



THE

SOWER

True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers

from seeds sown in the spirit of peace. James, 3:18

Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm, Maloy, Iowa Number 2, Winter-Spring, 2010

Dear Friends,

December was not even over before our local radio weather reports were calling this an "epic winter." Who makes such a determination, a climatologist or a poet? In any case, it has been an epic season due not only to dramatic weather events (this is written on a snow covered late February day with record breaking subzero temperatures) and global upheavals. This has been an epic time for us here at Strangers and Guests too. Winter is usually a quiet, homey and reflective time here on the prairie, but this year our winter has been unusually eventful.

This "epic winter" was slow in coming. This year November brought the winding down of the garden with clean-up and late harvest continuing, especially broccoli, cauliflower and parsley. The ever-bearing strawberries lived up to their name this time, the last of them harvested from under the first snowfall in December! The visit from a buck to several of our does, and delivery of a new batch of chickens caused a stir.

The end of the year is a busy time for sales of our woven products and we had a new opportunity this year to display work in Ankeny at the alternative gift sale at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish, thanks to Dixie and Barney Webb. The Henry Wallace Rural Life Center in Adair County also had a special "holiday boutique" including our rugs and other items, and we had orders through our autumn newsletter.

Betsy took a day to go to Lawrence, Kansas for a spinning class, a long term goal of hers being to spin the flax we have been cultivating, retting and storing up for several years. Betsy's sister Kathy and our son, Elijah,

gave her a spinning wheel for Christmas and we hope to be weaving our own linen cloth before too long.

Advent had a sporadic quality with Brian coming and going, including a truly epic journey driving a rental truck with our daughter Clara as she moved from Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she finished one master's degree to Eugene, Oregon, where she is starting another at the U of O. Christmastide brought family to visit, Christmas Eve and Day we suffered power outages with the rest of town. We saw the old year out with a small party of family and friends.

Most guests visit us in Maloy in the summer

months. Some are drawn to Strangers and Guests to learn about organic gardening, dairy goats and rural life. Other folks are traveling thru. In summer we have plenty of fresh food to eat- baby goats for entertainment, long days- especially the solstice- our busiest time. Cold weather and storms did not stem the flow of visitors this year, beginning with visits from Gina Cook of Kansas City



Our living fence of woven willow, a sculpture of ice in the winter protects the garden from the searing southerly winds in the summertime.

whose several week stay ended in November(see her letter on page 3), and Elaine from Minnesota,

who stopped on her way to and from Oklahoma.

This fall and winter we invested a lot of time planning a craft retreat in January to host Catholic Workers interested in learning about rag rug weaving and other crafts (see report on page 4). There was such interest from so many people that we scheduled one in February as well. Over these two long weekends our house was packed with good friends from communities in Iowa, Colorado, Illinois, South Dakota, Minnesota and Missouri as well as neighbors from close by.

Winter at Home in Maloy and on the Road

(continued from page 1)

Brian left Maloy with the stragglers from the first retreat in January on the first leg of a journey that took him to Washington, DC, and then to Madison, Wisconsin and home just in time to welcome the February retreaters. In Washington, Brian joined with friends with Witness Against Torture, meeting and praying at historic St Stephen's church.



On the eve of January 22, the day that the prison at Guantanamo was to have been closed according to an executive order by President Obama a year before, Brian and 41 others wearing orange jump suits stood on the Capitol steps with banners reading "Broken Promises" and "Broken Laws." The First Amendment to the Constitution notwithstanding, Police arrested the group before a third banner, "Broken Lives" could be unfurled and started them along an agonizing 30 hour labyrinth through the cells of the DC Metro police and the US Marshals for arraignment in Superior Court the next evening.

Upon release, Brian remained in DC for a few more days to join vigils at the White House with the Peaceable Assembly Campaign, imploring President Obama in the days before he submitted his budget to congress to defund our several ongoing wars of aggression and turn these resources to meet human needs at home and abroad. From Washington, Brian travelled on to Madison to appear in US District Court on January 28 (see report on this hearing on page 6) and spent the next couple of weeks in the Dane County Jail.

Our first edition of *The Sower* was most well received and we are encouraged by that response. The flood of prayers, solidarity, good wishes and money generated by it give us the courage and the means to carry on. Our financial situation, while still appropriately precarious, is not so dire as it was when you last heard from us. We are deeply grateful for many kindnesses.

Our needs continue and we ask for your continued support. We are now ordering seeds for the spring and need to replace several fruit and nut trees that did not survive the past few wet, cool, summers. (The seed catalogs arrive daily, tantalizing with their perfect lush vegetables, flowers, herbs and fruits. The selections are so numerous and enticing! A firm grip on reality is needed to sift the options, planning another fruitful season, learning from past successes and disappointments.) Brian will be in court in Washington and perhaps in Nevada, too, in coming months, entailing travel expenses.

Our thanks and prayers are with all who support of life here in Maloy and our work in the world.

Peace,

Betsy Keenan and Brian Terrell



**Izabelle, from Cherith Brook Catholic Worker
in Kansas City prepares rags for weaving at
S&G craft retreat in February**

Dear Brian and Betsy,

You know that feeling you can get at Sugar Creek? The one where we are all laughing or singing or praying together and you are so grateful to be alive and to know the Catholic Worker? Thank you for blessing me with that feeling every day for the past three weeks.

It is tough when you are young. People pull you in every direction; they expect such great, such **enormous** things out of you. I am grateful for the gentle contrast of your farm and your expectations- I never had to milk the goats alone or lead prayer. It was very (hopefully it will last) steadying to simply exist instead of what seems, in the city, a constant struggle to prove oneself worthy of life.



Gina Cook of Holy Family Catholic Worker House in Kansas City spent three weeks at Strangers and Guests this fall and returned for the craft retreat in February

Brian asked why I came here. I came because I have been exhausted my entire adult life (little though it has been) and I needed a good rest. I couldn't really say that, though, I'm sure you caught on. Somewhere in between my childhood of constant achievement and my young adulthood of pouring myself out for others, I never really learned how to care for myself.

Brian - thank you for all the stories, explanations, agitations, and for sharing (Ignazio Silone's) **Bread and Wine** with me. I'm thinking about joining you in DC in February if things work out.

Betsy- thanks for awakening me to the joy of crafting! I've never made so many useful things in my life! And thanks for the music and laughter.

Hopefully I am not a stranger anymore!
Blessings and Peace,

Gina



**Celebrate the
Summer Solstice
and feast day of
St John Baptist**

in Maloy

Saturday, June 19

**Come celebrate
with us the gift
of the sun and
the longest day,
despite the
darkness of the
times around us!**

Come celebrate our 16th annual summer solstice and the feast of St John Baptist celebration in the remote and colorful town of Maloy, Iowa, on Saturday, June 19. Festivities begin about 4 pm in the Maloy City Park at the center of town. At about 6 we will have a pot luck supper in the park and Foxtown dance hall, featuring the first harvests from our gardens, fields and pastures. After supper there will be folk dancing in the park until dusk, followed by a bonfire in our orchard, more food and drink and music. Bring friends, bring some food or drink to share if you wish (there is always enough) musical instruments, lawn chairs. There is room to tent if you want to stay the night, room to sleep on our floor and we can try to arrange for a bed for anyone who needs one. Children welcome, of course.

Please let us know if you're coming, especially if you are planning on staying the night.

A video of our 2007 celebration can be seen at-
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRGqJKpAnXw>
More news and events from Maloy are at
<http://foxtownmedia.com/news>

Catholic Worker Craft Retreat Comes to Maloy

“...an experiment in sharing skills and reinforcing their practice in CW households and in those of our fellow travelers in a search for cultural wholeness.”

By Betsy Keenan

Last winter Alice McGary of The Mustard Seed Catholic Worker Farm invited folks to Ames for a craft retreat, and her invitation was accepted. The weather was snowy and bitter, but the group gathered and tried their hands, brains and eyes at forming and finishing pottery, dipping candles, knitting, spinning wool, while we also shared stories, songs and food.

I came home and thought “I want to try that in Maloy”. So, this fall, I picked dates in January, and announced a “craft retreat” to Catholic Workers at annual Midwest



Nizhonia from New Hope CW Farm in LaMotte, IA, the youngest crafter at our January retreat and the eldest, Dagmar from Emmaus CW House in Yankton, SD, take a break from a basket weaving class



Brian and others hand-dipped dozens of sets of candles from recycled wax

CW gathering at Sugar Creek, Iowa and in our initial edition of *The Sower*. By November I was thinking hard about how many people I could actually accommodate, because there was so much interest. We conferred and called the January event “full”, offering a second event for February (when it is still definitely winter in Iowa!).

After years, decades, of conversations about the importance of hand crafts in the Catholic Worker movement, these “Craft retreats” are an experiment in sharing skills and reinforcing their practice in CW households, and in those of our fellow travelers in a search for cultural wholeness. This winter I wanted to share what we have in Maloy at Strangers and Guests, in terms of space, skills, experience and network of talented and fascinating dwellers in this rural corner of the Midwest.

Both retreats offered a time to center and form friendships, strengthen friendships, learning and teaching, building and enhancing community networks. Our CW guests from afar added their own crafts to ours, as did

local friends who came to share their talents. Every corner of our house and downtown Maloy's Foxtown Music Hall were buzzing with activity. What a powerful experience it was!

The retreat in January included basketry, rag rug weaving, candle dipping, bread making and knitting, singing, dancing and praying. On the evening of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., we marked the day with



Locals and Catholic Worker friends came together for potlucks and folk dancing at Foxtown Hall as a part of both retreats- photo by Sophie Ryan



David Stein of St. Francis CW in Chicago expounds a philosophy of wood carving- photo by Don Ray

a communal reading of his sermon from Riverside Church.

The February retreat was four days long, rather than five and a half, but included wood-carving, and ended with a class in pine needle basketry. Overall in both retreats 16 rugs were made-from loom set up, and tearing and sewing fabrics, to weaving and then tying knots, though a few left Maloy with their knots unfinished.

I was very pleased with the interaction between the retreat folks, who came from six states,

and the local friends who joined in various events. Everyone enjoyed the sharing, meals and talk- a great antidote to the blahs we can get toward the end of winter.

I think it is time for many varied events of this kind, with different offerings, small enough to offer good hands-on learning and community-building- and be accessible and affordable.



Nick from Cherith Brook CW in Kansas City at the Strangers and Guests loom- photo by Sarah Cool

“In light of the nature of the offence and the characteristics of the person, no other alternatives to imprisonment are adequate to serve the purposes of punishment and deterrence.”

Acting United States Attorney Stephen P. Sinnott

Jailing Activists in Wisconsin Fails to Punish or Deter

Brollier and Terrell would “rather get this done and get back to the important work of resisting these wars.”

By Eileen Hansen

Madison, Wisconsin, January 28, 2010

Today’s hearing before Judge Magistrate Stephen Crocker in US District Court was a resentencing motion filed by the government against the two for failure to pay



The author, center, was tried for trespass with Joshua Brollier, left, and Brian Terrell in January 2009

the \$75 fine imposed by the court in a bench trial in January, 2009. Judge Crocker began by hearing from Terrell on his motion opposing the resentencing. Terrell argued that it would be improper to impose a jail sentence at this stage since jail was not a sentence that could have been imposed at the time of the original sentencing under the Monroe County trespassing ordinance. (In the bench trial before Judge Crocker in January 2009, for instance, defendants were not offered representation by public counsel, specifically because jail time was not a potential consequence for the alleged crime.)

Further, Brollier and Terrell contested the government’s contention that “alternatives to jail are not sufficient deterrence”. Terrell spoke eloquently about the ex-

ample of friends and mentors like Dorothy Day, Daniel and Phillip Berrigan and Daniel Ellsberg.

He noted

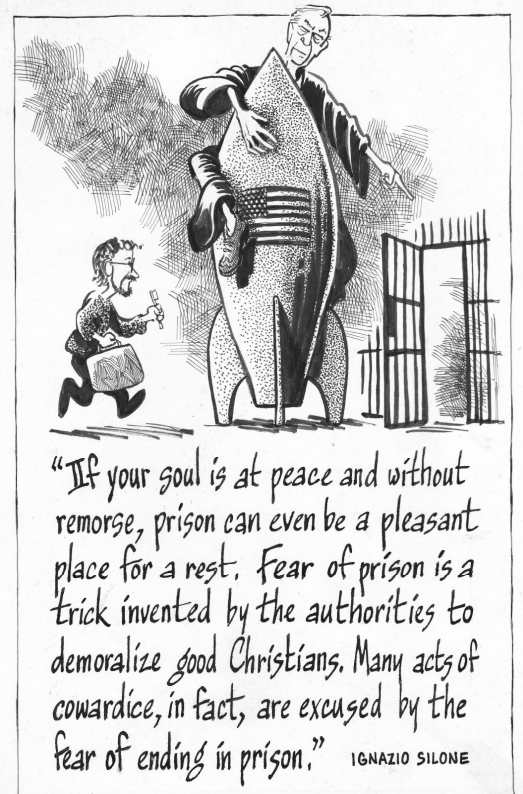
that “putting these people in chains and locking them in cages” served not as a deterrent to him and others, but rather as an inspiration to act with similar courage.

Brollier noted that their actions of August 8, 2008 did not take place in a vacuum, and that the state of the world must be considered along with their actions. It is not permitted to yell fire in a crowded theater if there is no fire. But if there is a fire, we are duty bound to alert people to the danger.

Both defendants agreed that they were not seeking to go to jail, but were willing to do so, in part, to stand in solidarity with those who have no such choice. Speaking from recent experience in Washington DC city jail where Terrell met inmates who were unable to pay even a small fine to get out, he said “in a world where jails exist and some can pay and walk away while others cannot pay and their lives are ruined, I would rather go to jail”.

After Judge Crocker declared the sentence of 14 days, both defendants stated a preference to begin serving that time immediately. Brollier said he would “rather get this done and get back to the important work of resisting these wars and also to alleviating the suffering” that is so often the result. The two were escorted out by federal marshals to begin serving their sentence in Dane County jail.

Cartoon above by Chuck Trapkus



“If your soul is at peace and without remorse, prison can even be a pleasant place for a rest. Fear of prison is a trick invented by the authorities to demoralize good Christians. Many acts of cowardice, in fact, are excused by the fear of ending in prison.”

The Coming Revolt of the Guards

"I look forward to the day of the 'coming revolt of the guards;' a day when veterans, soldiers, policemen and judges can stand together with civilians, workers and activists alike to put an end to any further senseless tragedies and atrocities."

By Joshua Brollier

On entering the Dane County Jail, the first holding cell that Brian Terrell and I were placed in had only one other person. We previously saw this man outside the cell during our initial booking. He was a man with dark black skin and a full beard. I thought I heard one of the officers say he was from Gambia. When we entered the cell, the man was in mid-ritual in what appeared to be a Muslim's midday prayer. A young white guard, who had the accent of a Midwesterner, looked disdainfully at the man and then somewhat positively at Brian and me. The guard said, "Just ignore that," as if the man was insulting or threatening us by his peaceful act of prayer. To which I replied, "It's fine with me."

This experience was contrasted by the next encounter I had with another officer who made digital copies of my fingerprints and pictures. As this middle-aged man placed my hand on the machine, I made a remark that I was surprised that he did not already have my information handy. (This was the third time I was fingerprinted and pictured for this same charge.) He said, "Oh yeah? You arrested a lot? What are you in for?" I told him that I was arrested with a group who engaged in civil disobedience at Ft. McCoy. Getting the sense that this man may have previously been in the armed services, I explained that we were not against the men and women in the military personally, but that our goals were to enter the base to talk to the rank and file soldiers about ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and to make certain the soldiers were aware of their right to refuse illegal and immoral orders.

Before I could get all of this out of my mouth, the officer piped in abruptly and surprisingly, "I understand folks like you. I was in Vietnam, and this is the same shit happening today." I said, "Oh yeah? What did they have you doing over there?" He replied, "Killing people and breaking shit, and this is just the same." He gazed at me

with a fierce intensity and honesty. I was now a bit nervous, feeling that I had asked too much too quickly. After a moment I said, "I'm sorry sir. I'm sorry they had you do that." I continued, "Well, from my perspective, I don't want any more young men and women to have to do what you did, nor to put themselves in harm's way for a war that has no goals or objectives..." He cut me off. I was planning to finish my sentence with something like "...no

goals other than bringing more profits to corporations and expanding the U.S. empire." But he continued in an angry tone, "There was no goal then and there is no goal now. It's all pointless." I nodded my head in agreement.

A few more words were exchanged between us about the families being torn apart in the U.S., Iraq and Afghanistan. The disgruntled Vietnam Veteran, now turned law-enforcement officer, concluded taking my fingerprints. He then told me his name and again repeated something to the tune of "I can respect people like you." After the unexpected bond of our short conversation, the feeling was mutual. Ironically,

this same man sent me along the way to serve my jail sentence for speaking out against the crimes being committed by our government and soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have now expanded to illegal drone strikes and extra-judicial killings in Pakistan and Yemen.

Until we build a culture that widely accepts that it is okay and necessary to resist war and injustice, I suppose that's the way it will go. I don't know when or if the day will come, but I look forward to the day of the "coming revolt of the guards" that our late brother Howard Zinn predicted; a day when veterans, soldiers, policemen and judges can stand together with civilians, workers and activists alike to put an end to any further senseless tragedies and atrocities.

Joshua Brollier is a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence in Chicago



Rag Rugs
Placemats
Table Runners
Shoulder Bags

*Traditional hand woven
textiles custom made to
compliment the colors
of your home.*

"Setting up the loom is the hard thing- Making the warp and setting it up on the loom... What it does too is restore the sacramental aspect of things. One gets a feeling and a knowledge of God's creation, and becomes co-creator, in fashioning wool from a fleece and towels from hemp and flax and to plant a bed of flax is to see a most heavenly blue mass of flowers."

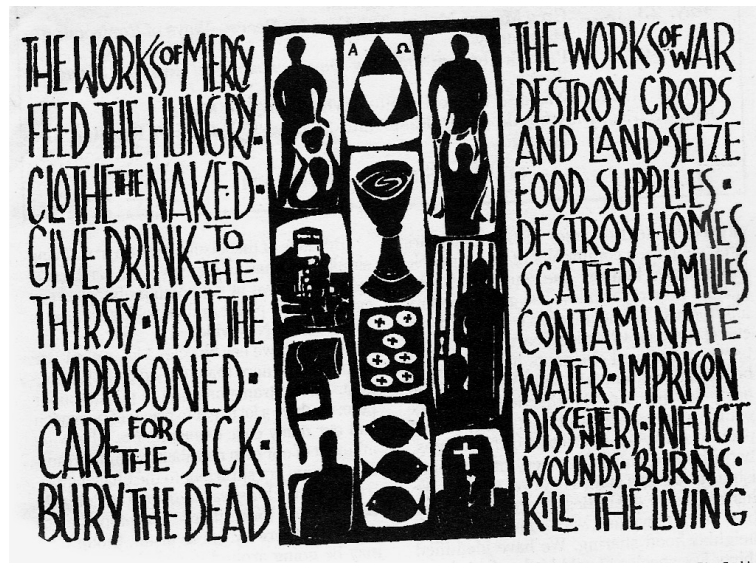
THE SOWER

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Rita Corbin