

25 Years

LOAVES AND FISHES

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Duluth, MN

25 for 25!

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Small Steps Toward The Revolution of Love

By Angie Miller

Has it really been 25 years since Steve and I moved to Jefferson Street and opened Dorothy Day house with our one year old and

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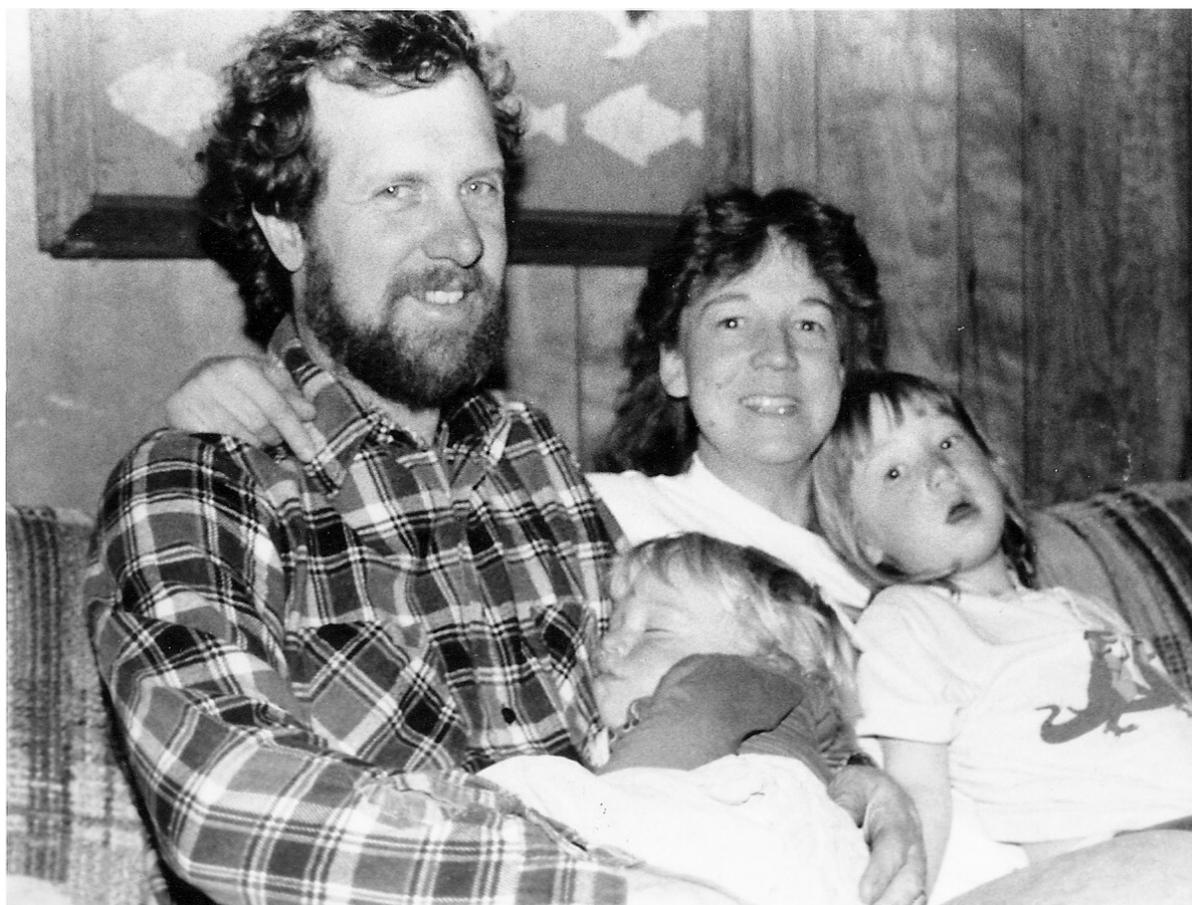
three year old? Brendan and Bri are now 26 and 29 years old and Steve has joined the saints in heaven. So much has happened since that time, but one amazing thing is that Loaves and Fishes' houses are still open and the community is still thriving. The Loaves and Fishes Community has evolved and changed over the years, and survived good times and bad times, but the original premise of a community providing hospitality to people experiencing homelessness (while challenging the systems that create homelessness and injustice) is still alive and well in our city. For this I am very thankful.

I'm personally grateful to every community member and volunteer over these 25 years for all of the hospitality provided, all those great meals delivered, the daily small quiet acts of compassion, and the courage to take direct action when necessary. It is amazing that after 25 years, the Loaves and Fishes Community is still creating, in the words of Dorothy Day, the "little cell of joy and peace in a harried world".

As Dorothy so eloquently wrote "What we would like to do is change the world, to make

it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves. By fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, and the poor or the destitute, the rights of the worthy and the 'unworthy' poor, in other words; we can, to a certain extent, change the world, we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend."

I remember many days spent at the Loaves and Fishes community feeling very much a part of the harried world and not so much part of the little cell of joy and peace that we're always working towards. Yet, while I reflect on my many years as a community member, I mostly recall the love and the great sense that every single day was one small step towards the revolution of the heart that Dorothy Day had envisioned.



Steve, Brendan, Angie, And Bri

Toiling For An Unequal Distribution

By Allen Killian-Moore

Here at Loaves and Fishes, we provide transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness, we do community organizing, and we run a free neighborhood bike shop. Our community is part of this thing called the Catholic Worker Movement which, for the uninitiated, was started in 1933 by two radical, anarchistic, justice oriented Catholics. The movement has grown or expanded to include people from an ever-widening variety of religious traditions along with people who have no religious affiliation whatsoever. The founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, started their movement as a kind of spiritual assault on the edifice of capitalism, which they saw as the most pervasive evil of the twentieth century. They understood that vulgar capitalism in practice results in a vastly unequal distribution of money, goods, and services, often predicated upon culturally derived inequality across ethnic, class, or gender lines. They also rightly saw that capitalism (as a purely economic entity) does not take into account the disruptive ecological harm related directly to exchanges of money or goods, and they critiqued the influence of capitalist expansion on industry's overzealous penchant for unrestricted resource extraction which has potential to permanently disrupt the ecosphere on which all human and other life depends. They believed that capitalism creates classes for the masses, marginalizing many human beings (particularly low wage and non-wage earners) to the economic and cultural edges of the society in which they toil.

Dorothy Day often noted that she hoped to "build a new world in the shell of the old," by replacing capitalism with a more personalist, compassionate, economic and social reality. Her plan to carry this out involved houses of hospitality for people experiencing homelessness (to help those most marginalized by capitalism), farms where people could grow food to eat, sell, or trade, and worker-owned cooperatives which could replace the hierarchical workplaces which served to effectively neutralize the voices, creativity, and self-worth of the working class. In 1939 Dorothy Day wrote an essay on labor, describing the movement's position: "We encourage efforts such as family farms, rural and urban land trusts, worker ownership and management of small factories, homesteading projects, food, housing, and other cooperatives -- any effort in which money can once more become a medium of exchange, and human beings are no longer treated as

commodities...We pointed out again and again that the issue is not just one of wages and hours, but of ownership and the dignity of people. It is not state ownership toward which we are working (although we believe that some industries might be run by the state for the common good), we are seeking a more widespread ownership."

It's strange that we as a society, at least in theory, believe in democracy, in governing our own lives, yet we don't have a sense of democracy in the workplace where we spend a significant amount of our time and energy. Democracy offered by the standard capitalist economic model doesn't go deep enough, it treads shallow water, barely breaking below the surface. Worker-owned businesses and cooperatives are a democratic alternative to the dominant strains of employment commonly offered in the capitalist model. Instead of the paradigm wherein one rents one's own body, time, and abilities out to someone else who then pays them for that rental, the worker-owned cooperative business allows for the worker-owners to make decisions themselves which directly affect their own bodies, time, and resources. Worker cooperatives take a democratic leap towards participatory economics, in which everyone has a say in the basic decisions of their workplace lives.

Michael Albert, an author noted for his writings on "parecon" (participatory economics) as an alternative to capitalist business structures, noted that, "Parecon has remuneration for the duration, intensity, and onerousness of socially valued labor. You can't produce what people don't want and be remunerated for that. For what is desired and for what does meet needs and develops potential, however, you work and you are remunerated such that if you work longer, you work harder, or you work under worse conditions, you make more. This approach turns out to not only be fair, but also to properly incentivize activity and, as well, to properly discern and communicate levels of desire for economic inputs and outputs needed for purposes of decision making. The parecon approach contrasts with (capitalism's)

remunerating property, power, or output — none of which occur in a parecon and all of which generate unjust income differentials, distorted information, and perverted motivations... In capitalism, coordinators work between labor and capital, often carrying out the will of the owners, but also, to a degree, advancing their own interests in conflict with workers below and with owners above. In twentieth-century socialism, while owners may no longer exist, the coordinator class not only still exists; it becomes the new ruling class... Balanced job complexes are the new way, in a parecon. Each worker has a similar job situation vis-à-vis empowerment effects. In other words, each worker does some empowering tasks, and some disempowering tasks, where the combination into the whole job complex, on average, is similar in its overall empowerment effects as each other person's job complex. As a result, there is no structural pressure producing an empowered coordinator class above a disempowered working class. There are just economic actors, all comparably empowered, together engaged in self managing economic life."

Participatory economic models involving worker-owned enterprises as described by Michael Albert offer a potential alternative to both the marginalization of the working class by capitalism and the lack of direct worker control over the means of production in some forms of state socialism. This is a step towards the third way that Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement envisioned, and there are a number of thriving examples wherein such models have been implemented in our world. One of these is the Mondragon Corporation in Spain. Founded in 1965 by graduates from a local technical college along with help from a radical priest named Jose Maria Arizmendi, the Mondragon Corporation is a federation of worker-owned cooperatives throughout the Basque region. Starting with just a handful of worker-owners, the federation has grown to

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**"We cannot walk before we toddle,
Though we may toddle far too long,
If we embrace a lovely Model
That is consistent, clear, and wrong."**

*- Kenneth E. Boulding, radical economist,
Quaker mystic, and co-founder
of General Systems Theory*

Why I'm Still Here (or Here Again)

By Donna Howard

Being a part of the founding of Olive Branch in 1991 remains one of the most joyful and meaningful parts of my life. In a catholic worker house, every day is about offering hospitality to people experiencing homelessness. Every day is about finding resources to meet the needs of our poorest citizens. Every day is about asking our country and society to act with justice and forswear violence. And every day is about doing it together. It's a great way to live. Yet I left Loaves and Fishes and my home at Olive Branch in 1996, as I prepared to do a Plowshares disarmament action at the Navy ELF base in Wisconsin. At that time, the Center for Defense Information reported that the US was spending \$75 million *per day* to prepare for nuclear war. As we in Loaves and Fishes struggled to assist people in finding food, clothing, and housing, this unconscionable priority of our country was a stinging assault to our own beliefs. How easy it would be for our nation to eliminate poverty by giving up the capability of nuclear warfare alone! Loaves and Fishes community provided strong support for the direct disarmament witness undertaken by Tom Hastings and myself as we acted, testified against nuclear weapons at our trial, and underwent incarceration.

After that action and its resultant prison time, I did not rejoin the community, but got my own home on the hillside above downtown Duluth. It had been a privilege to witness against the crime of nuclear weapons and their threat to all life on Earth. I was certain that we needed to disarm the weapons of mass destruction, and certain that we needed to create new tools to intervene when warfare occurs – alternatives to the tanks of NATO or bombers of powerful nations.

I wanted a nonviolent alternative that would protect civilians according to international human rights law, keeping them alive and free to participate in building a just resolution to their conflict. Shortly after my release from prison I met others who were working on a viable option and joined them in establishing Nonviolent Peaceforce (www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org), an organization which provides unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Nonviolent Peaceforce has successfully demonstrated that it is indeed quite possible for deeply trained civilian

internationals to work in conflict areas in a nonpartisan way with all warring parties and significantly reduce violence while increasing citizen participation in building peace.

We have demonstrated this with field projects in Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Mindanao Philippines and South Uganda, and have also worked in Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, South Caucasus and the United Nations. I'm proud of the organization we created and grateful for the opportunities I worked alongside others from all over the world to deepen my understanding of nonviolent intervention. But after thirteen years I felt fatigued from the responsibility. I resigned in order to convert that time and energy back into local projects.

I had continued, over the years, to volunteer at Loaves and Fishes, always drawn back by the richness of relationships with guests. But I became more and more involved at this point and found that Olive Branch still felt like an emotional and spiritual home for me. I kept increasing the time I devoted to the community's hospitality and organizing.

So in early February of this year, I moved out of my little house and into the 1900 block of Jefferson Street to be back at the side of the community. We are discerning ways in which this house might serve both the community and its mission. It's deeply satisfying, at this point in my life, to make a life change around these facts: I need the community and the community (its work of hospitality, activism, and organizing) needs me. I haven't been gone, but I'm glad to be home.

Leaves From The Olive Branch

By Chelsea Froemke

Early this year, two 4 year olds were playing in the Olive Branch toy room while their moms helped clean up dinner. Every five minutes they yelled to their moms saying "we're doing really good over here." This line quickly became a favorite quote around the house. We started repeating it to be silly, but quickly realized how important this simple encouragement can be for the folks that find themselves here. Living in a house of hospitality with 10 or more people can be very challenging. It's never totally clean, there are interpersonal conflicts, house rules aren't always followed, and the toilet paper roll is normally empty. Despite these challenges, we remind ourselves that "we are doing really good over here." Olive Branch is a home and a support system as we encourage people in sobriety, help our neighbors, play lots of games, and fill the house with laughter. We also make meals together, support parents, cheer people on as they find jobs or housing, and we care deeply about one another.

Guests, Volunteers, And Friends At The Olive Branch Pose In Front Of Our New Free Little Library



The Greysolon Plaza Resident Council

By Lonnie Engel

In recent months, the residents of Duluth's Greysolon Plaza, myself included, have been concerned with changes taking place in the building. Our beloved home is in the midst of a major transition. Recently purchased by George A. Sherman, and now under management by Sherman Associates, a number of issues have arisen, mostly regarding the overall well-being and quality of life for tenants. In essence, we were alarmed with the complete lack of communication and input we, as tenants, had regarding the decisions and policies now in place within the building. Change is always difficult, but made even harder when the decisions are entirely unilateral. Greysolon is a dual-purpose building offering multi-unit, low income housing for residents, and also functions as commercial property. Most Duluthians are familiar with the Greysolon Ballroom as the primary rental venue for functions in the community. Until recent changes, Greysolon Plaza also maintained a food deli & market, along with a hair salon.

When new policies were adopted, residents were uninformed and felt disenfranchised. After two years of being subjected to sudden changes and closed door management, a group of us began to meet regularly, forming a Resident Council with guidance from Joel Kilgour whose experience (and encouragement) brought a wealth of information. We have learned that renters do indeed have rights and with that has come a new-found hope and spirit within our building to have a more cooperative living environment between management and tenants. We've officially met two times with an impressive turn-out, and we've been fortunate to have in attendance Sharla Gardner, City Councilor for the 3rd district, Barb Russ, at large City Councilor, and Gwen Updegraff, attorney with Legal Aid Services, lending their concern and support.

We are learning some tenets of group organization, gaining an understanding of renters' rights, exploring our council's governing structure, and striving to maintain active participation as a cohesive group. A comprehensive survey for residents was prepared and distributed with the results being invaluable in our organizing efforts. In response to our complaints, management is holding monthly meetings with us. They are informal, conversational, and incredibly helpful. In general, we've been clearly and emphatically informed that the owner has a plan for redeveloping Greysolon into a more

prosperous commercial enterprise. New areas will be reallocated to commercial space along with current commercial spots being redesigned. These efforts are aimed at drawing upscale retailers to the building. This has been a disappointment for many residents as it is likely that none of the future businesses located here will be viable resources for us.

Sherman Associates has stated that they have a vision to be a key player in the gentrification efforts of the Old Downtown area. We are hopeful in our efforts to find peaceful, practical solutions that allow for cooperative living. As residents, we love Greysolon Plaza; its rich history, its heritage, and the safe, affordable, comfortable respite that it has provided all of us in our golden years.

Three Acres And A Cow

By Mike Hazel

"The earth is given as a common stock for us to labor and live on... It is not too soon to provide by every possible means that as few as possible shall be without a little portion of land. Small landholders are the most precious part of a state," wrote Thomas Jefferson. He was, despite personal moral failings, a prophetic voice. He recognized the necessity of widely distributed access to land. In fact, though I've not heard many make this claim, Jefferson and Marx would have found common ground when discussing the right of workers to ownership over the means of production, though Marx looked more toward the industrial and Jefferson the agricultural. Regardless, they recognized the reality of political power embodied in the material world, grounded in people's ability to provide for one another. This is a tenet of the Catholic Worker, to embrace subsidiarity in politics and production, which are in many ways inseparable. Modern economic scholarship uses the language of 'periphery and core'; the urbanized, politically centralized core of consumers, and the rural, increasingly dispossessed communities that exist in subservient relation thereto. In a process that echoes the ugliness of colonialism, wealth tends to flow from land toward cities. Though legalized slave trade has ended, our current economics have enshrined market-based wealth and labor extraction processes that are all too familiar.

The labor of immigrants, the fruits of the soil, the wealth of the land are dug up and hauled out, leaving communities broken open on the altar of contemporary capitalism. For evidence of this process, take a look at the Midwest: shuttered storefronts in small towns inversely mirror rising affluence in Chicago,

Minneapolis, St Louis; acres and acres of corn and soy plantations fuel this growth by burning topsoil and the memories of those displaced.

There is an economics called Distributism that offers a countering vision, one based in the widely spread ownership of property both agricultural and industrial. The Catholic Worker has drawn much of its vision from Catholic social teaching, itself often animated by papal encyclicals, thoughts of the early church, and biblical narrative conceptions of resource use and stewardship. There are also strong threads of thought from the organized labor and economic justice movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Though the latter seem to have been aimed at the issues brought on by rapid urbanization and industrialization, and the former drawn from currents much older, they share in common a vision of relative equity in ownership.

An interesting case study in a distributed land ownership system can be found in the example of Norway. Customary land tenure laws prevented the break up of land into parcels too small to support a farming family, and rules requiring the owners of land to reside there prevented central powers from administering lands remotely. The result of these customs has been a relatively egalitarian distribution of power, and a rural population with a strong tradition of local cooperative self-governance. The provincial has held onto the basis of its enfranchisement in the larger world, through the concurrent ownership and stewardship of its land. An instructive model for us in America, where huge parcels of agricultural and forest land are often held by absentee landowners and leased to local management, in what amounts to modern-day sharecropping. We just don't call it that anymore, because to do so would be impolite in its implications of injustice in ownership.

One can't help but notice the potential for a serious mismatch in priorities between the needs of a local community, both social and ecological, and those of distant owners. There doesn't remain much incentive beyond the dictates of impersonal markets for maintaining the health of these communities when one is not forced into contact with the consequences of resource extraction. And there's a compelling argument that goes beyond the material for retaining ownership on a personal level. In so doing people "Always work harder and more readily when they work on that which belongs to them; nay, they learn to love the very soil which yields in response to the labor of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of the good things for themselves and those that are dear to them." A lack of learning leads us into a growing anomie, a dangerous loss of connection with the roots of our existence. And lest you find that thought too exclusively new-agey, bear in mind that



Artwork by Ade Behume

Cause of Contentment

By Mali Lorenz

I joined a river of love-in-practice, beautiful imperfection, and creative indefinability for 3 months last winter as a live-in volunteer, with fresh perspective, but also a head start due to alum status. I wish to share some of the experience with those of you who keep it flowing even while you tend your own streams. I started reading a copy of Dorothy Day's autobiography "The Long Loneliness" but didn't get as far as I'd like. However, I was struck that she began with confession, which is worth repeating. During my time at Loaves & Fishes, I kept a journal:

12/6/13 Old friend Joel greets me, putting my faith tradition in the spotlight, referring to recent archaeological news item, "Sooo, big news about the Buddha, huh?"

12/10 Write a friend that despite the mental illness, addiction, or kookiness that afflict many here, it is so home-y. Guests are so nice and I love how they take care of each other. Resumed relationship with old sort-of-nemesis Burt, showed him pictures from my other life, grasping onto a comment that he thinks a lot about death; nice hook for a Buddhist.

12/12 Kelly is a superstar at snaking the drains.

12/18 When asked how she was, Ali said 'Oh, living the dream and stuff' Deadpan? Aggressive outbursts at Dorothy Day defused quickly. Emailed friends some stories, saying I'm almost over-stimulated by the richness of it all. Met Clint's blue eyes, crooked smile. Imperfections give me plenty to chew on.

12/31 A sober new-years. Meisha danced in DD living room to music, until I noticed the music drove others off. Getting to know Steve and his frostbite; we're both learning to put up with each other.

1/2/14 Feel challenged by having 3 people sleep in the living room. Perhaps sensing this, Steve and Bruce spend 20 minutes kindly looking for a book I misplaced!

1/12 I Zoned out with information overload, halfway through Courtney's wonderful explication of the patchwork of housing and other public resources. To what extent should I have a social-worker role?

1/19 Tell a mentor that "I have no boss and feel free to improvise adding value to pretty much whatever I encounter. Small frustrations or confusions are just interdependence for keeping going." I recall how many times, especially as a child, people who cared gave me a ride, or took me to eat, or taught me, and I probably just assumed I deserved it. Time to give back.

it was actually written by Pope Leo XIII way back in the 1890's.

G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, both inspirations to Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin, were outspoken advocates of Distributism. They saw the benefits that came from a world where the means of life were held widely and equitably, and were firm critics of centralized states and the levies that they demanded. Maurin was a tireless critic of an economics unmindful of its real roots. He quotes Andrew Lytle in his Easy Essay titled 'Regard for the Soil': "It is in fact impossible for any culture to be sound and healthy without a proper respect and proper regard for the soil, no matter how many urban dwellers think their food comes from groceries and delicatessens or their milk comes from tin cans. This ignorance does not release them from a final dependence on the land." Wendell Berry, the noted poet-farmer, speaks to this dependence, and encourages recognition of its indissoluble bond: "There is, in practice, no such thing as autonomy. Practically, there is only a distinction between responsible and irresponsible dependence."

So let us consider what a reply to this remembrance might entail. It's clear enough that our current forgetfulness finds us hurting the earth and ourselves, and doing so as if they were separate things. We struggle to find shared meaning in the anonymous bigness of the world as it is now, so maybe it's high time we seek the small. Maurin was fond of advocating a remembrance of agriculture by much of the population as a means of transforming social order toward a common good. He recognized that in reconnecting with the fruits of our labor we would find recover the human; that there is dignity in the dirt. As Chesterton would have it, the way forward looks something like three acres and a cow.

1/20 Drawn into arguing with a long-time visitor who tests house rules. Feel solid backup for a consistent response from the whole household, after a discussion. Aspire to keep clear about motivations and ultimate goals.

1/29 Steve, though nervous, knew he might lose his whole leg if he didn't go in to get his toes amputated today. Surgery went fine!

2/3 Told fellow volunteers during check-in at a house meeting that I have an existential hole; "doesn't everybody?" Enjoyed sharing and clarification of values at a community meeting with Ann, a visiting facilitator.

2/5 The photos Deb posted of Steve using his post-surgery walker, looking around his new apartment, may have looked really boring to most, but not to us!

2/7 Special feeling seeing Donna's big painted "Laurentian Shield Plowshares" saw, when helping her move down to Jefferson Street!

2/16 Impending departure and truncating relationships feels emotionally stressful; I tell friend of mine that I feel as if I've been "throwing my heart around."

2/17 Ricky is really pumped about connecting with his biological family on facebook. They're carnies.

2/19 Pharrell's viral music video "HAPPY" has landed in our community life! Compiling responses to the Greysolon resident survey where Joel, Mike Hoemke, and others are helping organize a tenant's union.

2/20 Allen (along with my own mistakes) assists me in learning better boundaries.

2/22 Rownel: "did you pick this music?" (blues-y noise.) We turned it off.

2/24 Kate made me amazing 'Catholic Worker Lotto' cards for my last community meeting. Feel loved; also feel the vibrant dream and attendant hopes and fears of my community sabbatical approaching dissolution; every detail and memory.

2/23 Chelsea has been drinking Pregnancy Tea because it's 'yummy.' Giving her Quickbooks tutorial after Muffin Sunday.

2/25 My last goodbye is to Sue Sojourner. Left a jar of tasty New Mexico chiles at Dorothy Day House and yarn at Olive Branch.

I like to think that no one touches the Catholic Worker phenomenon without becoming better at love (a reliable medicine), or at least getting exposure to our rough edges, and perhaps better instincts for the causes of contentment. The more you give and open up to connection, the more you might have your own sorrows and mis-steps held and transformed by the momentum of something much bigger than an individual. Thanks for trying and please keep going! It's up to us.

ALLEN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

include 289 companies with over 80,300 worker-owners. Scholars such as Richard D. Wolff (a noted professor of economics in the U.S.), have hailed the Mondragon federation, including the good wages it provides for employees, the empowerment of ordinary workers in decision making, the solid wages workers provide themselves with, and the measure of equality for female workers, as a major success and has cited it as a working model of an alternative to the capitalist mode of production. The workers within the Mondragon federation have had literally NO layoffs since 1965 and they have some of the highest wages in Spain for the many industries in which the workers are involved. They also have some of the strongest ecological standards in the country, due directly to the fact that the workers do not want to decimate their own ecosphere which will directly affect their region's health and well-being. Though Mondragon is not without fault, (they've hired workers in their international shops who are not worker-owners, for example), they still offer a big step in the right direction. According to the Center for Social Epidemiology, Mondragon operates "In contrast to most capitalist companies, whereby the measure of a successful business is almost always based on maximum profitability, the cooperative approach offers an alternative that supports democracy through an egalitarian system, while at the same time promoting job security for worker-owners, social justice, and community responsibility."

All that being said, it also must be noted that worker-ownership is not utopic and worker cooperatives still wrestle with the question of externalities forced upon other workers outside their own purview. While operating in a less than perfect world, it's impossible to correct all negative externalities fixed on others outside of one's own worker-owned cooperative, but it is certainly much more likely that worker-owners (who themselves would be at risk for exploitation in non worker controlled environments) will have a more compassionate stance toward external workers with whom their own enterprises interact, and they have historically been far more likely to try and minimize those negative external effects on other workers who reside outside of their operations. In truth, the more worker-owned cooperative enterprises there are, the more they can work together to change policies and alter consciousness such that all workers in all circumstances will benefit. This has proven to be true in the Basque region where even non-Mondragon workers often receive higher

wages and better benefits than throughout other parts of Spain. The Mondragon federation has positively impacted even those outside of its own worker-owned membership ranks. And for all the faults that Mondragon has, there are other thriving examples of cooperative federations seeking to further minimize the problems of externalities, thus building more resilient, democratic worker-ownership networks. Prominent examples in North America include the Parecon collective of worker-owned enterprises based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the MadWorC network in based in Madison Wisconsin, and the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives based in California.

Again, though worker-owned cooperatives are not by an means perfect, Dorothy Day and the movement she started have always seen worker-owned cooperatives as one of the strongest economic alternatives to capitalist modes of production, and by looking at the hundreds of worker-owned collectives and cooperatives throughout the world, we can see that these examples of participatory economics can and do offer a functional approach to establish far more egalitarian work, along with a more regenerative, increasingly democratic,

and ecologically sound world.

In summary, here's a telling excerpt from Robert Ludlow's essay regarding the Catholic Worker movement's position on labor: "Since the aim of the capitalist employer is often to obtain labor as cheaply possible and labor must sell itself as dearly as possible (to buy things produced as cheaply as possible), there is an inevitable and persistent conflict which can only be overcome when the capitalist ceases to exist as a class. When there is but one class, the members performing different functions, there is no longer an employer/wage-earner relationship... Today we have a non-producing class which is maintained by the labor of others with the consequence that laborers are robbed of the wealth which they produce over and above what is needed to maintain a life... We believe in worker-ownership of the means of production and distribution... this is to be accomplished by de-centralized worker-owned cooperatives and the elimination of a distinct employer class."

BIKE CAVE HOURS

We need volunteers to join us,
various skill levels welcome!

Wednesdays 3-6

Saturdays 1-5

Located in the back of Dorothy Day
House at 1712 Jefferson Street



Something Called Personalism

By Andrew Moe

My name is Andrew. I am 37 years old and suffer from Autism and mental illness. I have always wanted to help people, and in 1995 I took a trip to Mexico to do so. It turns out I didn't have to go to Mexico to find poverty. Last year, my whole world came crashing down and I became homeless. Before this happened I had a lot of assumptions and prejudices about homelessness. I had no idea how many people sleep outside or in cars every night, and I thought that people experiencing homelessness asked for their troubles. On July 22nd, 2013, it became apparent that my living situation was no longer safe for me or my son. I sent him to live with his mother and started my journey into an unknown realm. I was afraid out of my wits. I headed for a small town in Wisconsin, where two wonderful people took me in without a second thought. It was beautiful out there; I liked the solitude and rolling hills. I'm not sure how long I was there as I was still in shock and had forgotten my meds. My friend's mom helped me get my head together as much as possible as well as getting me started on my SSI. I spent the rest of my time trying to make contacts for help.

Soon, though, a friend came to bring me back to the Twin Ports. I had no idea what to do from that point. I stayed with a friend in Superior until I got a refill for my meds, and then moved into the Solid Rock shelter. This was an extremely different situation than I was used to. The manager was rude and I have a hard time with social understanding as it is. I had been taking the bus to Duluth to eat because I couldn't handle the negativity which permeated the place. I was a wreck, feeling physically, mentally and spiritually destroyed. I didn't ask for this and did not know what to do.

Some friends of mine worked at a store in Duluth and allowed me refuge from the heat. One day while visiting the store, I became very hungry. I had been losing weight like crazy and decided to try to eat at the Union Gospel Mission. (I have Crohn's disease so I have to be very careful what I eat). I was standing outside of the Mission waiting for it to open and had a complete breakdown. While I was crying my eyes out, a woman approached me and asked if I was okay. I told her "no" and shook my head. She said her name was Courtney and that she was a volunteer with the Street Outreach Team. They were handing out lunches and survival gear (this is where I met Chelsea from Loaves and Fishes, too).



*Home Again Woodcut By
+Sister Mary Charles McGough,
OSB St. Scholastica Monastery*

Courtney told me she worked for the Human Development Center Homeless Project and offered to help. It still wasn't easy. I was staying in Superior and bused to Duluth for appointments every day. I had begun to experience massive panic attacks which completely debilitated me. I was picked up by an ambulance one night, which ended my stay at Solid Rock. I was given a taxi to CHUM.

I stayed at CHUM for two and a half weeks. It was the longest two and a half weeks of my life, especially considering my anxiety and the medications I had to keep hidden. My life became my backpack. Many things that had been extraordinary for me quickly became normal. I would get up at 4:30, strap on my pack, and leave CHUM to escape the crowds. I stood in soup lines knowing I needed to eat

whatever was put in front of me, even if it would make me sick. I would walk around or take the bus through Duluth and Superior all day, still making my appointments with my ARMHS worker and case manager. After a week of constant moving, I was almost ready to give up. I started having the illusion that I did not matter. One night I was running at full speed to catch a bus when my shoelace became untied and I tripped and landed on my face. I went back to the ER and was released with a broken nose covered in stitches. It was at this point things finally began to change.

I went with my ARMHS worker to visit Loaves and Fishes. I was very nervous, not knowing what to expect. I was offered food and started talking to the people there. They invited me back to dinner, which was different than anything I was used to. I was in a state of disbelief as everyone greeted me with a genuine smile. These were the kind people that actually cared. Following dinner, Courtney set up a meeting with Joel to talk about moving in. We sat down and played a game of cribbage (he played nice, but still won). After the game he told me a bed was opening soon and asked if I could hold out one last night. I said YES! I moved in the following day. I was still nervous. I don't think I stopped shaking for a couple of weeks and I still had my backpack with me wherever I went even in the house. Finally, I ventured upstairs to my room and let go of my pack, knowing my stuff was more than safe around my new housemates. I fell in love with the community and met many like-minded people from diverse backgrounds.

I also learned about something called *personalism* - the idea that if you see people in need, you should take personal responsibility to help. Through Loaves and Fishes, I joined the Street Outreach Team which gave me an opportunity to help others. This is very important to me. If you were to ask my mother what I've always wanted to do, she would say that I wanted to help others, though at times I had trouble just helping myself. The Loaves and Fishes folks, along with the Street Outreach Team and the Human Development Center, have saved my life. I love them all for the care and support they've given me.

Who We Are

Loaves and Fishes is a diverse group inspired by community organizing, the Catholic Worker Movement ('catholic' meaning universal), and alternative economics, building "a new world in the shell of the old." With our three houses in Duluth, we offer food and shelter to people experiencing homelessness; with the bike cave and our gardens, we promote free sharing of skills or resources; and in halls of power or on the streets, we organize for a just and peaceful world. Loaves & Fishes is 100% volunteer-run. Core Members and Live-In Volunteers as of this issue: Chelsea Froemke, Kelly Wallin Joel Kilgour, Allen Killian-Moore, Kate Bradley, Mike Hazel, and Donna Howard. Many others contribute as builders, organizers, cooks, and more. We aren't a charity and have no paid staff. We are a community striving together for radical change & **we invite you to strive with us!**

Current Wish List

Cash Donations: This is our biggest need. It pays the bills and also covers emergency needs that may arise.

Food: Coffee; herbal tea; butter; salad dressing; raw sugar, cheese; almond milk, healthy cereal; nuts, olive oil, canned tomatoes (large cans); tofu, pasta, tuna.

Bike Cave: NEW kid-sized bike helmets, volunteers, & tool donors always welcome.

Household: Natural laundry detergent and dish soap; paper towels, vinegar, toilet paper, borax, and napkins.

Personal: Razors; ibuprofen; tampons and pads; house slippers (men's sizes 8-13); men's underwear (medium and large).

Street Outreach: Tarps; rain gear; gas cards, flashlights

Special Requests: Small Safe (for Olive Branch to store meds and valuables); 60-gallon screw-top plastic barrels (for our composting needs).

Volunteer Wish List: Roofers (Hannah House needs a new one!); land surveyor.

Questions? Call #218-724-2054

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Our Homeless Bill of Rights

By Mike Hoemke

The city of Duluth was presented recently with a unique opportunity to lead the nation in meaningful social change. A petition to establish a Homeless Bill of Rights and a Duluth Commission to End Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty, were accepted and endorsed by a unanimous vote of the city council. The vote took place in January with council agreement to allow a collaborative committee to oversee the writing of the final draft through the Human Rights Commission. In order to fully understand the significance of this initiative, it's important to know the reasons why it is necessary to establish such an ordinance.

The huge number of people experiencing homelessness across the country is a modern phenomenon. In the city of Duluth, homelessness is at an all-time high with an alarming 46% of those without a permanent residence being children and teens. The lack of affordable housing makes it nearly impossible for people in poverty to sustain permanent residence for any extended period of time. To receive a section 8 voucher or to get public housing, people regularly have to wait 1-2 years for placement.

There are many other factors which contribute poverty, homelessness, and poor nutrition. These include an obscenely low statewide minimum wage, fewer available jobs, a lack of price controls on vital staple goods, and an massively unequal opportunity for access to good education along with a deficit in options for employment advancement. These kinds of social inequities are apparent to many people, yet the popular view of the extreme "hard right"

and of many middle class residents of Duluth, is too often predicated on age-old stereotypes such as "Poor people are lazy, they have no ambition," or "People are homeless only because they're drug addicts and drunks," or "People in poverty are moral degenerates, dregs on society, takers of the public dole," and on and on the stereotype train goes.

Let's take a moment to consider the issues at hand. Some homeless residents suffer from substance abuse. Many are mentally ill. Almost all have very limited income or none at all. Criminal behavior happens. A few simply refuse to be encumbered by accepted social norms. These problems occur across the wide spectrum of society. Criminals come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Addiction and mental health issues are not limited to those in poverty and a majority of working Americans are only a paycheck away from poverty themselves.

The stigma of being homeless is the most anguishing part of the equation. From personal experience, I know how it feels to lose everything and have nothing. It eats away at the soul, destroying one's confidence, resulting in depression as well as physical pain. It wears on the body and psyche alike. At Loaves and Fishes, there's a strong commitment to helping the poorest among us find their way to a regenerative life. All human beings have inherent dignity, regardless of their status in society. Homelessness is indeed NOT a crime. It's a social cancer on our collective body, and it is also curable. The Homeless Bill of Rights is of course not a panacea, but it is a rung up the ladder of justice and equality for all. We've been striving every day to give those experiencing poverty a voice in the matters that directly affect them. May we all support such measures in the cities, states, and nations in which we live and dwell.



*Sleeping On The Street in Duluth
Photo: Deb Holman*