

## WE NEED DONATIONS!

CATHOLIC WORKER FARM NEWSLETTER–October, 2007  
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Dear Friends & Supporters,

We have great news to greet you with this Fall. Marilyn Richter was our new volunteer last September. She and Brad married in January. It was a small private wedding at San Damiano Retreat house with just the community present and some of the friars. Brad and Marilyn are ecstatic. It has been so wonderful to see Brad find a life partner. Marilyn has been a wonderful addition to the community. She has taken on the grant writing that Joan did and is doing a wonderful job. As well, she has taken charge of the kitchen and shopping. She is a wonderful cook and turns out great meals and desserts. Recently she has gotten a part time job at a bakery in Murphy's and brings home lots of left over bread and baked goods. Brad is carrying on with the candles and did a wonderful job repairing the Common Building deck just before the youth group came. We wish them well in their new life together.

Speaking of marriage, Joan and I just celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a short time away. Thanks be to God for all our blessings!

More good news is that our dream of having our new well powered by solar (first conceived in 02 by Chris) is beginning to come to fruition through an amazing set of circumstances. Joan's former supervisor gave us her son Chuck Allured as a contact. Chuck designs electrical systems including solar. He put us in contact with his supplier of solar panels, Holly Thomas from Granite Bay Solar. Holly located panels from a distributor that handles blemished solar panels. A customer of hers who installed them found them to perform well. They also have the industry's standard 25-year guarantee. We purchased a 4.8K array. Our new array cost us \$15,083. This last year, propane to run the pump's generator cost us \$1900 and if propane costs remained the same, the panels would be paid off in 8 years. This does not take into consideration the \$6,000 generator, which is already showing signs of wear. The life expectancy of the solar panels is actually 40+ years! This is another step in moving us from fossil fuel driven generators and toward energy self-sufficiency.

We were given a no interest loan of \$10,000 in order to purchase the panels and keep our programs going. **We have in the bank just enough left over for one more month. We need your generous support to pay back this loan and to keep our programs going. Thank you.**

In January the logger came and cut down the trees around the buildings that had cut out the solar exposure. As well, we had trees logged to allow the winter sun to hit a spot in the meadow where our new solar panels will be located. It was the first time the forestry department had someone file for a conversion to remove trees for a solar exposure. In order to save as much money as we could to use for some of the cost of purchasing the panels, we did the entire cleanup of the branches from the logging. What a huge job that

was! We had to have all of this cleaned up by April 1<sup>st</sup>. We started with a group of young folks helping us including Gabe Nelson, our son Joe, Emily and Dave Whatford-Ciabattari and some of their friends as well as our long time friend Peter Menard. Gabe, the son of John and Amy Dougan Nelson (married here 25 years ago) stayed with us for a month helping us pull, cut and burn branches. Without his hard work, we would have been hard pressed to meet our clean-up deadline. Chuck and Beth who helped found the farm years ago also helped. Late in March the Five Cities Fellowship came with a big crew and with Josef's help, put us over the top and got the cleanup done. Our Land Trust Board members, comprised of Jenny Sprinkles, Phyllis Manford, Richard Hammer, Sandra Nelson, Beth Whatford, Josef, Brad, Joan and myself all helped split lots of rounds set aside for winter firewood. Marilyn, Jeannine and Chuck also helped and young Thad got a big kick out of it all! This was the last task in our four months of cleanup. We could not have done this without the help of so many wonderful friends!

In the early months of the year we only did one AIDS retreat a month. Some of the guests helped haul a few branches but for the most part, that kind of work was too grueling for someone with AIDS. In May we did two retreats and one in the beginning of June. In August we hosted Sunburst who work with Children and Youth with AIDS. They used us for their 14-18 year old group. We began again our regular AIDS retreats in September, once the hot weather passed. For the rest of this year we currently have planned 2 retreats a month. Ruth and Henry Ferguson have been a big help with retreat house preparation and cleanup, as well as gardening help. They are retired and live above Big Trees.

Five Cities Fellowship has been coming up once a month and has been a tremendous help. They helped with the garden at Catherine's House and helped fence a new garden at Chris and Joan's. The gardens have helped supply us with fresh zucchini, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, beans, eggplant, tomatoes, watermelon, and fresh herbs. Also, along with the help of our friend Peter Menard, they helped with the repair of the deck at Chris and Joan's house. A member of the fellowship, Ted, who works at a lumberyard had his yard donate materials for both of the repaired decks. Also helping with the deck and garden was our new friend Arturo, who also helps at Marty's Place in San Francisco, a hospice for persons from the street with AIDS, started by Fr. Richard Purcell who inspired us to start Catherine's House.

One of the more interesting events of this year was a visit by one of the long-standing members of our environment here. A California Black Bear visited our woodshed where we had our propane freezer stored. In an awesome display of power, he yanked it out 12 feet, breaking a half-inch steel black pipe, discharging \$300 worth of propane into the air from our recently filled tank before the tank was shut off. The Bear likes to visit us regularly in the Fall and we are relocating the freezer and food for the chickens hopefully out of the bear's reach so as to discourage reliance on non-native foods. My dog Iris and I, as we were out running, saw a young juvenile bear. What a wonderful gift from God, as is all of our lives.

Wishing you all blessings. Know that you and your intentions are all in our daily prayers.

Fondly, Chris  
For the Farm Folks, Brad, Marilyn, Josef and Joan