

Faithful Fools



STREET MINISTRY

FOOLS FABLES

ANNUAL EDITION 2010/2011

HOPE WITHIN FEAR AND CONFUSION

Josh Mann

*You say you don't know exactly why you
came here.*

*That's okay.
Few people really do,
and I'm sometimes skeptical of the ones
that claim to.*

*But, will you greet the answer if it comes to you?
It may differ, you know, from the one you
thought you knew.*

In fact, it may scare the bejeebers out of you.

That's okay, too.

*If you have but an ounce of curiosity,
there's hope.*

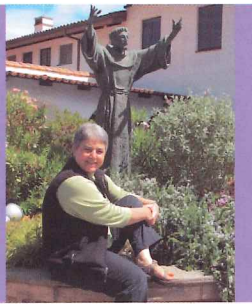
*If you have but a sliver of faith - even if the very
word repels you, you'll make it through.*

*You are supported in ways you can't
possibly understand.
And, though your own heart may seem like the
farthest destination,
You never left it, Dear One, except in
your imagination.*

LIVING FAITHFULLY

- Sr. Carmen Barsody, OSF

Carmen at Mercy Center



There are times I wish Kay and I would have kept the newsprint that hung on the wall in her office in early 1998 out of which came forth our name, Faithful Fools Street Ministry, and our mission statement.

We are called to a ministry of presence that acknowledges each human's incredible worth.

Aware of our judgments, we seek to meet people where they are through the arts, education, advocacy and accompaniment.

We participate in shattering the myths about those living in poverty, seeing the light, courage, intelligence, strength and creativity of the people we encounter.

We discover on the streets our common humanity, through which celebration, community, and healing occur.

After walking the streets of the Tenderloin each day and sharing stories of what brought each of us to this place and time, we'd head back up the hill to Kay's office at the Unitarian Universalist Church and make notes on newsprint of the people, places, poems, books, beliefs, observations and longings that had come to us as we walked and talked, and encountered people throughout the day. In a magical sort of way our name and our mission statement formed itself on the newsprint.

"FAITHFUL FILMMAKER" FILMS AT FAITHFUL FOOLS

- Ra Mu Aki

his focus, sublime artistic trust. improvise as he sculpts from life. through intricate emotion ensemble creates in faith

Filmmaker Rob Nilsson (9 at Night, Chalk, Winter Oranges and other films) and his brilliant crew of merry technician/artists, performers and support staff, converted the downstairs of Fools Court into an abandoned, dilapidated Tenderloin SRO (Single Room Occupancy) named Hotel Odessa during the month of August. "STEPPES" (working title) is his latest exploration of humanity and beauty amidst some of San Francisco's poorest neighborhoods.

The filming took place in and outside of the building as well as numerous other locations throughout the city. During the shooting, some Fools' activities were re-arranged to accommodate the film crew; however for the most part, both operations flowed smoothly for the duration.

almost like magic an environment transformed into illusion through artful installation to nurture art's creation

Once the filming was over, the Fools Court was returned to itself in less than a day. And while it is wonderful to have the building back to itself, it was magnificent to witness the power of illusion unleashed in the service of art under Rob Nilsson's consummate direction and guiding vision.

We set out as a Unitarian Universalist Minister and a Catholic Franciscan Sister aspiring to be Faithful Fools. We had both come to a place in our lives where we longed to be faithful to a way of being and seeing in the world. Our many and varied experiences in life had led us to one, simple truth - we are all human. No amount of wealth or education, nor any particular place or religion protects us from suffering or assures us of joy. We have an unabashed belief that everyone has the potential to change and be changed and the work is for a lifetime.

Faithfulness is required for us to accompany a person through deep-seated and unimaginable pain. The patience and compassion we need must be in direct proportion to the amount we allot to ourselves through a lifetime of failed attempts to change our own unhealthy behaviors and ignorant ways of thinking.

To be faithful requires that I walk with a mirror ever before me and practice constant reflection. When judgments or frustrations arise I often say to myself, "you who have never sinned throw the first stone." I've discovered over time that it ultimately takes less energy to put down the stones than to repeatedly hurl them. It is a greater gift to someone to patiently stand still and be a witness rather than to throw stones toward something or someone I ultimately know little about.

Almost 13 years of walking the streets with many Faithful Fools may not have changed the world, but lives have been changed, including my own. Faithfulness has meant never giving up on anyone or anything. If I were to name one gift I have received it is that my mind and heart have been enlarged, and my love has increased so as to have room for the vastness of human experience, and for this I am grateful.

Rob Nilsson, Filmmaker



Rob and crew filming at the entrance to the Faithful Fools lobby

"WRITE ON" !!!

- Josh Mann

Learn more about this Creative Writing Workshop by going to www.writeonworkshops.org
robert-harry@writeonworkshops.org

Last February, the Fools began hosting a new workshop series that gives members of the local writing community a space to meet, connect with creativity, and share with one another. It's a creative writing workshop called "Write On" led by Robert-Harry Rovin, and it includes periods of free-writing, guided meditation, and opportunities for reading out loud and receiving positive feedback. A group of long time Fools as well as a number of newcomers participate each week and give the workshop series a sense of continuity and community.

Approximately twenty-five people have participated over the six and a half months. For the last two months each session has consisted of five to seven people - a good size for Robert-Harry's format. This workshop has been a wonderful contribution to the healing sanctuary sustained at the court of the Faithful Fools and to the larger community of Tenderloin writers and poets.

BODYSOUL CARE

TRAUMA RESOLUTION

- Rev. Denis Paul



It's been a year now that we've been offering individual BodySoul Care sessions to the people we walk with in the streets of the Tenderloin. We have five fabulous practitioners of trauma resolution work called Somatic Experiencing, which was developed by Peter Levine, of the Foundation for Human Enrichment. All of our practitioners are not only certified or in the process of being certified, they are also marriage and family therapists, body workers or certified massage therapists.

This is work that is rooted in faith that we hold within our own bodies the power to heal ourselves, and to build the kinds of skills that will help each of us lead fuller, more productive, happier lives. Cynthia, Beth, Lynne, Linda, Megan, Megan and I are working with individuals in a variety of contexts to tap into their body memories to heal past traumas and develop resiliency to prevent being hurt again.

It sounds implausible, but when you think about it, it makes sense. Our bodies remember - at a cellular level it's sometimes hard to be aware of - what has happened to us in the past. A common example is one that happens after a car crash where a person has been injured, physically or psychically. Each time the person approaches that spot in the road, the body tenses, returning to that state it was in at the time of impact. The person can be very aware of the tension, or can deny it, or can be completely unaware of the discomfort and its origin. All are perfectly valid responses.

In studying the process of Somatic Experiencing, I've learned a new kind of faith: faith in the human body and the nervous system, and it's ability to protect me from danger. And I trust in this process for unlocking the secrets that our bodies carry within them.



Rev. Denis Paul,
BodySoul Care
Coordinator

This is the great part about being at the Faithful Fools. After years of seeing the long term effects of trauma in ourselves and the people we walk with, the right people came along, and now we have the opportunity to build a program that is unlike anything we've ever done before. We've created a space for people to meet regularly, committed to the goal of healing, accompanying one another in a new way.

Now that's faithfulness.

A REFLECTION ON FAITHFULNESS

- Danilo Ortiz, Ecuador

Danilo is the husband of
Veronica Rivadeneira, co-minister
of the Associate Franciscan
Sisters in Ecuador.

The question of what I learned during my time in San Francisco often comes to my mind, and without forgetting about the learnings in formal English lessons and U.S. customs, what most motivated and challenged me was that I had a period of time to reflect on how to contribute and be useful to humanity and not "spend all of me" to obtain money alone.

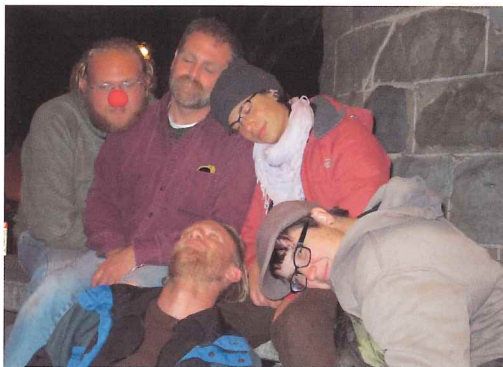
By observing the practice of the life of "faithful fools" in the day to day, something that caught my attention is the total accompaniment of those in need, without questioning or inquiring the reasons for the request for help; an accompaniment that comes out of listening and dialogue and providing material support such as housing and/or food. "Faithfulness" is expressed through art, knitting hats, cooking, painting, through movie forums, bringing joy to children and adults through the "clown". The clown is that in each of us that is difficult to express. It is the comedian, with deliberate innocence and courage, that breaks through conventionality in human relations while at the same time, finds new ways of relating. It is another aspect that I consider relevant in the daily practice of fools.

Faithful Fools manage to meet whomever, because I believe they have overcome fearing the stranger, the "unknown," the marginalized, meaning the criminal, drug addict, vagabond or thief. Overcoming this prejudice or rather, learning to unlearn is a challenge for everyone, at least it's what I experienced firsthand on a retreat for one day in the streets. When we see the marginalized (call them homeless) as an equal; on the same level; as a person; then we will respect them and we can communicate with each other. But if we don't even look at the person (because of this learned fear) then it is the same a seeing from above, from our own security, feeling ourselves superior, and this is aggressive and without feeling.

I asked myself, is this work enough before the infinite needs of humanity? And my autocratic self says, of course. Improving my attitude I improve my outlook and see the importance of these efforts, which is to say, it's worth it.

In short, being a "faithful fool" is to give without asking anything in return. The reward is greater than imagined. It is to see "someone" who has a name and age in better condition than when we met them. It is to seek and find oneself in the other; a relief to exist with reasons for the life that extends beyond our nose.

My natural and sincere reflection of what I saw is what came encapsulated in a clown nose, it's what I learned and questioned of my existence and my family. It is no longer just Verónica and my three daughters; my family was enlarged.



Street Retreatants catching a group snooze outside during the annual seven day retreat in the Tenderloin and Civic Center neighborhoods of San Francisco. Clockwise beginning with the red nose on Marcus Liefert, Denis Paul, Katie Loncke, Megan Rohrer and Josh Mann

"the other day a group of us was talking about the folks who are signing up for the new floyd community garden. someone said, 'hmm, you have some real characters!' and i thought, 'oh, goody, i'll feel right at home.' the garden is on the fringe of town and i like being on the fringes instead of walking in the center of things. maybe that's what made me feel so comfortable with the fools, i didn't have to have things figured out, to have a set path ahead of me. instead i could walk with 'unknowing' and see what i encountered. i didn't have to fill a role and so i could be not that different from the 'characters' on the streets. in my little town the streets are very different from the tenderloin. but the people are not so very different. thinking about the fools i resolve to walk more deeply into my neighborhood and my county so i can find who is tucked away, lonely, waiting for connection - just like me.

- Karen Day

FAITHFUL FOOLS WELCOME THE ROADDAGWZ TO 234 HYDE STREET



ROADDAGWZ
HOMELESS YOUTH
DROP-IN CENTER

Formerly housed at Hospitality House around the corner from us on Leavenworth, the Roaddawgz needed a temporary space to operate in while Hospitality House remodels and completes seismic upgrades to its building.

The proposed duration of their stay is approximately one year. In that time we will to continue to develop our relationship with the program and its participants. They will be here on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. We look forward to many cooperative events especially in the arts! WELCOME!

The **Roaddawgz** drop-in center is a highly unique, activity-driven, safe and supportive sanctuary for homeless youth who are writers, artists and musicians. We employ a peer-driven, harm reduction and self-help model and offer homeless youth a number of services including: mental health support, employment and technological training, education enhancement, drug and alcohol recovery support and flexible participation in our mentoring program, creative workshops and public events.

The people we serve are between the ages 16 and 24. Roaddawgz also offers youths cash payments for their creative works and participation in our program activities, workshops, events and internships. We are dedicated to helping end homelessness and to reducing homeless youth incarceration, hospitalization and preventable deaths by providing creative and educational alternatives to criminal, dangerous and life-threatening behavior.

"And let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the lepers and those who beg on the streets."

- Rule of Life of St. Francis of Assisi

WE ARE FAITHFUL TO OUR PRACTICE OF THE STREET RETREAT!



University students on a Faithful Fools Street Retreat

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE ABUNDANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

If it weren't for our faithful volunteers, we might not have a "home" to go to. From students at USF, UC Berkeley, SF State and Starr King to members of the Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, SERVAS, Volunteers of America and others, we have had an enormous abundance of dedicated and faithful people who do everything from cooking to painting and administrative work. Often they accompany individuals in our community to GA, Social Security or General Hospital. Whatever the work, it is done with energy and enthusiasm. We are so grateful for these marvelous "pennies"!

FUNDRAISING AND
GIVING...

Teens in San Diego, Nicaragua with ankle bracelets and Sandra in her new necklace



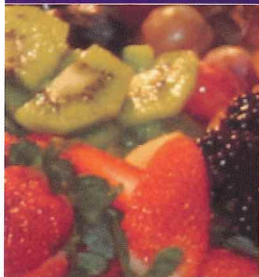
MORE THAN JUST JEWELS

Yvonne Garcia has been giving to the Fools in many different ways since our founding days when she offered computer support. She has helped with fundraising meals and made regular financial contributions. Last year, Yvonne donated several pieces of jewelry from her business "Yvonne's Pearls" for the women in Nicaragua. The joy and excitement of these lucky recipients is hard to describe but the beauty of it is evident on their faces.

Thank You Yvonne!

"FEAST OF FOOLS" CATERING RAISES MONEY!

All of those volunteers have been busy chopping, serving and finding a wealth of community in the kitchen with the "Feast of Fools" catering. We have doubled our projections for 2010 income from catering. Many thanks to Joan Rost who nudged us in this direction and to the many committees and clients of the Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco for hiring us to cater their events. Look for more information coming soon on our website. www.faithfulfools.org





Marcie and Carmen
on moving day

What Faithfulness and the Faithful Fools mean to me...

"When I was brought to the Fools all my Faithfulness was about gone. I had given up on the streets, family disownment and self loathing. They said, 'you can do it!'"

"I'm off the street. I have my own place. And you, the Faithful Fools, gave me your faithfulness, never giving up even when I did. What does Faithfulness and the Fools mean to me? They helped me save my life."

- Marcie Kroft

STRONG BACK: THE FAITHFULNESS OF FOOLS

- Katie Loncke

Roshi Joan Halifax, an American Zen teacher, urges meditation students to maintain "strong back; soft front." Typically, she says, most of us go through life in the reverse: with a soft spine of insecurity, doubt, and fear, and in front a hard, contracted shell or shield that we hope (in vain) will protect us from life's sufferings. In order to awaken, however, we need to build our confidence. Strong back. At the same time, we practice opening and engaging with everything, pleasant and unpleasant, that comes our way. Soft front.

To me, faithfulness is another way of saying "strong back."

Strong back does not come from rigidity and tension. It is not static at all. Instead, it strives for balance: deftly choreographing micro-motions to achieve the effect of a steady center. There is constant movement in strong back, in faithfulness. Returning over and over again. Arriving, and arriving, and arriving.

It was almost one year ago, in October, when I first arrived at a mysterious purple place called Fools Court. A few weeks later I moved in, and since then I feel as if I have arrived at the Fools a hundred thousand times. Each month, each week, each day, each morning, from moment to moment.

Like this morning. Friday meditation with Zenmaster Keith is finished, and I leave the zendo, shoes in hand, padding down the hallway to the staircase. There in the front lobby is Stone, reclining in an armchair. He's dressed in his usual: torn jeans, a filthy coat, matted hair, a hat, and snazzy sunglasses. As I drop my shoes to the floor with a "smack," I realize he's also in one of his not-uncommon accusatory moods.

"Angry again today?" he asks me from behind his shiny, opaque shades.

"Not particularly," I reply.

"Well it sure seemed like it when you beat and assaulted me in Golden Gate Park."

"Oh. Goodness. When did that happen?"

"Oh, about a month ago or so. It was one of those things where they combine the marijuana with the hashish, and you can burn it to make fuel. And you and your friends, you came and burned me. And every time I came around the park you called them and they came and attacked me."

"Wow, Stone. That sounds painful. I'm really sorry. I shouldn't have done that."

With this sincere engagement, I can almost see the steam being released from his metal engine of blame. The motor slows and slows, whirring to a stop.

"Well...yeah," he says thoughtfully. "You know, these things happen. And it seems like you're in a good place of character now. Lessons can be learned. As long as you don't repeat it."



Protesters sit in meditation against San Francisco's proposed no-sit law.

I have a small smile now. Even if things had gone down differently and there had been friction and a blowup, the fact is: I like Stone. And I think he likes me. We're friends, in a way.

I turn to walk up the staircase. "Thanks for your understanding, Stone. How's your morning going?"

"Oh, you know, pretty strange, pretty weird, as usual." He laughs a little. "Things change, you know, and it's hard to keep up."

"Ain't that the truth. Well take care, it's good to see you."

He waves with five blackened fingers, and resumes looking out the windows.

The strong back of faithfulness in friendships like this is not dogmatic. It does not support arrogance or complacency with what we think we know about a person. As Sister Susan explained to me early on, when

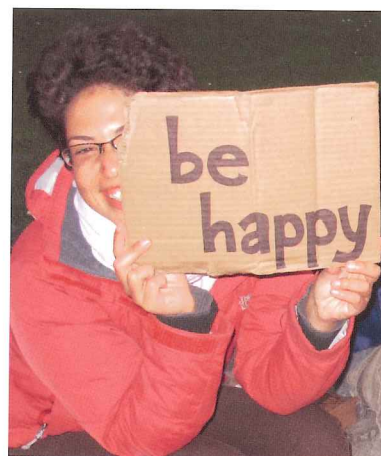


Kay, Carmen and Denis on a Minneapolis Street Retreat

we listen to folks around here, we learn to live in the middle. We don't accept what they say as 100% true, and we don't reject it as 100% false. We hold it. We keep paying attention. That's faithfulness.

And anyway, strong-back faithfulness is much more exciting than calcified certainty! It brings alertness, curiosity, attention: both internal, to ourselves, and external, to another. It draws wisdom and confidence from past experience, but employs this knowledge fluidly, not rigidly. It's like the well-built, active muscle that allows a ballet dancer to bend and move with grace across the floor.

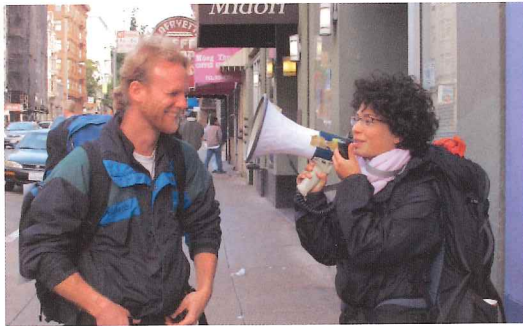
Turning ever toward the trauma, resilience, suffering, healing, creativity, and the very life unfolding in this dirty, spurned, jam-packed part of town, it is with strong, faithful backs and soft, foolish fronts that we dwell here in the Tenderloin. I am so thankful to the company of Fools — past, present, and future — who return again and again.



Katie Loncke on a Street Retreat



Past and Present Intern Ministers & FF Founders (L to R) Thom Longino, Cathy Harrington, Laurel Liefert, Carmen Barsody, Kay Jorgensen, Mary Ganz, Merida Wilson, Michelle Collins, Karen Day, Denis Paul and Barbara Meyers



Interns in Residence Josh Mann and Katie Loncke

THE FAITHFULNESS OF INTERNS

- Rev. Dr. Kay Jorgensen

Like the annual return of swallows to the mission at San Juan Capistrano, people who served as interns with the Faithful Fools returned to the "Fools Court" to reflect and refresh. They came together this year with these questions in mind: "What called me to the Fools?" "What has stuck with me?" and "How do I live out the message of the Fools in my present life and work?"

Their gathering coincided with a session of the on-site class Carmen and I teach for Starr King School for the Ministry called "Crossroads of Parish and Community."

The sun shone brightly through the skylights, the aroma of coffee and cookies joined in an atmosphere that was charged with an eagerness to share stories. Here are a few of the many responses from people who are both preparing for and participating in successful and engaging ministries around the country and in Canada.

"I've learned to keep my blinders open, to notice everything, all possibilities, and when something feels right, to follow, even when I don't know." - Barbara Meyers

"if you remember anything - always reflect on your experience, otherwise it will be gone." - Cathy Harrington

"Helmski's parable still serves me as a meditation on my own work. I learned to reflect as I walk, and I still do." - Thom Longino

"I came with a 'no' on my lips, but I somehow found myself walking away having said 'yes!' The most powerful and enduring part of the Street Retreats is learning about assumptions. It's like an ethical ground of being that I am constantly struggling to be in alignment with." - Laurel Liefert

"This place remains the well for me. When I come back I remember why I'm doing parish ministry or anything at all. Being able to feel I had something to offer in the Bible study circle was the single most formative experience of my life." - Mary Ganz

"What I gain by being here is this incredible container. I can do anything here with this great group of people holding me." - Denis Paul

Karen Day is doing the work of helping us connect to each other as we do the larger work of answering the question "What holds us separate? What keeps us separated? As we walk the streets, what still connects us?"

Where are these "streets"? They are wherever we find ourselves walking. Karen is walking in a community garden, connecting food to hungry people and being a foolish presence. She says "Thinking about the Fools, I resolve to walk more deeply into my neighborhood and my county to make connections with others, like me."

Currently, our space is lively with the presence of four interns! A clear indication of the growth that our small organization and family of fools is experiencing. In addition to the seminarians from Starr King School for the Ministry - Merida Wilson and Michelle Collins, we have two live-in interns, Katie Loncke and Josh Mann, who literally arrived at different times on our doorstep, each with open hands and open hearts. Now they are steadily walking the streets of the unknown with an eagerness towards social justice and advocacy.

Whether miles apart or together in our community of the Tenderloin, we walk together...connecting...still connecting.



Kay Jorgensen during class at the Fools Court (Photo by Merida Wilson)

Faithful

-Merida Wilson

"Both noun and adjective, the word 'faithful' encompasses our ability to demonstrate our steadfastness and loyalty, while at the same time suggests something outside of ourselves which is worthy of our devotion and belief. Sr. Carmen and Rev. Kay, arriving from different religious streams and yet sharing a common ministry embody and teach what being faithful and experiencing faithfulness is. What the Fools describe as 'walking the streets,' is bringing a ministerial presence by witnessing, accompanying, listening and caring for others. When we walk with others we are implicitly saying, we see you, we hear you, you have value and we care for you.

Building relationships over time and providing faithful companionship we are all on this journey together."



Intern Ministers Merida Wilson and Michelle Collins

What does it take to be faithful?

-Michelle Collins

"Not only does it take someone or something to which to be faithful, but being faithful is also a shift of the self. It is a shift away from your own self-interests; it is a surrender of yourself. Because when you are faithful, you let part of your heart be unconditionally directed by another.

If there is faithfulness, there is always surrender. But when there is surrender, there is a movement of the heart. And when the heart moves, connections are made possible. When the heart moves, we move towards the amazing possibilities for our sacred work in the world."

Faith Is Enlightenment

"Today I want to talk about faith and devotion in Zen practice. Actually I want to talk about faith, enlightenment and practice, because all three are necessary, and you might say that these are the three legs of Zen practice."

Actually practice is devotion and faith is enlightenment. When people think about Zen, what comes to mind is enlightenment as the main feature. But actually faith is the foundation, and faith and enlightenment are inseparable. In all schools of Buddhism, faith is an indispensable factor and Zen is just Buddhism." (From a lecture by Sojun Roshì, Sept 30, 1995)

"Faith implies action or practice as opposed to just having a belief in something or someone. Our practice requires an intention to 'study the self' through meditation, and 'to study the self is to forget the self' and 'to forget the self is to join the ten thousand things,' a statement by Dogen which means, to become one with the universe, or 'enlightened'."

- Keith Walker, Temple Keeper

In Memory with Thanks and Gratitude



Patricia (Pat) Lamerdin, author, potter, painter, gallery owner and friend of San Francisco's poor died November 9th 2009 at her San Francisco home at age 82. She honored the friends who were closest to her by leaving bequests to organizations that

were important to these friends. Sr. Susan Knutson, OSF, of the Faithful Fools was among this privileged group and because of their 10 year relationship, Faithful Fools, Franciscan Sisters and the primary school in Nicaragua became beneficiaries of Pat's generosity.

Mrs. Lamerdin's knowledge of the poor was extensive, personal and deep according to Susan. "Before I met her, Pat had written a book *Out In the Cold* based on her interviews with homeless people. She had great compassion for those out on the street and down on their luck or mentally ill. I believe that came from talking to so many homeless one-to-one. The artist in her allowed her to connect with people who live on the streets and who are often artistic. She was outgoing and loved to socialize. Her friends loved her."



Marbeth Munn, friend and faithful fool, passed away this past spring. It was for Marbeth that we joyfully worked to install a chairlift in the Fools Court when it became too difficult for her to climb the stairs. She wanted to still come to Fool's events.

Marbeth cheered us all on. She was always right there with encouraging words and was often known to slip a few dollars into the hands of those who were hungry or just had a need for a few bucks. When she would show up at our events wearing her purple Fool's t-shirt and her stunning Fool's hat a smile would spread across our faces and we'd feel compelled to simply bow to her and say, "Thank you, Marbeth". We are grateful to Marbeth's family who asked that memorials be given to Faithful Fools. We received them with honor. Marbeth, Faithful Fool, your spirit lives on.

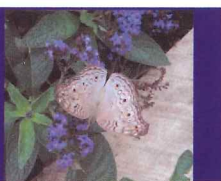


Barbara Bournes left us some two years ago now but we honor her again as we watch Jay come out of his recovery program. Whether it sticks or not is not so important but it is something she would have loved to witness. Jay was a friend.

You may not have noticed the hat on her head (the Fool's hat), as she never wore her beliefs, or the nature of her great work as a Fool, either on her head or on her sleeve. She lived her faithfulness out loud and thereby helped to change, for the better, lives of many people whom she came to know. She played the role of trickster who must cross the diverse boundaries of wealth, poverty, mental health challenges, education, race, gender or age to find our common humanity where acceptance and love, through the likes of Barbara, can work their healing magic.

BREATHING

Marsha Campbell, Tenderloin Poet
August 30th, 2010



*Like windows on the world
her eyes are opened
with a space that never stood still
but wavered like a breathy flute singing out butterflies --
the softest she might ever touch
as if it were forbidden
in this strange place full of strangers.*

*Yet when she spoke
it was with a joy that speech was allowed her
and that there were people around listening and responding,
humans like herself were no longer strange
and she was no longer lonely but, rather,
grateful to be a part of the great world.*

*A curtain's soft swish, swish fluttered inside her
wonderful discoveries and fine silk threads
continued to waver along with her lifted voice
and she knew the primary reason for her being there
was to talk, sing, lift her mind
and live, live, live
and she was free.*

WE THANK YOU!

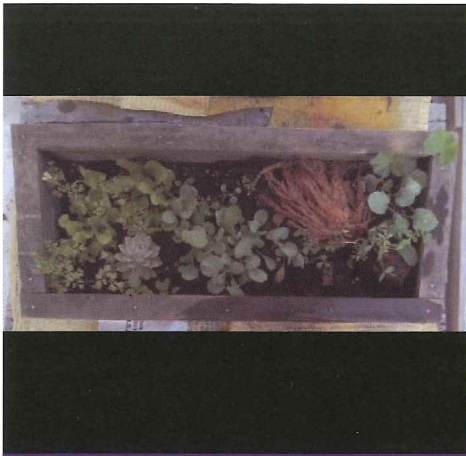
With Pie and a little clowning around...
The "Jugglers" (staff and volunteers) piled into two cars and made their way to San Rafael on a rainy day in early Spring to show our thanks after receiving a larger than expected grant from *Kalliopeia*. We brought home-baked pies and shared foolish stories with Barbara Sargent and Barbara Cushing. These general operating funds are critical in sustaining the day-to-day and administrative expenses of our organization.



*Barbara Sargent and
Barbara Cushing*

"The first time we met Sr. Carmen and Rev. Kay they told us a story of how every time they needed something a penny would show up, or many pennies, and they came to have complete faith that whatever was needed for the work they are committed to, would be given. They are faithful, and something so much larger is also faithful to them. They carry this faith into all dimensions of their work and we at Kalliopeia Foundation, in turn, are deeply inspired by them - they show us the way, we see a living breathing community of Faithful Fools and we know that we are all in this together. The Fools are faithful to the truth. It is an honor to support their work, and we too, have the experience of being faithful to a community 'that acknowledges each human's incredible worth'. The work of Faithful Fools is held with divine humor, with wisdom, and with an unflagging commitment to be of service - we can think of no more worthy goals to be faithful to."

- Barbara Cushing



Living Creatures require attention and nourishment to survive. It is with that in mind that I mount the ladder to the roof of the faithful fools, to water and feed the little garden on the roof. Some plants have struggled to grow, but my great joy is in the 'weeds' which I did not plant, but which thrive in spite of the environment. Thus, the symbiotic morality of my faith in their will, and their faith in reaching for the sky that we enjoy the sun and the breeze which passes through the Tenderloin, together.

I see this roof garden as a reflection of the Work the Faithful Fools are doing because the plants hold the space in a difficult environment, and bring a new perspective to the realities of the Tenderloin. The fact that Fennel and Crab Grass (neither of which were intentionally planted) are my two top producing plants is a testament to the power of life, even in adverse situations. Like the Fools who bring a new light to the streets, and witness and nurture the people they come into contact with, even these hardy plants would not survive without someone paying attention to them.

-Octavio Carrasco

faith-ful (fthfl)

adj.

1. Adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, cause, or idea; loyal.
2. Having or full of faith.
4. Worthy of trust or belief; reliable.
5. Consistent with truth or actuality.

pl. n.

1. The steadfast adherents of a faith or cause: a meeting of the party faithful.
2. The sustaining character of all people who make the ministry of the Faithful Fools possible.



Thank You!

We wish to thank these generous foundations and organizations whose contributions have allowed us to be faithful to our vision and work.

Kalliopeia Foundation; Sisters of Loretto - Kentucky;
Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, MN;
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*And hundreds of Individual Donors,
Pledgers and Volunteers!*

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“On the Streets, We Discover Our Common Humanity”

Second Saturday of Each Month
Poetry Reading 4:00 pm
Movie/Discussion 7:00 pm
Third Saturday of Each Month
Street Retreat 9:00 am
(check website for schedules)
Monday Mornings
Yoga 10:30-11:30 am
Tuesday Evenings
Meditation 6 pm to 6:45 pm
Thursday Mornings
Bible Study 10:00 am
Thursday Afternoons
“Write On” 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Fri.
Meditation 9 am to 10 am
Sunday Afternoons
Nichiren Shu Lineage Meditation
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm