



Volume 3, Issue 1



September 2011

## Schedule of Events:

Please consider joining us for the following

Daily— Dinner is served most days around 6pm, 1910 Constance St. ALL ARE WELCOME

Weekly—  
Day Labor Breakfast, Wed., 8am, @ N. Carrollton Ave. Home Depot  
Prayer, Tuesday and Friday 8:30am @ St. Thomas House and Monday 11:30am @ Rebuild Center  
Community Resource Center, Tuesday and Thursday 6:30-8:30pm @ Hope House (NEW HOURS)  
Bible Study, First and Third Wednesday (NEW DAY) 7:00-8:30pm @ St. Thomas House

### August:

19, Clarification of Thought: Freedom Songs Sing Along at 6:30pm  
24, Bible Study: Join us at 7:00pm as we choose a new focus

### September:

5, Labor Day Grill Out at 4pm  
7, Bible Study (Subject TBD) at 7:00pm  
16, Clarification of Thought: Alex Mikulich - Scandal of White Privilege; and Conflicting Solidarity at 6:30pm  
21, Bible Study (Subject TBD) at 7:00pm

### October:

1, Yard Sale 8:00am—2pm  
5, Bible Study (Subject TBD) at 7:00pm  
7-9, CW NATIONAL GATHERING, Las Vegas, NV  
19, Bible Study (Subject TBD) at 7:00pm  
21, Clarification of Thought: Elizabeth Eckman - Responsibility: Responding in Grace at 6:30pm



Thanks a million to Sam Jackson, who would not be bested by a pesky roof leak and to Van and Randy who helped kick our composting up a notch. We are also grateful to those who support us in prayer, by presence, and through monetary donations.

We welcome submissions of stories, art and poetry. Submissions should be 100-500 words in length.

Our needs include:

Items for yard sale, cooked meals on Tuesday or Thursday, sandwich fixings, silverware, paint, and produce. Thank you!

We are available to speak with groups interested in learning about the Catholic Worker movement, nonviolence and social justice.

## WHAT'S COOKIN'

By Katy Heeren-Mueller

If you came over to our house on a Thursday afternoon, you would most likely find the following scenario: Joe, Dan, Stephanie would be at work, with most of our guests gone for the day. I would be home with Micah, my 8 month old son, playing, eating, and sleeping with him. The smell of good home Southern cooking would lure you into the kitchen to find our neighbor and close friend Lowrine .a.k.a. “Grandma”, cooking up a meal for at least 30 people. As meal time approaches, you would experience the Catholic Worker House in full swing, with volunteers and guests arriving home and preparing to take the meal over to the Resource Center at Hope House where it would be served.



Grandma at work in the kitchen.

About a year ago, Joe came up with the idea to open the Hope House Resource Center once a week to neighbors and homeless folks in the evening for a reliable meal, a cool (or warm), dry place to be depending on the weather, a movie or some computer time on the Internet, and a chance to build relationships and community. At first we only had about 3 people, but as word got around and advertisements were put up, we now regularly have fifteen per night at the Resource Center.

As Joe and I are busy with raising children, Dan has really embraced this ministry of presence and is the main volunteer that hosts this event. He dutifully goes over early to make a large pot of coffee. He then comes back to the house to pick up the dinner food with a guest. They push the heavy pots full of food up the street in one of our stray shopping carts. Along the way, a neighbor might ask them, “What do you got cooking tonight?”

As this ministry has evolved over the year, Grandma has increasingly taken charge as Thursday night chef to prepare the meal. She comes over Thursday morning to check our pantry to see what she can cook up for “the guys.” As she and I are usually the only adults home during the day, we get to chatting about this and that while she cooks. She has shared with me many times that she really feels that everyone deserves a good home cooked meal no matter what your walk of life or circumstances be. She puts her soul into that soul cooking, which usually makes it the best meal of the week!

Not only does Grandma give them her time and talent, she also donates from the unused commodities she receives from a food bank and sometimes splurges on a bit of ham to flavor the beans. Those beans, plus oatmeal, dried milk, and so much more, go a long way in our kitchen to

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Randy Isaac relaxes at St. Thomas House before a Thursday night dinner.

## LA Shines the Light On Shadowy Power Brokers

By David Williams

Community organizers from Ohio and Baton Rouge rode into town the first weekend of August, joining forces with union leaders and concerned local citizens of all stripes in a day of enlightenment about, and action against, the American Legislative Exchange Committee (ALEC).

ALEC, a lobbying group working to pass anti-worker legislation, hosted more than two thousand state legislators and corporate executives at their Annual Meeting on August 3-6 at the Marriott Hotel. ALEC's agenda is to write and promote model legislation for member legislators who then work to pass them as law in their home states. Arizona's controversial anti-immigrant bill, HB 1070, which essentially compels police to discriminate based on race in pursuit of undocumented immigrants was drafted in ALEC committee rooms. These pieces of so-called “copy-and-paste” legislation have proved detrimental to already marginalized groups of people whose labor, at the end of the day, provides these same executives with wealth that allows them to wield great influence over lawmakers in the first place.

Though they have existed in the shadows for nearly four decades, ALEC can no longer remain hidden. Key provisions of HB 1070 have already been struck down, and a nearly identical (but even

more draconian) bill recently passed in Alabama is already under legal attacks from many sides, not the least of which is a group of religious leaders who argue the new law criminalizes good Samaritans.

Organized by the Student Labor Action Project at LSU, the day began with a morning teach-in at the Catholic Worker house. Following the teach-in, a hundred or so people then convened at the Boggs Federal Courthouse on Poydras where a succession of students and union leaders spoke out against ALEC. The mood was positive as anarchists passed out fliers and union members passed out bottles of water. The crowd was encouraged by the music of David Rovics, a songwriter who traveled from Oregon to share in the show of democracy.

We then picketed and marched around the Canal St. hotel where ALEC met. It was a totally empowering show of solidarity save for the uncoordinated spray-painting action of a single protestor. Al-Jazeera English News Network was present to film the event.

ALEC meets thrice yearly; the next in Phoenix from November 30 to December 2. Ω



Steph and Dan with friend, Kyle Vogel (center) are hopping mad about ALEC's undemocratic machinations.

As a Christian acting and operating on an urban stage, I ask again: Where are the bodies? Whose blood is sacrificed on whose altar and for what purpose?

- Rose Marie Berger from her book, *Who Killed Donte Manning?: The Story of an American Neighborhood*.

## Around the House

by Joe Heeren-Mueller

This summer Lory Schaff, co-founder of Hope House, challenged us during a Clarification of Thought to embrace Peter Maurin's vision of round-table discussions not merely as social gatherings or lecture nights, but as occasions for critical analysis of our aims and means with the purpose of "bring(ing) the social order to Christ." Joe Grant gave us a chance to do that when he led a dynamic discussion around the interwoven relationship between spiritual practice and social engagement. We look forward to good discussions and clearer thoughts when Alex Mikulich and Elizabeth Eckman join us in September and October. Alex researches race at the Jesuit Social Research Institute and Elizabeth is a yoga instructor and founder of the Divine Yoga Studio. Dan has been particularly inspired by her generosity and enthusiasm for making yoga accessible to peo-

ple of all means.

In July we received visits from Jan and Wanda and Pauline, who were visiting communities across the world and US. They were rays of sunshine throughout a series of four rainy weeks. St. Thomas House has been blessed to have David and Greg join the community this past month. David is a New Orleans native with an interest in art. He has a lot of energy and is excited to be learning more about Catholic Worker life. Greg works in the restaurant industry. He has jumped into community life and has been very helpful around the house. To boot he is conversant on almost any topic. Pavan, who had planned to join us this summer, returned to California to attend to family matters and has decided to stay for health reasons. We hope his path crosses back through Louisiana and he remains in our thoughts and prayers.

The Las Vegas Catholic Worker is hosting an international gathering of Catholic Workers the weekend of October 7-9. Our own Stephanie Malinowski is planning to attend. The weekend will include round-table discussions, talks by Wes Howard-Brook and Sue Ferguson-Johnson, and two civil disobe-



We celebrate Gary Gibson's birthday with cake and ice cream.

dience actions at the Nevada Desert Test Site and Creech Air Force Base, the staging ground for the Air Force drone attacks in Pakistan and Libya. If you are interested in joining Steph, call the house.

Our bible study is reconvening after a summer break following a two-year study of Luke-Acts. We now consider what direction to move in the future. Options of study include Matthew, Mark, Revelation, Exodus, or Daniel. Our studies move from the scriptures' context to our own. We pray that God will move us to action through our study and reflection. Those joining us on August 24 will discern and decide what our focus will be for the next 8 months of bi-weekly bible studies. The bible studies are open to all; please consider joining us as we study the Word at work in our lives.

October is around the corner, which means that we will be having another yard sale fundraiser. These have been a great way to meet neighbors and raise a bit of money for the house. If you have any treasures stored up that you would like to donate for the sale, we will be collecting them the last two weeks of September.  $\Omega$



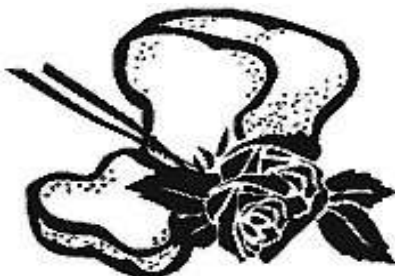
Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement

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serve over a hundred meals per month.

Since having the Resource Center at Hope House open in the evening has been such a grace all around, we have decided to be open now on Tuesdays as well as Thursdays. As this newsletter goes to print, we will begin hosting folks two nights of the week, offering a meal and hospitality on both nights, with hopefully the same great response. As you can imagine, operating this ministry is a significant task and commitment for the volunteers and resources of this Catholic Worker community. If you are reading this and feel so called, please consider joining us in these works of mercy—providing food and shelter to the hungry and homeless. We are looking for all sorts of help: perhaps you can donate a large amount of uncooked food for a specific meal, or maybe, like Grandma, you could give your time to cook on Tuesday, or perhaps you could help host during the hours that the Resource Center is open to the community.

The Kingdom is at hand and needs your help! Please contact our house to get involved.  $\Omega$



## Catholic Worker Farming

By Paul Troyano

Among his many other contributions to the Catholic Worker movement, Peter Maurin gave us a three-point program of roundtable discussions, houses of hospitality, and farming communes. He proposed farming communes or "agronomic universities," to acquaint city folk with the spiritual richness and simplicity of life on the land, which is to be farmed using the most earth friendly methods available. This, he thought, is how to live in cooperation with God

Peter Maurin saw both capitalism and communism as materialistic economic models that emphasize wealth and production over and against the wholeness of the person and his/her spiritually centered communal life. He emphasized poverty over affluence, self-giving over self-advancement and cooperation over competition. He took to heart the Benedictine motto: Pray and Work. So he advocated small communal structures, the practice of the works of mercy, and the return to a village-like land and craft-based culture

in order to build "a society where it is easier to be good."

In pursuit of some of these aims a group of us are looking to find a farm—hopefully within 60 to 90 minutes of New Orleans in Louisiana or Mississippi. We are able and willing to work to add to an existing structure or build a new one, and we can clear a section for gardening. We are looking to utilize around 5 or 10 acres and have already raised a small amount for purchase. We also set up a non-profit called *Bayou Le Terre* for accepting donations as a land trust, which functions to preserve land from being sold in speculation.

We want to practice these principles of Peter Maurin and the Catholic Worker, like sustainability in land use and living in harmony with nature so as to be in harmony with God. We would be grateful for contributions to this endeavor—of land or money for the purpose of acquiring it or for participation in this the vision of this project.  $\Omega$



Sue Troyano looks forward to getting back to the earth.