENT we committed ourselves to ten years ago. This is truly the long-haul... I feel challenged and troubled by my words. I don't know how to manage the reality, but I KNOW TOGETHER WE MUST. These are the AMERICAS of which we are a part—our body and soul.... +

FROM KAREN HOUSE

by Becky Hassler

One of my favorite community times here at Karen House is Sunday night — ordinary time. It's just what the name implies — ordinary time — together. Our lives as individuals and community are filled with busyness (you know, living the Works of Mercy and being about building the Reign of God do not lend themselves to "normal" working hours!). I find great comfort in knowing that in addition to meeting each other coming and going throughout the week, Tuesday night liturgy, and Wednesday night community meetings, there will be a few hours on Sunday night that I can count on as ordinary, as time to relax and "waste" time together.

Community life, for me, is essential to living at the House. Finding support, encouragement, faith, and ordinariness in the midst of complexity, suffering and seemingly never ending needs is so sustaining.

There are no rules or protocol for ordinary time. Sometimes there are just a handful of us who sit and talk about whatever is on our minds at the moment. Sometimes we are joined by friends and former community members and we may share stories about the "old days" or former guests. Or, as was the case last night, we may be thoroughly entertained by Ben, Jim and Katrina's two year-old. Ben certainly has a way of bringing out the child in each of us. He can completely delight us by articulating our names as only a two year-old can. He'll go to each of us one by one, playing, until he's bored or we've exhausted all of our creativity. Finally, he becomes sleepy enough to find an available,

inviting lap to nestle in and fall asleep. We "adults" then go on visiting as we take turns holding Abraham, Katrina and Jim's newborn, and our newest miracle in community.

It's so simple, this ordinary time, that one could easily overlook its sacredness. But it's there, often disguised in the feeling of cozy-at-homeness. There are no plans drawn up, no decisions made, no house rules changed— but something essential happens during those few hours together. Something that may go unnamed, but certainly not unnoticed. +



**REMEMBRANCE
IS THAT WHICH MAKES
THE UNFINISHED
FINISHED
AND THE FINISHED
UNFINISHED**
DORIS MEE SCARLE

Becky Hassler, newest member of the Karen House community, is also a nurse at Regional Hospital's emergency room.

by Janet Grey McKennis

"I'm taking the year off," I said, when I learned we were moving back to St. Louis for a year. The past seven years of teaching had been rewarding, but I was ready to think about doing something else. My hours had been cut to half-time that year too, and I had been frustrated to discover that I felt more ambivalent than ever about juggling parenting and teaching responsibilities. Working fewer hours made me feel as if I were cheating my students as well as my family. Though part of me was profoundly sad at leaving Ancona School behind, I also looked forward to summer when I would have more time.

As I pedaled to work, dodging pedestrians and pointing out flowers to our daughter Kate, I made mental lists of the things to do before we moved. There were two months for saying good-byes and visiting all the places I had learned to love. And packing; I anticipated it with the relish I always have for new projects.

During the summer, Kate and I had a wonderful time while Mike put the finishing touches on his dissertation and wrote lectures for fall classes. We bicycled along the lakefront to swim and build sandcastles, or just to get a glimpse of the sun playing on the waves before returning home to pack. We went to one of the zoos or museums weekly. We polished off the neighborhood stores' supply of clean and sturdy boxes with the efficiency of vultures stripping bones. And friends came

Stacks of full boxes grew taller alongside the towers of empty boxes that crashed about us when we brushed against them. Time was running out, though, and it was impossible to go to all the places on my mental list or visit with all the people I would miss. In the hectic days just before the move, I couldn't wait for the day after moving day, when we would be able to unpack, to organize our new space and our new life.

Thanks to our family and friends (two dozen on the Chicago end!), our moving days went well. Mike and I spent a week moving furniture and unpacking and tending to Kate. There seemed to be more boxes than I remembered packing. I looked forward to the time when we would be all unpacked, Kate would be happily ensconced in a half-time pre-school, and I would have time for the projects I had in mind. School began for Kate and Mike, and I kept unpacking. The boxes multiplied while I slept. I decided to begin my new routine and take care of the boxes as time permitted.

Not long into the new routine, I realized that Kate's new school was not going to work out. After I took time out from my new projects to look for another new school, I found a wonderful

place for her, Neighborhood Pre-School. The neighbor who recommended it to me agreed to baby-sit on the afternoons Kate wasn't in school. Kate enjoyed her son and made the adjustment easily. We were ready for a new and improved routine.

It was a great plan, and things went like clock work for a few weeks. I took my turn assisting at the school, and I helped on a field trip. I looked forward to having a clear week of afternoons. The next week I got sick. The following week the sun went on vacation and Kate got sick. After four straight days of listening to the whine of a child too energetic for bed, and too lethargic for anything else, with rain as background noise, my attempts at cheerfulness and calm had an hysterical edge even to my own ears. Then the baby-sitter's son got sick. Her other son got sick. And I finally realized that I was not in control of my time, not even a few measly hours a week. (This is not news to most; I'm obtuse, I admit it.)

At the same time, I was reading Karl Barth's counter to Augustine's and Heidegger's concepts of time in Church Dogmatics. (Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. 1, chapter 2, part 2, 14.1.) I'm sure that I have no more than a skeletal understanding of Barth's intricate dissection or revelation time, but I've found it increasingly helpful. Barth outlines three kinds of time: time created by God before the fall, which is opaque to us; time as we experience it, impossible to possess; and revelation time, "which rises and has its place because God reveals Himself (sic), because He is free for us, because His is with us and amongst us, because in short, without ceasing to be what He is, He also becomes what we are." (K. Barth, C.D. trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight, Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1970, vol. one, second half-volume, p.49.) Barth explains that Christ, Lord of Time, experienced our time while transforming it. (ibid p.51)

As I write in the first week of Advent, I find this really comforting. I face the usual decisions that we make this time of year about how we spend these few weeks before Christmas. I can try the glass half-empty/half-full exercise and remind my self to appreciate how much I do have time to do, but that rings false right away. I consistently rebel against my finiteness and lack of control; I really want to be God in my life. What a relief that the Light that will break/breaks/has broken into my darkness, to which I cling so fiercely, illuminates and so transforms time as I know it. "I'm thinking about eternity; some kind of ecstasy's got a hold on me," Cockburn sings. And so I say again this year, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

Janet Grey McKennis, formerly of the Cass House community, returned to St. Louis this fall with Mike McIntyre and their daughter Kate.

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We need blankets at Karen House. Can you help?

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Subscriptions are free. Please write to The Round Table, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO. 63106. Donations are gladly accepted to help us continue our work with the poor. People working on this issue include: Joe Angert, Margaret Boyer, Kris Dearnis, Beth Druhe, Virginia Druhe, Bill Miller, Tom Nelson, Katrina Plato, Barb Prosser, Ellen Rehg, and Mark Schou. Letters to the editor are encouraged; we'll print as many as space permits.

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