

Fire in the Dark

making a difference in the world

by Ron Talarico

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TO THE READER

Virtually all individual components of this book may be read in any order the reader wishes. One can skip around at will; there would appear to be no real disadvantage in doing so, for no single story of a man depends on the story which precedes or follows it, and the same is true of the interview sessions and the historical units from the times. While the sequencing of the material was rather arbitrary, yet there was some deliberate effort to sequence for historical or other considerations. For example, it seemed to make sense to place the story *Beginnings* as the very first story and the powerful story of *Clay Harmon* more toward the center of the book even though this breaks from the alphabetical arrangement of the 115 stories.

With the exception of the stories *Beginnings* and *Clay Harmon*, the stories are arranged in alphabetical order by first name (e.g. the story of Boyd Vandehey appears after the story of Bobby).

Enlarging any of the images in this book or zooming in for closer examination of details may be accomplished by going to the *Fire in the Dark* section of the author's web site - www.rontalarico.com - and clicking on the buttons "Map of Project Area" and "Original Photo Collection."

Any updates to the book over time will appear exclusively on the author's web site, and it is anticipated the web site will provide bonus material that is not found in the book.

Finally, except for the names of Kate and Ron and where noted otherwise, the names of all individuals appearing throughout the 115 stories of this book and the interview sessions have been changed and are fictitious. More information about this is available in *Appendix IV. A Look Inside Some of the Project Development Process*.

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With all the personal sacrifices,
discipline, and pain that men,
women, and children have endured
for thousands of years and that have
been preserved in histories and
traditions and other lessons for the
benefit of future generations they
would never know...

With this tireless massive heroic
effort of regard for posterity, and
indomitable resilience of the human
spirit in affirming and sustaining
people everywhere and in every age
in their struggle to be well and
whole...

With all of this: It is one of the most
poignant ironies and dead ends of
human existence that you can still
think you have to go through most
of the mistakes and the pains and
the fears of your life alone and on
your own, in isolation from human
social history, with no way out, as
though each one were happening for
the very first time.

1990

To people everywhere
who struggle daily
with addictions
with roads mis-taken
with brokenness
—whose vulnerability
life's circumstances have exposed
to the rest of us,
without your wanting,
without your permission . . .

To you especially who through your stories here
have testified in eloquent silence
that our full worth as human beings
is dependent entirely and exclusively
on simply being born
and nothing else under the sun . . .

TO EACH OF YOU AND ALL

MASTER TEACHERS
of those of us whose own brokenness
hangs by but a
single
gossamered
thread
above the surface of discovery

**THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED**

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Angelo John and Rose Antidormi Talarico, who offered me the most precious gifts I would ever know: values, education, faith, and the ability never to see myself as the center of anyone's universe. None of these can be taken away, stolen, or lost. All are rewarding beyond imagining. And together at my side these gifts have remained best friends through each new storm and joy that life has presented. On some level, in some sense, way down deep, they just may be all I need.

TO ALL OF YOU THANK YOU



Kate St. Martin, SNJM, 2007.

PROLOGUE

the beginning

"People should know about this."

"Oh... I don't think so. I don't have anything to say."

"Anything to say? Kate, you've been talking non-stop for an hour!"

The year was 1985, and thus began what would become my more than twenty-five-year journey into the lives and times of Kate St. Martin and more than a hundred male residents of Portland Oregon's Skid Road.

Kate and I were dining that evening at a restaurant near the De Paul Center for Alcoholism Treatment where we both worked and had met the year before. She was the nurse at De Paul and I was assistant to the president. De Paul is located within walking distance of the Skid Road area where the majority of the stories of this project take place. Kate is a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, a Catholic religious order of women.

the what and why

This project is essentially an oral history consisting of a hundred and fifteen stories and twenty-five interview sessions. Interspersed among these are many historical segments and several photo galleries. Kate is the source for the stories and interviews, both of which she provided in the form of casual recording sessions between the two of us over the course of twenty years. The material was then transcribed and edited. Additional details of the project development process appear herein as an appendix.

The reason for dedicating more than twenty-five years of my life to this undertaking was, simply put, to help make the world a better place. From the start it was easy to see a connection between that goal, the example of Kate's life, and the question people frequently ask: "What positive impact could the efforts of just one person like me possibly have on the world's problems, which are innumerable, unbelievably vast and complex, and seemingly overwhelming?"

The telling of the stories of the men and of Kate's impact on their lives formed the essential link between my goal and the question, "What could just one person do that could possibly matter?"

Related to this goal was a desire to cut through the objectification our society commonly applies to Skid Road and other marginalized populations. To offer the reader and myself a certain reconciliation with those individuals by providing an opportunity to take another look at our attitudes and beliefs about them. To put a face on the men of Skid Road, most of whom most of us probably never have seen, stood next to, or spoken with. And to explore their personalities, their thoughts and attitudes, their living conditions, and the disease of alcoholism.

The number of individuals in our world who are broken and hurting is very great, and the number of those among us who can bring relief and healing to them is similarly large. My task in this project was to encourage the convergence of these two groups by documenting and sharing a powerhouse of human actions and interactions that took place between a hundred and fifteen men and one woman in an impoverished, roughly ten-square-block area of Portland, Oregon, over the course of twenty-five years.

without the make-up

The story of every human person ever born is important, no matter how brief it is, without notice, or seemingly uneventful. This is why even very short stories have not been excluded from the project, as well as some that were not particularly eventful. Each story says something about a fellow traveler on the journey called life, someone whose life is worth as much as our own — not more or less, but completely and entirely. Through the stories of this project, the individual characters give testimony. "I was here. I *am* here," they seem to tell us in their quiet way. "I did the best I knew. Well or poorly

I dealt the deck I found myself with. I did what I had to do to make my way through the endless mass and mess of mystery, complexity, and compromise that form much of what we call the human experience."

Each person, without exception, is an indispensable part of the garment of human existence; for there among the threads that lead to any of us lies the path that comes from each of us. And each person is a part of the human mobile; when one part moves *all* parts move, and in some way, one way or another, sooner or later, we all are affected physically, emotionally, morally, in our spirits, in our minds, in our consciences, or in the guts of our being.

Despite how things might be presented to us in life, without the make-up we are all hopelessly the same, believe it or not; changelessly equal in worth and rights, like it or not. Whatever the category, whoever the individual. When all is said and done, the men's stories are our own stories — set in a different context, played out with a different set of details, but essentially our own.

target audience & glossary

This book is written with an international audience in mind and, as such, is intended for readers from a wide spectrum of cultural and educational backgrounds. Transcending language and culture and focusing on the common humanity that unites us across national boundaries were values that formed part of the project's foundation from its inception. Because of this and the wide use of specialized terms that likely will be unfamiliar to many readers, a comprehensive glossary has been included for convenience. The glossary contains entries for virtually every term and concept used in the project, including regarding substance abuse and treatment, religion and Catholicism, HIV disease and AIDS, buildings, agencies, places, and events. When readers come to an unfamiliar term, they should assume it appears in the glossary. Even terms that readers are already familiar with may be explained in the glossary in such a way that generates new interest or fuller meaning, thereby lending additional richness and understanding to the narrative.

While some clarifications and other details in the glossary will be obvious and seem unnecessary to readers who are familiar with Skid Road cultures, Catholicism, the fields of chemical dependency and HIV/AIDS, or with life in Portland, Oregon, the project does not presume familiarity with these subjects by other readers, and the glossary reflects this. In the end, the glossary is there if and when use of it is desired.

audio excerpts from the original recording sessions

Audio excerpts are available from the original recording sessions. These are fifty-plus audio tracks drawn from both the 115 stories of the men and the 25 interview sessions between Kate and myself. These excerpts demonstrate the integrity between the original spontaneous oral history and the written narrative that grew out of them. The recordings allow one to easily discern through Kate's own voice her remarkably non-judgmental attitude toward the men — an attitude that is consistent with the same attitude the reader will doubtless sense in the narrative. These audio tracks also help make a case for the significant positive value that can result from even the smallest and seemingly most insignificant of actions performed on behalf of others.

small detail

On a more technical note, *italic type* is used in the stories and interviews whenever Kate herself stressed the italicized material by raising her voice in a way which provided clarity or emphasis to her meaning. I did not italicize any of Kate's words in order to emphasize material that I personally thought should be emphasized.

the reality that supersedes

It is possible there are instances when Kate's memory of the facts does not match the actual facts — that here and there she has stated incorrectly a year or dollar amount or street name or some other minor detail. Given the context of more than 115

men and their families and friends, and a multitude of social services, hotels, and events — all taking place over the course of more than two decades — an inaccuracy here and there would be understandable. Yet, while Kate and I are not aware of any inaccuracies, the point of a story should always be *what is going on*, what the human moment is that is taking place. *This* reality is offered as the superior of the two; it is the one about which there is no discrepancy and the one with which readers are encouraged to concern themselves.

the rapprochements

Rapprochement is a French word that in English indicates reconciliation between parties or the bringing of harmony to their relationship. The four *rapprochements* that appear in this book were originally personal reflections and not written with the present project in mind. They are termed *rapprochements* and have been included because they fill a strongly felt need for a more public way of reconciling myself with the men of Skid Road who were living at the time the stories took place, many of whom in my own way I avoided or otherwise rejected. Also in these brief writings I see and feel a bond with the men of Skid Road, for although the specifics of our culture's marginalization of them differ from my own experiences, a substantial similarity exists and remains.

the two of us... perfect odd couple?

As stated earlier, Kate and I first met in 1984 at De Paul Center for Alcoholism Treatment.

Born in 1921 in Canada of American parents and raised there for most of her first nineteen years, Kate has lived in and around Portland since 1940. I was born and raised in Portland and have spent my life here.

Kate taught elementary school for twenty-five years before becoming a nurse at the age of forty-eight and going to work and volunteer the remainder of her career on Skid Road and at an AIDS residential care facility. My experience with disadvantaged populations involves thirteen years of working with or on behalf of adults with various disabilities.

As for age, Kate and I could be mother and son.

Several of the individuals discussed or mentioned in the stories were acquaintances, friends, or co-workers of both of us, and I accompanied Kate in the mid-eighties on her rounds to various Skid Road hotels.

In the seventies and eighties, Kate could never wait to get down to Skid Road each day. By contrast, I was not comfortable there at that time and more or less avoided the area.

Kate and I are about as opposite in personality as two people can be. Truly an odd couple. She likes to talk, for one thing; I don't. She processes out loud; I to myself. It is always clear that something is going on in her because she expresses it; to observe me, some people might wonder if I am still alive. Kate likes to work on many task-folders at the same time, literally as well as figuratively, and with as many people present as might be present; I can deal with only one folder and person at a time. She looks forward to just about any new experience; I like to repeat mine, a lot. She loves a crowd, the more people the better; for me three is already an overcrowded situation into which I find it difficult to insert myself. She loves parties; I dread them, preferring instead to see the same people but one at a time and in some quiet place. She loves spectator sports, especially basketball; about all I manage in that department is spelling and pronunciation. She can't avoid telling me every detail of everything she has ever experienced (or so it seems to me); I am equally attracted to details, but mine spend the majority of their time in solitary confinement.

You get the picture.

But...

...our values have always been our real bond. And if intimacy is (as I believe it is) mutual, self-initiated, self-disclosure, on a regularly recurring basis, of matter of a

substantial nature, then Kate's and my relationship has grown and matured through the years primarily because of our intimacy with each other.

more on Kate

Kate is amazingly non-judgmental (except for certain politicians and government policies, and certain Church officials and Church pronouncements). This attribute is rather obvious in the written version of the stories, but it becomes even more obvious in the fifty-plus digital audio segments that have been excerpted from our live recording sessions and made available separately.

Kate is very focused on whatever the task before her and staunchly resolute in the face of adversity.

She is liberal, at least in the sense that her more important decisions and actions are determined in large part by the question, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" I believe this is why — paradoxically — she does not always follow Church rules. Why, for example, she saw no problem making condoms available as a way of preventing the spread of HIV disease, or why she gave Communion several times to a man even when she knew he was not Catholic. And her actions are often enough not popular in the view of or sanctioned by members of some of the groups to which she belongs (or would not be if they knew).

She is enthusiastic and always ready for the next experience, even more so if it is new. She is very young at heart, still at age ninety-one. And I know of no one who is and who has been more genuinely happy, both now and throughout her life.

But Kate can also be afraid and want to blend in. She can close up and not move forward easily. And she is not above shock value — perhaps particularly around folks who are trying to box her in, label her, define how a nun should behave. Perhaps. Yet perhaps she also likes to just plain shock others now and then — at least so it seems to me.

As for my *own* boxes and labels in her regard, a case in point might be of interest. Somewhere around 1998, Kate asked if she could share my home, staying overnight to make a private, one-day spiritual retreat there the next day while I was at work. When I got home from work on retreat day, I guess I expected to find her in prayer, or reading the scriptures, in some pious stance or something similar. Instead, I found her in a pair of shorts, fast asleep on my patio in the afternoon sun of summer, stretched out on a lounge chair with an empty bottle of beer at her side.

chiaroscuro of human existence

When I think about the stories of the men and the numberless things Kate has done for them, and if I ponder the many insights into her inner workings as revealed in the interview sessions, I often get the feeling I may be experiencing the presence of a saint. For what is a saint, at least in non-technical terms, if not simply an excellent model of good behavior, a fine example that inspires us to desire and strive to do always more good?

Yet when I think about Kate in this way I inevitably find myself saying, "Wait! Is *this* the same person I know? Is this the same woman who seems to never stop talking about her life, forgetting, it seems, that I have one, too? Is this the one who used to rarely let me finish a thought without turning the conversation back to *her* life? Is this the friend who many times jerked me around in headstrong debate before conceding I was right, though she knew it all along? Is this—"

But she *is* the same person! She is.

I have wrestled much with this thought of sainthood and Kate. On the one hand she would seem to be just that. On the other hand I have known and experienced another side of her — a shadow side I will call it. A side that is less than desirable and not so selfless. She can be stubborn, feisty, judgmental, defiant, and resistant to being told what to do even by people in authority. Her behavior has been known to border on impertinence, and she has not always been up front with her true motives.

The conclusion I have come to about this never-ending struggle between good

and bad behavior is that both are present in all of us and at the same time. The inclinations within us to perform actions that affirm, encourage, and sustain life and to perform actions that erode, diminish, and tear life down — these both exist within us always and simultaneously, and we often turn from one of them to the other within the short span of only a few minutes.

The "chiaroscuro of human existence" is what I have long called this state of affairs, and the integration of dichotomy is what it regards.

While chiaroscuro referred originally to the representation and distribution of light and dark in Renaissance paintings, by extension this term represents for me the contrast of dissimilar elements within the same entity, in this case the human person: the simultaneous presence of good and not good (light and dark) working side by side in the same person. We all (Kate and canonized saints included) are combinations of this chiaroscuro all of the time, to one extent or another, and each end of the polarity tugs at us constantly and vies ceaselessly to be in charge.

In spite of our every flaw, each of us possesses all that it takes to be the best (and more) that we see in Kate St. Martin. And we dare not point to her as she passes by and declare, "Look, there is the best!" unless we are willing to risk challenging one of our deepest fears: that she would turn to *us* in that moment and, holding a mirror to *us*, say to us, "Right you are!"

transformation

I am convinced that the very shadow-side behaviors of Kate mentioned previously were in the end actually instrumental in leading her to Skid Road; that these very personality characteristics that commonly have negative connotations got rechanneled somehow — not by her, and unbeknownst to her — and provided the energy, tenacity, and courage that were required and essential for her to go down there and remain there for more than twenty-five years.

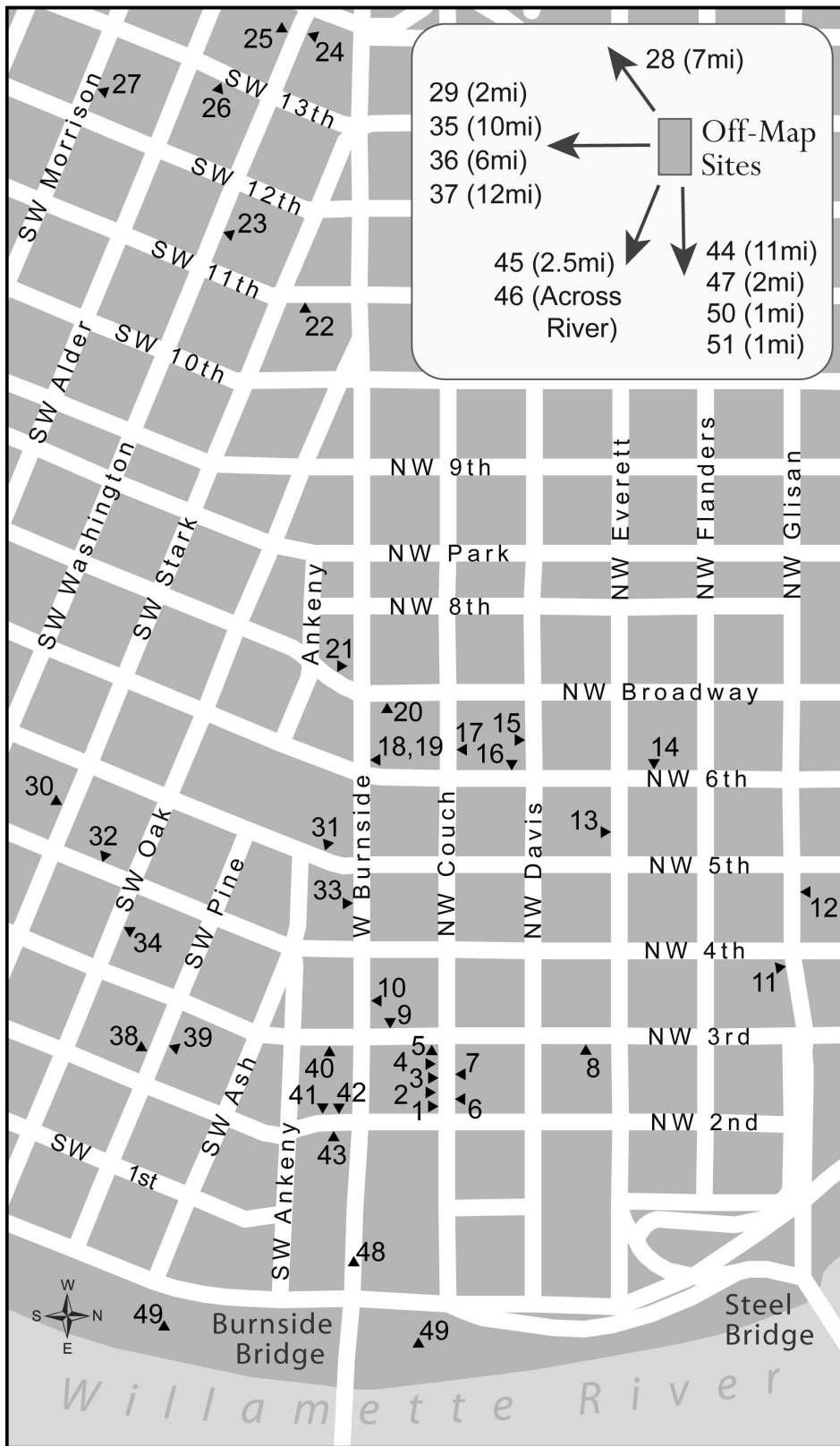
And Kate went there against all odds:

- She was a woman.
- She was alone.
- It was 1970 and the times were presenting new and considerable challenges on several fronts (the sexual revolution, for example, and the dramatic changes in the Catholic Church that resulted from the Second Vatican Council).
- Kate was initially in the area against the preference of her religious order at the time.
- She was older (in her fifties).
- She was naive regarding many worldly matters, knowing nothing about alcoholism or illicit drugs or sexually transmitted diseases, for example.
- She was getting into work that has one of the highest rates of burnout.
- And she didn't even go to Skid Road with a conscious plan or mission.

Whatever its source or inspiration, something almost magically powerful fired up and energized Kate to go to Skid Road with little more at first than a satchel of Band-Aids and aspirin, to function there happily and without burnout, and to remain there for all those many years among the poorest of Portland's poor, in one of the most challenging chambers of the heart of human misery.

-Ron Talarico

MAP OF PROJECT AREA



MAP KEY BY NAME

- See glossary for information about entries, including street addresses.
- Miles indicated and corresponding direction of arrows are rough approximations from downtown Portland.
- Triangular indicators are accurately placed regarding *the side of a block* they point to, but they are placed only relatively *along that side*.
- Entries are shown located where they were at the time the stories were actually taking place and may or may not still be located there (e.g. the Danmoore Hotel building no longer exists).

Access Clinic.	31	Convent (Marylhurst).	35
Addy's.	33	Southeast Portland (just across river).	46
Arlington Hotel.	14	Stewart Hotel.	21
Baloney Joe's (east end Burnside Bridge) (1 mile).	50	Taft Hotel.	24
Beaverton, OR (7 miles).	28	Tom McCall Waterfront Park.	49
Blanchet House.	11	Transition Projects.	12
Broadway Hotel.	20	Union Gospel Mission.	9
Burnside Hotel.	1	Veterans Hospital (adjacent to OHSU) (Marquam Hill).	29
Burnside Projects (see Transition Projects)		Washington Plaza Apartments.	23
Butte Hotel.	15	Western Hotel.	41
Cardinal Café.	10	Westside Health Clinic/Center.	30
Clean-up Center.	19		
County Hospital (now part of Oregon Health & Science University) (Marquam Hill).	29		
county jail (early 1970s before moving to Justice Center).	38		
Danmoore Hotel.	27		
De Paul Treatment Centers.	25		
detox center (see Hooper Detox)			
Downtown Chapel.	18		
Drop-in Center (when on NW Couch Street).	2		
Estate Hotel.	7		
Foster Hotel.	8		
Gresham, OR (11 miles).	44		
Harmony Houses (a) SE 20th & Taylor (b) Two blocks north of SE 39th & Division) (2.5 miles).	45		
Henry Building.	32		
Holm Hotel (Chicken Coop Flophouse).	42		
Home Hotel.	40		
Hooper Detox (early 1970s).	39		
Hooper Detox (after early 1970s) (east end Burnside Bridge) (1 mile).	51		
Joyce Hotel.	22		
Last Chance Café.	3		
Macdonald Center.	17		
Marlena's Tavern.	16		
Marquam Hill, Portland (site of major medical complex) (2 miles).	29		
Marylhurst, OR (10 miles).	35		
Maryville Nursing Home (Beaverton).	28		
Matt Talbot Center.	4		
Milwaukie, OR (6 miles).	36		
Oak Apartments.	34		
Old Town Café (formerly Gus's Café).	5		
Operation Nightwatch.	26		
Oregon City, OR (12 miles).	37		
Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) (Marquam Hill).	29		
Our House of Portland (2 miles).	47		
Rich Hotel.	6		
Sally McCracken Building.	13		
Salvation Army.	43		
Saturday Market (below west end of Burnside Bridge).	48		
Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon Convent (Beaverton).	28		
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary			

MAP KEY BY NUMBER

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1 - | Burnside Hotel | currently) (east end of Burnside Bridge) |
| 2 - | Drop-in Center (when on Couch Street) | (1 mile) |
| 3 - | Last Chance Café | |
| 4 - | Matt Talbot Center | |
| 5 - | Old Town Café (formerly Gus's Café) | |
| 6 - | Rich Hotel | |
| 7 - | Estate Hotel | |
| 8 - | Foster Hotel | |
| 9 - | Union Gospel Mission | |
| 10 - | Cardinal Café | |
| 11 - | Blanchet House | |
| 12 - | Transition Projects (formerly Burnside Projects) | |
| 13 - | Sally McCracken Building | |
| 14 - | Arlington Hotel | |
| 15 - | Butte Hotel | |
| 16 - | Marlena's Tavern | |
| 17 - | Macdonald Center | |
| 18 - | Downtown Chapel | |
| 19 - | Clean-up Center | |
| 20 - | Broadway Hotel | |
| 21 - | Stewart Hotel | |
| 22 - | Joyce Hotel | |
| 23 - | Washington Plaza Apartments | |
| 24 - | Taft Hotel | |
| 25 - | De Paul Treatment Centers | |
| 26 - | Operation Nightwatch | |
| 27 - | Danmoore Hotel | |
| 28 - | Beaverton, OR (7 miles) | |
| | - Maryville Nursing Home | |
| | - Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon | |
| 29 - | Marquam Hill, Portland (site of major medical complex) (2 miles) | |
| | - County Hospital (now part of OHSU) | |
| | - Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) | |
| | - Veterans Hospital (adjacent to OHSU) | |
| 30 - | Westside Health Clinic/Center | |
| 31 - | Access Clinic | |
| 32 - | Henry Building | |
| 33 - | Addy's | |
| 34 - | Oak Apartments | |
| 35 - | Marylhurst, OR (10 miles) | |
| | - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary | |
| 36 - | Milwaukie, OR (6 miles) | |
| 37 - | Oregon City, OR (12 miles) | |
| 38 - | county jail (early 1970s) | |
| 39 - | Hooper Detox (early 1970s) | |
| 40 - | Home Hotel | |
| 41 - | Western Hotel | |
| 42 - | Holm Hotel (Chicken Coop Flophouse) | |
| 43 - | Salvation Army | |
| 44 - | Gresham, OR (11 miles) | |
| 45 - | Harmony Houses (a) SE 20th & Taylor (b) Two blocks north of SE 39th & Division) (2.5 miles) | |
| 46 - | Southeast Portland (just across river) | |
| 47 - | Our House of Portland (2 miles) | |
| 48 - | Saturday Market (below west end of Burnside Bridge) | |
| 49 - | Tom McCall Waterfront Park | |
| 50 - | Baloney Joe's (east end of Burnside Bridge) (1 mile) | |
| 51 - | Hooper Detox (after early 1970s & | |

BEGINNINGS

beginning of interest in alcoholism

To begin this story of faces and people on Burnside, I'd like to tell a little about how I got interested in alcoholism and alcoholics.

When I was a child, I lived in Skagway, Alaska. Two days after my tenth birthday, my parents invited a young, newly ordained priest for dinner. His name was Father Merrill Sulzman, and he was a very good priest, very personable, very kind and



Fr. Sulzman at play with Kate and her brother, Al.

loving, and a very well-liked young person. After we had finished dinner, my dad, who was a United States immigration officer, returned downtown to wait for a train that was to arrive from Whitehorse, a town in the Yukon Territory. Mom, Father Sulzman, my brother, and I were sitting around the table, talking.

It was the Fourth of July, and after a bit my brother and I decided to go outside and play with our sparklers. We went to the area in front of the dining room window and were playing with the sparklers there. Mom and Father were watching us. I had bent a sparkler and was twirling it and making a circle of sparks when my clothing caught on fire. I ran to the back door of the house, and Father and mom took the same direction. Father took a coat that was hanging on a hook at the back porch, smothered the flames, and probably saved my life in doing that.

Within three years, I was told that he had started drinking. By then I was thirteen. I began praying for him, and that was the beginning of a prayer list that continues to the present day — a prayer list of a lot of street people, alcoholics, drug addicts, convicts, hobos, priests, and Negroes (as I called people who are black at that time). I prayed for blacks because I thought they were getting a bum deal, and I prayed for priests because I felt so badly about Fr. Sulzman and just wanted to pray for priests as a group.

I really had never had an association in any way with an alcoholic up to this point in my life, nor did I know what the word alcoholic meant. I did see Father once after I learned of his drinking problem. He was sober on that occasion. I remember that

my parents and I talked to him, but I was a little self-conscious. I was also a little uncomfortable with the whole situation of his drinking. Around the time I was ten, during the period when my clothing caught fire, Father came to our house often; life was pretty uncomplicated, and I knew him well. But by the time I was thirteen, the situation had changed. I was going through puberty, with all the special complications which that brings on for a young person — and then I discover that this man I had been so familiar with has a drinking problem. I didn't know how to deal with our changing situations.

Throughout the years, Father Sulzman was assigned to several parishes or missions [by which Kate means small, perhaps isolated parishes where there was no live-in priest and where Mass would be celebrated only on Sundays by a visiting priest]. Finally, he was banished from the diocese of Alaska and he returned to New York. He went through a treatment center, whatever that consisted of in those days. I don't know if he ever drank again after that, but I know that he became alienated from his family.

The case of Father Sulzman, then, was really the beginning of my concern for alcoholics. At that time, however, I never once thought I would be involved with them.

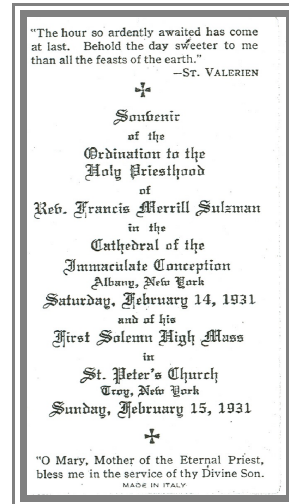
attends boarding school in Oregon

My parents knew we would be moving soon since my dad had put in for a transfer. They wanted me to get into Catholic school by the eighth grade in order to be better prepared for entrance eventually into Catholic high school. Since Skagway had no Catholic schools, and I had a friend who was a religious novice in Beaverton, Oregon, I spent my eighth grade year as a boarder at St. Mary of the Valley School in Beaverton. The school was (and still is) run by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. This was my first acquaintance with that order. While I was at boarding school, my dad was transferred from Skagway to Victoria, British Columbia.

When I first got to the school, becoming a nun was one of the last things I ever would have dreamt of becoming. But I found the Sisters very loving and nurturing during that year, and being away from home for a solid year also had an influence on me.

enters convent but is soon asked to leave

So, after completing my ninth grade year in Victoria in 1935, I decided I would like to be a Sister, and I returned to Beaverton that fall to enter St. Mary of the Valley convent as a postulant. Eight and a half months later I was asked to leave due to immaturity. Fifteen was too young in my case to embrace community life. I experienced



Souvenir card of Fr. Sulzman's ordination to the priesthood in New York, 1931.

"Please fill my heart to overflowing with your love so that it flows into the hearts of others."

—one of Kate's favorite prayers over the years. Her first memory of saying this prayer was back someplace in the forties, after becoming a Sister. She would say it in conjunction with making the Stations of the Cross in chapel, early in the morning, before morning prayer would begin with her Community.

some difficulty following rules, and I was frequently getting into trouble.

finishes school, re-enters convent, becomes a nun, teaches for twenty years, and pursues degrees

I returned to Victoria and finished high school there in 1940. That same year, I once again entered St. Mary of the Valley as a postulant. On August 15, 1946, on the Feast of the Assumption, I made Final Profession.

During the next twenty years, I taught music, and eventually academic subjects, at various elementary schools in Oregon, while studying for a bachelor's and then a master's degree in education. I received my master's in 1965 from the University of Portland, with an emphasis in guidance and counseling.

"Please help me to be the person you want me to be."
—another of Kate's favorite prayers

enters nursing program

In 1967, after working for a while as a nurse's aid to determine my interest in nursing, I entered a two-year associate degree program in nursing at Portland Community College. I graduated from the program in 1969, took state board exams, and became a registered nurse. After graduation, it was recommended that we get some extra training because we hadn't had much lab experience. In the two-year program, there had been more focus on textbooks and academics than on clinical training. The head of the nursing program recommended that we each continue our training in an area of special interest. She suggested the County Hospital as one example of a facility in which to gain exposure to a variety of experiences. The hospital was located right across from Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland, and has since become part of the OHSU University Hospital.

gets extra training and is introduced to individuals from Portland's Skid Road

So I went up to the County Hospital for a year, and *that* was my introduction to the people on Skid Road, in the Burnside area.

I was on the infected surgery floor. We had many patients who came to us from Skid Road with infected leg ulcers. They would develop infections due to unattended wounds and sores and broken bones from falls or fights. I began to see people "recycle" — come in and go out repeatedly, displaying a revolving door type of pattern: they would be in for a while, get fed, get well, go out, drink again, and pretty soon I'd see them back in the hospital.

I began to wonder during this period if I might like to work on Skid Road with these kinds of individuals, although I didn't know if there would be any possibility or any place for me.

After my experiences at the County Hospital, I continued nursing at Maryville Nursing Home as a staff nurse until 1972. This was a geriatric nursing home founded and run by my Community at the time, the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, and I really liked working there very much.

her interest in Skid Road grows

At some point during this period, I read an article "Priest Runs Skid Road Hotel," about a priest who was managing the Burnside Hotel, an alcohol-free residence for homeless men on Skid Road. I clipped and saved the article. Later I read another article about some Holy Names Sisters who were doing Friday night sing-along for the men at Blanchet House, a house of hospitality on Skid Road, that provided and still provides free meals, some lodging, clothing, and other services. These articles sparked my interest in the subject of alcoholism.

Something was beginning to stir inside me. I was beginning to feel called and drawn to do something different from what I had been doing, but I didn't know what. I

recognize now that I think it was God letting me know in some way that there was going to be a change in my ministry, a change in the kind of work that I was doing.

In the summer of 1970, I called Father Lambert, who was the priest in the article I just mentioned, and asked if there was anything that a nun-nurse could do down on Burnside. He said, "Yes. Come and have dinner with us at the hotel. We'll talk about it." So — I really was a little leery about this — I got a young nun to go with me, and she was scared stiff. We were walking on Couch Street between Second and Third, in the heart of Skid Road, because that's where the Burnside Hotel was. The hotel was located on the southwest corner of Second and Couch, on the second floor. Its entrance was on Couch, and it housed probably twenty-some men.

We had dinner with Fr. Lambert and others, and we talked about what I could do. He suggested that, if I was interested and would come back, he would introduce me to the public health nurse and some of the people working in other related services, like the Clean-up Center in the basement of the Downtown Chapel, which is the Catholic parish located in Skid Road. At the Clean-up Center, individuals — usually men in those days — could shower and get an exchange of clean clothes for the ones they were wearing.

From that time on, I began to look for, and soon received, an okay from my Community to volunteer one day a week on Skid Road.

begins to volunteer on Burnside

So in 1970 I began to go down on Burnside, to Blanchet House, one day a week on one of my days off.

Blanchet House [established in 1952] served roughly 600 free meals a day at that time to homeless and low-income people in the Skid Road area. Meals included an early breakfast, and lunch. Eating capacity was fifty men at a time. People sat at tables, on benches without backs, approximately ten at a table. As some finished, they returned their trays, and others came to replace them. Those who wanted seconds had to go to the end of the line, which was outside.

Working in the Burnside area was a kind of monumental task because I was going into a totally unknown world of alcoholism and homelessness, neither of which I had ever experienced. It was a form of culture shock. I had been working in Maryville Nursing Home, for example, a very clean, organized, and sanitary work environment; on Burnside this was not at all the case. Also, I was still wearing the habit at that time — an abbreviated habit consisting of a skirt and veil.

I was certainly the only nun down in the streets at that time. Father Jim Lambert, of course, was in the Burnside Hotel on Second and Couch, and Father Harold Webster was chaplain at the Downtown Chapel on Sixth and Burnside. As far as I know, the three of us were the only Catholic religious in the area during that period who were involved with Burnside alcoholics.

Blanchet House and first office space there

I remember my very first day on Burnside. I went into Blanchet House, and a man named Mel [see Mel's story] said, "Sister Kathleen is here. She's a nurse, and if any of you want to talk to her she'll answer any of your questions."

The very first contact I had with people on the street itself was outside of Blanchet House. I was on the corner of Fourth and Glisan. There were a few men on the corner. Nobody was saying much of anything. Finally, one of them came up to me and said, "Have ya got 'ny Librium?" I said, "That's a prescription medication! I couldn't give you that." And he said to his buddies, "Well, see, I told ya she couldn't help."

And *that* was a breakthrough, an opening.

Then another man came up to me. I don't remember what he asked, but that interaction, too, was an opening. This was the beginning of a door being opened to something which I still wasn't sure I wanted to continue doing.

After that first street encounter on the corner, I began using a small office inside

Blanchet House, next to the manager's office, and seeing a succession of people who wanted something, mainly dressing changes or medication.

Soon, I began going down on Burnside on both of my days off, while continuing to work five days a week at Maryville Nursing Home. I asked to have Tuesdays and Fridays off so the spacing would be better for doing dressing changes on Burnside.

A lot of the men came back to me at Blanchet, but some of them I never saw again. Some would come to me, either right on the street or in my office space in Blanchet, with problems that I didn't want to touch — massive infections, for example, or sutures that needed removing from their lips. Since they wouldn't go to a hospital, however, I would do my best to deal with each situation as it presented itself rather than just let their condition continue or deteriorate.

In 1970, there weren't any clinics in the Skid Road area that I was aware of. There was, however, the Community Communicable Disease Center that would try to keep track of people who had active tuberculosis or who tested positive for it. In order to keep track, they had visiting nurses who would do follow-up with some of the men in the hotels. This follow-up was very difficult to accomplish with those men who were homeless, some of whom slept in doorways, under bridges, or, at times, in a drop-in center.

For quite a long time I used to go down the soup line at Blanchet with one of their soup bowls filled with all kinds of vitamins that had been donated — all colors, all shapes, all sizes. They might have been vitamins for pregnant women, for the elderly, for children, or multi-vitamins with or without iron — you name it. But they were vitamins. I'd go down the soup line and say, "Have a vitamin?" They began to call me "the pill-pushing nun." They'd say, "Will it do me any good?" and I'd say, "It won't do you any harm!" So they would take the vitamins, and they began to look forward to my coming.

After I was unable to get any more of the mixed-vitamin variety, someone introduced me to the manager or owner of a drug company that manufactures vitamins, and I was given a quarter of a million multi-vitamins with iron! Those took me a while to dispose of. I used to make up little medicine bottles with about a month's supply and give them to different people in the hotels, as well as keep Blanchet House supplied. Blanchet has been supplied to this day [2000] through the person who supplied me.

I began doing massive dressing changes in Blanchet House — and I mean massive. There was a lot of debridement to do (which is the removal of all foreign matter from a wound), and getting wounds cleaned out so that they would heal better. Of course, if the men kept drinking alcohol, this only made their condition worse because they would be getting too much sugar in their system when, instead, they needed to get a lot of protein in order to heal properly. The best I could do in that situation was to dress the wound with sterile dressing and say, "I'll see you next week," even though I thought to myself, "Oh, my gosh, that's not often enough!"

I don't know why Blanchet House ever put up with this arrangement as long as they did, because there really was not sufficient room both for serving meals and for providing medical treatments. People were continually getting in each other's way. What compromised the restricted space even more was the lack of patience of many of the men who were waiting to see me. They would jostle each other, and some of them would be half drunk. Pretty soon it became too much for the staff; it was getting on their nerves. So I began to look for another office space.

the Holm, Western, and Home Hotels . . . and incident with gypsies

Three hotels in addition to the Burnside Hotel were a part of my early years on Burnside: the Holm, the Western, and the Home. They were all on the same block. On the southwest corner of Second and Burnside, was the Holm Hotel, with its entrance on Second Street; adjoining the Holm, also on Second Street, was the Western Hotel; and at the opposite end of the block from the Holm, on the southeast corner of Third and Burnside, was the Home Hotel, which had its entrance on Third Street.

The Western had been closed before I arrived on Skid Road because it could not meet city codes. It was later remodeled and currently [2000] is used for low-income housing. The Western had been managed by Oliver [see Oliver's story], who also managed the Holm and the Home. The men in the Holm and the Home did not have to be sober to stay there; they could drink and they could be drunk.

While the Holm and the Western had separate street entrances, you could go through to one small area of the Western from the third floor of the Holm. Brent, who was the night clerk of the Holm, occupied this small area.

At the time I began on Burnside, some gypsies often would stand in a doorway on Second Street, between Burnside and Ankeny, on the same side of the street as the Holm and Western Hotels. They would stand as an invitation to have one's palm read. One day, one of the gypsy women asked if I would see an elderly gypsy woman, who was living in the area, about a medical problem. Evidently, the gypsies near the Holm Hotel were aware that I was a nurse and trusted me enough to see this old woman.

I went to the location and entered a large room. There were two large beds in the room. The elderly woman had been propped up in one of the beds, which was covered with a dark green velvet spread. There were a number of her relatives — men and women — in the room. One of these told me that the woman had been released from the hospital with several prescriptions and that they wanted to know why these medications had been prescribed.

I checked the medications and explained why it was important for her to take them as directed because of a heart condition and a blood pressure condition. This gave them a better understanding of the necessity for taking the medications.

second office space, and involvement with Harmony House

Also in 1970, there were some people who were conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War. They were required to do community service in place of going to war. Some of these worked in the Burnside area, and I often got a ride there with one of them from Beaverton, where I was living. He was a fine young man.

One of these conscientious objectors was a doctor who had a little clinic on Second Street, between Burnside and Couch, next to a tavern. I needed some kind of a space to work out of after I stopped using the office space at Blanchet House, and he allowed me to share the office with him. I remember it was a little room, a very small and narrow room. I worked there for a few months assisting him.

It was also during this period that I first became involved with Harmony House, a grass-roots alcoholism rehabilitation program that was just in its beginning stages. My involvement there lasted until 1982.

a routine

After I began going down to Blanchet's soup line, I would walk down afterwards to the Burnside Hotel and Salvation Army to talk to some of the men there. The Salvation Army — "Sally's" as the men called it at the time — was located on the southeast corner of Second and Burnside, across from the Holm and Western Hotels.

As I mentioned earlier, I would get a ride to Skid Road from Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton with one of the conscientious objectors. But every Tuesday I had a car that Maryville would let me use to bring in supplies, clothing, vitamins, medications, and sometimes food — all of which had been donated; the car was handy for that purpose. I would distribute these things to the Burnside Hotel, Harmony House, Blanchet House, and the Clean-up Center.

third office space in Last Chance Café

Another one of the fellows from the group of conscientious objectors opened what was called the Last Chance Café, which, in effect, was a meal service operation where men could get a bowl of soup or chili, depending on the day, and coffee. The café was located on the south side of Couch Street, between Second and Third, and was

below what was then the Burnside Hotel. The men could get this meal for twenty-five cents. If they didn't have that much money, they could pay whatever they had or use a voucher from me, which was a simple note that would allow them to get the meal free.

At some point in 1971, after the Second Street clinic closed, I needed office space a third time. I was given permission to use a space inside the Last Chance Café. It was a hole-in-the-wall space, a dark little room with a ceiling light bulb, back from where the dining area was. There was no running water, and I worked from a little stock of supplies in my bag.

fourth office space in Matt Talbot Center

I will mention Burnside Projects at this point because it ties in to the beginnings of my next office space. Burnside Projects was begun by Fr. Jim Lambert, whom I mentioned earlier regarding the Burnside Hotel. It developed into a coalition consisting of the Burnside Hotel; a small Drop-in Center in one of the storefronts on Couch, between Second and Third, below the Burnside Hotel; and, in the basement of the Downtown Chapel, the Clean-Up Center, which was staffed by some of the men from the Burnside Hotel.

In order to take care of the tenants who were displaced when the Western Hotel was closed, a group of individuals who were involved with the Burnside Projects secured use of some space which eventually became the Matt Talbot Center.

This space was located on the southeast corner of Third and Couch, above the Old Town Café (which used to be called Gus's Café). At the opposite end of the same block, on Second and Couch, on the second floor, was the Burnside Hotel. The Burnside Hotel and the Matt Talbot Center together took up the entire side of the block between Second and Third Streets on Couch, above the storefronts.

The space for Matt Talbot Center was very old, and in terrible — just ungodly — shape. You cannot believe the awful shape it was in. They fixed it up and turned it into low-income housing for the men. And by low-income housing I mean two and a half dollars a week, fifty cents a day, or, if the occupants couldn't pay that much, nothing. The occupants would have to remain sober in order to stay there.

Sean Simons was, for a short time, the first director of Matt Talbot, and Brother Eric Hobbs, a Jesuit, came on the scene soon after.

It was when Eric came that the name Matt Talbot Center was chosen. Matt Talbot was an Irishman who had lived in Ireland. He was an alcoholic who sobered up "cold turkey" with the help of a friend of his who was a priest. He died in 1925 on his way to Mass, which he attended daily because he believed that it gave him the strength he needed in order to stay sober. He has served as a model for many alcoholics since.

Eric got a couple of volunteers from the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and other volunteers, to work there. Matt Talbot Center was good for many of the younger occupants — I'd say those between twenty and thirty-five years of age; they did well there, let me put it that way. They received guidance and counseling. There wasn't a recovery program in place exactly, but the men were required to stay sober and not to smoke pot (which wasn't quite as prevalent as it is now).

After the building was renovated, a little room on the second floor was set up to serve as both a clinic and a social service room for me when my use of the space in the Last Chance Café came to an end in 1971 or 1972.

The clinic had a shelved storage unit for over-the-counter medications and other medical supplies. There was a desk and there were several chairs. Eric later had a wash basin installed, which was helpful for dressing changes, among other things. Sometimes there would be so many people waiting to see me that Eric decided eventually to put a bench in the hall outside the clinic for people to sit on while waiting their turn. I had a phone. And Eric had a seven- to eight-inch hole cut low on the wall, where the phone line came in, so he could hear me calling through in case of an emergency — if I needed help quickly with one of the men, for example, or if I felt threatened.

Such was my office. The room was simply provided to me; I never had to pay

anything for rent.

A lot of over-the counter medications were donated to me — usually in the form of samples — from such places as drug stores and sales people. I also used my ministry funds to purchase medications and medical supplies that were needed.

Both those people who lived on the streets of Skid Road and those who lived in the area's hotels — almost always men — would come up to see me every day — between twelve and fifteen people on some days. Some would come for dressings and other nursing services, some for appointments with local health clinics, some for housing, transportation, money, cigarettes, clothing — you name it. It became a place of many services for the people. I functioned partly as nurse there, partly as social worker, partly as counselor. My services at Matt Talbot were always on a volunteer basis.

That was the last little downtown clinic/office that I was in, except for a temporary place across the street in the Estate Hotel after there was a fire in Matt Talbot in 1980. [Kate worked at Matt Talbot until it closed, but she does not remember whether that was in 1980, after the fire, or at some point between the fire and 1982.]

seed money for ministry, and J. Arthur Young award

To return to those earlier years: from early on in my work on Skid Road until I started at Matt Talbot Center, I used to carry around a small satchel with peroxide, bandages, a few medications, and similar things in case they were needed. The first money that I used for purchasing these supplies came from an award I received: the J. Arthur Young Award. There were at least three recipients of the award, and we were the first persons ever to receive it. I believe I received several hundred dollars. The award was for community service on Skid Road and for helping alcoholics and people with drug problems who were from the Beaverton area as well. I put the money in the bank, in a savings account which would give a little bit of interest. It was seed money. I've never run out of these ministry funds [still true in 2000]; I got down to three dollars once, but I've never been out. There has always been some money from gifts and donations which I have put into the account. Currently my ministry money is in a tax-free account at a bank.

liability insurance

I began to carry liability insurance in about 1971 or 1972. While I have never needed to use it, I have always felt reassured about carrying it for protection against the risks involved in the kinds of work that I did (and still do) — in case anybody ever decided to sue me because of what they perceived as poor judgment on my part or improper treatment. The insurance has never been that expensive, and it's never gone up that much until more recently. It just [in 1985] went up ten dollars from when I first purchased it, and that isn't bad: seventy dollars a year, now, and it was sixty for years.

observation by community health nurse supervisor

At one point during this period, a public health nurse (whom I believe was a community health nurse supervisor) came around with me to observe. I think she wanted to assure herself that what I was doing involved good nursing techniques. She was satisfied, and felt fine about my work. I never had a problem regarding my rapport with others who provided services to those on Skid Road.

goes to full time on Skid Road, moves to Portland, and gets first job on Skid Road

After the first couple of years of commuting from Beaverton and volunteering two days a week on Skid Road, I began to go to Skid Road three times a week — on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays — while continuing to work as a nurse at Maryville Nursing Home the other four days.

In 1972, I requested to be full time on Skid Road. My Community was willing to consent to this if I could find a paying job there. So, I moved from Beaverton to the

convent at St. Andrew parish in Portland in order to be closer to Skid Road, and I got a job as a nurse at the newly formed Hooper Detox. Hooper was (and still is) a detoxification center. At that time, it was located on Southwest Pine Street, between Second and Third, across from the then county jail. This was my first paid job on Skid Road. I worked there from three in the afternoon until eleven at night, and I continued volunteering from nine in the morning until two-thirty in the afternoon at Blanchet House, in my little clinic at the Matt Talbot Center, and at Harmony House.

transfers religious communities

After a year, in 1973, I transferred religious communities from the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon (SSMO) to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, of which I am currently still a member. The SSMO community did not appear to be comfortable with my working on Burnside, and I was not comfortable with their discomfort. I felt I could continue to work on Burnside with the support of the Holy Names Sisters, so I transferred communities on a two-year trial basis.

no longer wears the habit, and its effect

While the Sisters of St. Mary were required to wear the habit, wearing the habit was optional with the Holy Names Sisters, and I decided not to wear it. I remember being reluctant at first to appear without something on my head, so I wore a little blue head scarf in place of the veil for a couple of days. The people didn't seem to notice the difference, even when I took the scarf off altogether. I was still Sister Kathleen, and I realized that clothes didn't make the person. Yet there was a difference: newcomers didn't know who I was because they no longer could see a veil to identify me.

And sometimes it would happen in reverse, where even *I* didn't recognize some. Just today, for example [December 1985], when I walked through the lineup of men outside Blanchet House to pick up a check for somebody, I realized that I didn't recognize all the faces. Even so, all of a sudden one older man said, "Sister Kathleen, I haven't seen you for a long, long time."

"No, but I still am around. How are you?"

"Oh, pretty good."

"That's good."

"You?"

Just a little conversation there. Then, as I turned to go into Blanchet House, I heard him say, "That's Sister Kathleen."

Many of the old-timers knew me by "Sister Kathleen" rather than by the "Sister Kate" that the newer ones use.

If you're down there very much, you become very, very well known and, of course, in the habit as I was at first, easily recognized. The men always would say that no one would ever touch me or he'd have the whole Skid Road population down on his back so fast, which, really, when I would stop and think about it, was a comforting thought!

So that is the introduction to how I began my ministry on Burnside — some of the different places where I worked and the types of services that I provided. At this point, I would like to begin to launch out into talking about individuals, which I think is far more interesting.

[Ron: One thing I did want to ask you was if you did all this alone.]

[Kate: Basically, yes. Now as we begin discussing people, I will tell how some different individuals tied in to, and were a part of, what I did sometimes; but I didn't work with an organization if that's what your question was. There were people who would volunteer to be with me and to help, and some of them were invaluable. That information will come as I tell the stories.]

Postscripts

1. During the course of a project work session in September 2000, Kate recited to me her recollection of a quotation which she had encountered at some point during her ministry. They were words by Frederick S. Perls, from his book *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* (1969, Real People Press). She was touched by these words, she never forgot them, and she said that she endeavored to incorporate them into her behavior and attitudes during her many years of ministry on Skid Road and afterwards. "I am not in this world to live up to your expectations," she recalled, "nor are you here to live up to mine. You are you and I am I, and if by chance we meet, it's beautiful." After reciting these words, Kate looked at me and said, "I'm not there to change them; I'm there to accept them."

2. During the early seventies, Kate was trying to develop full-time employment for herself on Burnside. This effort involved obtaining letters of support, a copy of one of which appears on the next page.

**MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION
ALCOHOL AND DRUG SECTION**

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

309 S.W. FOURTH AVENUE • PORTLAND, OREGON • 97204

November 15, 1974

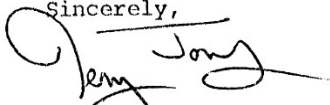
To Whom It May Concern:

Sister Kathleen has been essential to the social services system in Portland's "Burnside area" for four years. "Kate" has provided unique and valuable services to Burnside residents and particularly the alcohol dependent. As an R.N., she combines her medical expertise with her compassion in a way that has made her a popular member of the Burnside community.

As a local alcohol specialist, "Kate" and I have had a number of opportunities to work and play together and I have enjoyed both. She has been an active member of the Harmony House, Inc. Board of Directors for some time. Her work in both the David P. Hooper Alcoholic Recovery Center and the Matt Talbot Center is well known and respected. She has served me both as a consultant on the Burnside community and as a friend.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage all those who would consider supporting Sister Kathleen's work among the Burnside residents to do so. One would need to go quite far to duplicate the kind of person one finds in this lovely lady.

Sincerely,



Terry Jones
Alcohol and Drug Specialist

AARON FELLOWS

Aaron Fellows came to the De Paul Center. He had been a singer. He composed his own songs on a guitar and sang in bars. Of course, he often got paid with a drink, and this led to his really getting out of control with alcohol.

He had been married for quite a number of years, and because of his drinking (I guess) his wife sought a divorce. This didn't help his situation, because he did a lot of drinking after that. He figured "what's the use?" He continued to drink until he got to where he couldn't handle it any longer, and then he came to De Paul for treatment.

I remember that for quite a while he wouldn't play the guitar or sing; he just focused on treatment. As time went on in his recovery, he began to feel better about things, and he would take out his guitar and strum and maybe sing a little bit.

I asked him to sing and play some of his songs for me one day, so he came in the office and did this. He had one song *The Bag Lady* that struck me at that time because it was a dear little song. He sang quite a few of them for me, and I said, "I really like those, Aaron. If I got a tape, would you sing them on the tape?" and he said yes he would. So I gave him a tape and he recorded. He's not a great singer, but he had a style that was interesting. His lyrics were especially drawn from his life experiences.

Aaron was *excellent* at photography. He took a lot of photographs of buildings, drunks, and dogs, and was very good at it. I have some of his pictures; he also sold some. People found him interesting, and he was staying sober at that point. He was somebody who appealed to me, and somebody I wanted to see make it, because there was something that seemed to be very sincere about him.

ALAN

One day I met a man whom I had seen previously on the streets, sometimes drunk, sometimes sober. His name was Alan. The day I met him he was sober, and he said, "Sister, I want you to come and see where I'm living. It's a good place, and I think you'd be interested in it." I said, "All right, I'll come out sometime," so he told me where it was.

He was living in a house that turned out to be the beginning of what came to be known as Harmony House, an alcoholism rehabilitation program. The program was begun by a group of recovering alcoholics who had received a grant to set up a simple rehabilitation program for men. The program didn't function too well at this point because not all the men worked, which meant that there was not as much money available to the house as there would have been otherwise to feed the men, keep supplies stocked, and keep the program going.

I later met those who had begun the program. Harmony House was a rehabilitation endeavor that I soon became associated with, and that I remained being associated with in one way or another from 1970 until 1982. It was another big part of what I got involved with in the early years of my ministry, and it resulted in the expansion of my services. Its program was a good one and still is in existence [1985]. I thought at one time that I would probably stay there indefinitely, but I realized later that I could do the same kind of work by remaining down on Burnside.

Alan lived in the Kirby Street House, which was one of two houses that formed the Harmony House group at that time. That house has now been leveled, and the area has become part of the expansion of Emanuel Hospital.

The other House was on Twentieth and Taylor, in southeast Portland. I used to go there often. I'd bring food, I'd bring clothing, I'd bring cigarettes and other items to the men at the house. At a certain point, I began to form more of an association with the men and with those in charge. I was asked to be a member of the advisory board, an invitation which I accepted, and I had a lot of contacts with staff and clients from then on. I went to their meetings and helped with policy-setting, development of regulations, and getting the house set up with a better structured and more stable program.

Alan was doing well at Harmony House and staying sober. But there was at that time a program for women with narcotics and other drug addictions, and Alan fell in love with one of the women in that program. She had already been married about nine times. I think she tried to hold him off for a while, but she finally married him, and it turned out to be a disaster for Alan, who later relapsed. I never saw him again, and I don't know if he's still living.

ALEX

Alex came from a very good middle class family in The Madeleine parish [a Catholic parish in northeast Portland], but he felt that his parents were phony. He appeared to be an intelligent and gifted individual. When he would get drunk, he would come down on Skid Road.

I was still wearing the habit when I first saw him. He had absolutely no use for me the first couple of years — no use for nuns or priests, and no use for religion. He did like Father Harold Webster, however, who was pastor of the Downtown Chapel; he had befriended Father, but I didn't know what he thought of him. At any rate, Alex would make sneering comments when he was drunk. He would just rant and rave about the Pope and Catholics, and say, "What are you doing down here? You don't know what you're talking about or doing!"

Through the years, however, Alex began to trust me. When I had a clinic at the Matt Talbot Center in the eighties, he would come there occasionally to see me and talk. He'd *always* want to talk, and he'd go on and on and *on* about his family and about the Church. Once he kissed me on the cheek, and he seemed so surprised and so pleased about it; it was something that I don't think he had done to someone for a long, long time.

He told me a story once that I felt very badly about. I guess he had been a little kid and been given a school assignment to draw something — I don't know if it was to draw his house or something else. He said he took a lot of time and a lot of pains with it. When he brought it to school, the teacher looked at it and said, "You didn't do this by yourself. This isn't your work." He never forgot that; it was a grossly unkind and unfair thing for anybody to say to a child, particularly since whoever said it didn't know if it was true. After hearing about this incident, I sometimes wondered if perhaps a nun had been his teacher that year, which could have led to his resentment of religious in later life.

Apparently Alex felt, too, that he had to compete with his brother. There were always comparisons being made such as "Why can't you be like the rest of the kids in the family?"

One time when Alex came into Matt Talbot, he put his hands around my neck and said, "I could break your neck so easily." I didn't say anything. But after Matt Talbot Center had a fire, and I was temporarily taking care of people's needs in the lobby of the Estate Hotel, which was across the street from Matt Talbot, I remember telling the manager of the hotel, "Please be on the lookout for Alex, will you? I'm a little uncomfortable with him."

Once in a while if I see Alex [1986], I will try to avoid him because I don't get anywhere talking with him when he's drunk, and he's never down on Burnside when he's sober; when he's sober he works someplace and seems to do all right. He's a periodic drinker. I don't know if his drinking pattern has gradually deteriorated or if he even gets down to Skid Road anymore; I don't think he gets down there, though, because I see him rarely.

Alex is somebody I pray for a lot because it seems that expectations were made of him by his parents and teachers, and comparisons were presented to him, that he couldn't measure up to. I always felt that he was, innately, a very good person.

ALFRED HOWELL & NORBERT PRATT

Alfred Howell was somebody I met through Norbert Pratt.

Norbert was a very fine man with fine sensitivity, who seemed to have some special skills in renovating and remodeling buildings. I used to meet Norbert on Couch Street a lot. I think he helped with re-doing the Burnside Hotel when it later became La Patisserie [a coffee house at Northwest Second and Couch].

One day I received a telephone call from Norbert. He said he was helping take care of a man who was living with him and was dying of heart problems and wanted to see a priest. He said, "I've called different churches and I can't seem to get anybody to come. Would *you* be willing to come and talk with him?" and I said, "Sure." So I went to visit the man in Norbert's apartment; his name was Alfred.

Norbert and Alfred lived in a beautiful apartment, very beautifully furnished. They were up on the ninth or eleventh floor and had a super view of everything. I found out at that time that Norbert worked in an antique shop. His home was *filled* with antiques and other beautiful furnishings; you can't believe the pieces that he and Alfred had collected for years.

Alfred was not one of my usual Burnside people, but he did tell me he had been a drinker at one stage of his life. He was a very religious man; he had a lot of faith and he prayed a lot. He also, of course, had a strong love for beautiful things.

He was in bed that day and kind of quiet. In addition to being an amputee, he had severe heart disease and pain, for which he received morphine as needed. He also had a rather unusual pulmonary problem, and he was on the hospice list. When Alfred came home from the hospital, I don't know how many months before my visit, he had been told that he had four days to live. He had said he wanted to go home to die, and that's when the hospice team got involved. They came to give him medication and morphine.

Alfred lingered on and on, and pretty soon he was addicted to morphine. Later, as death seemed no longer imminent, the medical staff tried to get him off the drug and finally succeeded in weaning him from it. At that point, he began to respond more, and he got up in his wheelchair more.

He asked me if I could bring him Communion, and I said, "Yes, Alfred, I'll do that." I thought maybe I'd better say something to Father Walter Shubert, who was pastor at St. Andrew's, which was my parish. In the meantime I found out that Alfred wasn't Catholic — he was Episcopalian — but I just went ahead and brought him Communion. He appreciated this very much. I finally did say something to Walter Shubert. He said, "I wish you had said something to me. I'm responsible for the parish and what's happening." He said, "You go ahead and continue," but I knew I had overstepped my bounds when I did that. I'm not always one for asking; I sort of *move* and go ahead and *do* something about the situations I encounter.

Then one day Alfred's son, Luke, came from the Midwest and started to have some problems. He was drinking and going around with some beer-drinking young people when he got here. Norbert did not want to see him waste his talents, so he helped him find a place to live. Alfred and Norbert together furnished a house for Luke when he got married. He wanted to go in for body-building, and I think Norbert helped pay for that. As far as I know, from what Norbert told me the last time we talked, Luke is still doing well.

Then Alfred's daughter came, also from the Midwest. And *she* was a *pain* where you couldn't ache — to Alfred, to Norbert, to everybody. She was spoiled, extremely selfish, and she was taking advantage of her dad. She was spending his money, coming in late at night, and sleeping around; and that was angering both Alfred and Norbert. Finally they said that was *it*, and Norbert paid for her ticket back to her mother, who was Alfred's ex-wife. They would have *helped* her, too, but she wasn't capable of being

helped, I guess, or wasn't ready.

Now Alfred was gay, and Norbert told me that this was probably why the marriage hadn't work out. I've often thought that Norbert, too, might have been gay; he never told me that he was gay, but there were a lot of things that made me think that he possibly was.

One Christmas they gave me a beautiful gift that they had had somebody make. It was a set of earrings, and a turquoise pendant set in sterling silver. Norbert had said, "I don't know if Sister Kate can wear something like this," and Alfred said, "Oh, I think maybe she can." I still have them and wear them.

Alfred's health was deteriorating, and one day Norbert called and said he had died.

Norbert stayed in the apartment for a while and then bought a house. Every so often I would stop in at the antique store and have a cup of coffee with him, and we'd catch up on news.

I didn't see Norbert again until, I believe, early in 1990. I was visiting a friend, when I saw Norbert leaning on a car across the street in front of an apartment complex. I went over to talk to him and was aware that he had lost a lot of weight and appeared to be very ill. He told me he was going to move into an apartment, and he pointed to it; he had already moved some things in. He mentioned that he had been in the hospital for a long time, very, very sick with pneumonia.

Sometime after this encounter, I saw Norbert's obituary in the newspaper.

ARCHIE RYDELL

Early in my connection with Harmony House, Archie Rydell came into the program. This must have been in about 1970, when I was still wearing the habit.

When a resident of the house seemed to be staying sober and had any special qualifications as a cook, and if a cook was needed, he would be asked if he wanted the job. This was the case with Archie. He got a little pay for cooking — very little — and free rent.

Archie was different from the others, and the guys didn't like him too much. I don't think he liked them, either, but he liked me and probably the fact that I was a nun. He seemed to have a lot of respect for me and always liked it when I came to the house to visit. He stayed with the program until he was ready to leave, and I lost contact with him for a period after that.

Then one day I was at Matt Talbot Center, and this man came up to my office — well-dressed and walking with a cane. I didn't recognize him. He said, "You don't recognize me, but I'm Archie Rydell." He had been in a car accident and had been hospitalized for months. He said he always had a lot of pain. He told me that he had married and was living in Montana. His wife was a nurse, and she still worked. He said he did some drinking yet, off and on.

He would write to me after that; I would get a letter from him at Christmas, and he would give me a little update on what was going on. I believe that in the last few years he stopped drinking completely. He and his wife seemed to be very happy, and he was living a productive life.

Later I received a letter from Archie's wife saying that he was very ill, and later still she wrote to tell me that he had died. Archie had had many happy years of sobriety, and is one who managed not to live and die on Burnside.

FROM THE TIMES

Blanchet House of Hospitality: I

["Blanchet House," an article by Paul Lobell, in BCC Pipeline, August 1975.]

Blanchet House

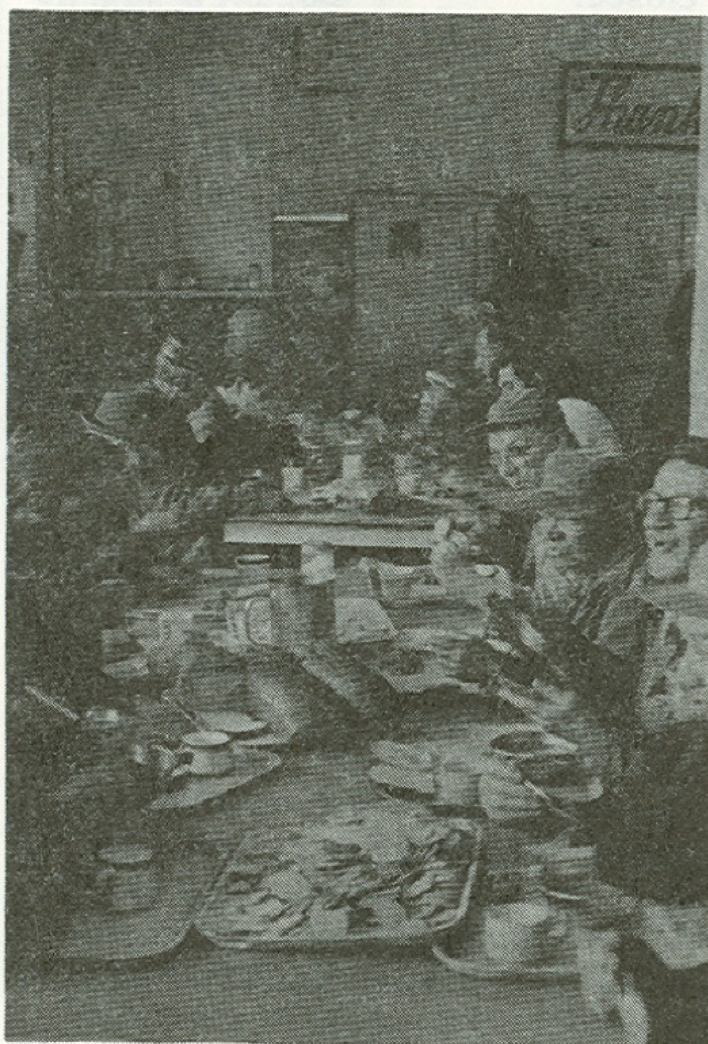


Photo by Paul Lobell

The Blanchet House serves lunch and breakfast everyday except Sunday. The food is free to anyone who is hungry. Breakfast is at 6:30 and lunch is 11:30.

The day the Pipeline went to lunch, the menu included soup with meat, onions and rice, hash, bread, butter, milk, cookies, and a little yellow vitamin pill for each person. 300 to 500 people are served each day.

The people waiting in line to eat were both young and old; they were mainly men. Their common story was that they were low on funds and needed a good meal in their belly to sustain them for awhile. A typical comment came from a young fellow who had just come into town from California, "I'm a little down on my luck today, and that's why I'm here, but who knows tomorrow, I may be eating on top of the Hilton Hotel. I'd like to find a job so I can stay in Portland. It's a friendly town. It really is," he exclaimed.

Most everyone agreed that Blanchet House was a nice place. "It's better than the other missions," said old-timer Travis Norris. "You don't have to attend a service, you ain't got no wait, and the food's pretty good." Someone else added that the vitamin pill was an added touch.

by Paul Lobell

It was Kate who initiated the passing out of vitamins at Blanchet House, and she was still passing them out or at least keeping Blanchet supplied with vitamins during this period (1975).

Atomic Energy

[Excerpts from "A Venerable Vignette," part of a Maryville Nursing Home chapel Sunday bulletin, by Fr. Mollenbeier, chaplain at the time, October 31, 1971.]

I was roused back to reality when I heard another voice, a husky, almost masculine-timbered voice, speaking as if to no one, yet to anyone listening: "This coat will comfort Frank; he's been down with pneumonia 5 times since January."

Bent over a hamper of heaped clothing was Sister Kathleen St. Martin, SSMO, [...]. I watched her feverishly sorting clean and usable wearables from a carton of forfeited give-a-way materials [...]. [...] a sincerely dedicated nun, veiled and gowned in blue [...].

Maryville [Nursing Home] and the Convent Sisters of St. Mary [Kate's religious order at the time], co-operatively maintain a mission of mercy along Portland's skid row. Sister Kathleen St. Martin is the strong right arm of this charitable co-operative. Dispensing medicines, pills, clothing, social service, cheer and friendliness to a floating army of modern mendicants, down-and-outers, bums, human derelicts, unwashed, bruised, ailing, sick and dying, she takes care of the human flotsam and jetsam that litters the hovels, sidewalks, and gutters that "adorn" the unhuman area of Portland, known as "skid row."

The governing Superiors of the local Convent first graciously gave Sister Kathleen permission to spend her atomic energy among the down-trodden of skid row and on her own unselfish initiative Sister Kathleen St. Martin has added her 2-off days from her duties at Maryville [where she worked as a registered nurse]; so that on 3 days a week (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays) she dispenses her meaningful mercies between the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

It would indeed take pages and more pages to diagram the ministrations of this selfless servant who single-handedly combines the well authenticated historic services of a Nightingale and Barton [Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton, foundresses of modern nursing and the American Red Cross, respectively]. [...] Sick men are brought to hospital beds, the unsheltered to havens of protection from weather and cold; the wounded have been bandaged, alcoholics housed in half-way houses, dope addicts in "drying out" centers. [...] Sister Kathleen may be contacted in person, by phone, by correspondence at Maryville Nursing Home.

ARNOLD

Arnold lived in one of the inside, dark rooms in the Home Hotel on Third Street, between Burnside and Ankeny. My first visit there was to see Oliver, who managed both this hotel and the Holm Hotel, which was on Second, also between Burnside and Ankeny [see Oliver's story].

Arnold was reasonably young and a slightly built man. He developed cancer of the lungs and continued to smoke. He stayed in his room most of the time. He took time to do some interesting designs, drawing geometric figures and then coloring them with colored pencils. This was a type of occupational therapy I guess, or, at any rate, something he enjoyed.

He used to cook in his room. Most of the people in the hotels had a little hot plate, which served two purposes: it kept them warm, and they could heat water for their coffee or heat up a can of beans or soup.

One time in about 1973, Arnold asked if I could get him a statue of [the Virgin] Mary, and I told him I would see if I could get him one. I was living at The Madeleine convent (on Northeast Twenty-fourth and Siskiyou), and I told the Sisters that I had a friend who wanted a statue of Mary and asked if anyone had one. One of them said, "There's one in our classroom that we don't use anymore," and I said, "I'll take it!" But I hadn't seen it yet. When I eventually saw the size of it, I thought, "I'll take it? How?!" It was a statue of Our Lady of Grace and was two-and-a-half to three feet high. It was plaster, painted, and in very good condition. Anyway, I did take it, and I put it in a plastic bag because I didn't want it to get nicked. Now the statue was visible as I carried it; so there I was carrying the Blessed Mother under my arm down Burnside Street on Skid Road, and I remember feeling a little embarrassed! I brought it up to Arnold in his hotel, and he loved it. But it probably got knocked over and broken at some point, because I didn't see it later when I would visit him.

Arnold was getting pretty sick as time went on. He became very thin and his cheeks were hollow. One morning I had stopped in at the hotel to check on a couple of people, and I said to someone, "How's Arnold this morning?" He said, "Brought him dinner last night and he's still just sleeping this morning." So I went into his room, and I saw this plate of cold liver and onions and vegetables that someone had brought and put on his bedside stand. Then I glanced at Arnold; he was dead. I went to the manager and said, "I think Arnold is dead," and he, too, said, "I thought he was sleeping." So he came back with me to the room and agreed that Arnold had died.

Arnold had found a home and friends at this hotel, and he was another individual who touched my life in his gentle, quiet way.

ART

Art was another person I met at Harmony House. He was a tall, good-looking, blond man. He was married and had two children — a little four-year-old blind boy and a six-year-old girl. He had his problems with drinking, but when he would be ready to look for work he never had a problem finding a job. He had worked for a donut chain for years, doing the baking at night, and he was good.

He really loved his little boy, who was a sweet child. And he would have been a very good-looking child, but his blindness was the type where his eyes were sunken in their sockets. As far as I know, Art was pretty faithful to his wife, and yet I think living with him must have been hard for her in many ways. I think a lot of times he denied his problem with alcoholism, and it would get him into enough trouble that he entered the program at Harmony House a couple of times.

One time I went to the coast with his whole family. We were in two cars — he and his wife and children in one; Scott and I in another [see Scott's story]. We met there and had a picnic. On the way back, Art's car broke down and there was no way he could get it fixed at that time. So they all got into my little car, and my brakes started to malfunction. We had a *l-o-n-g* session trying to get back home again. When we arrived in Portland, someone took Art to wherever his car was, halfway to the coast.

Art was having his problems staying sober, and I think his wife decided to take the children back to Idaho, where his family was, for a little stability with their grandparents. I hope that he ended up going back eventually, too.

Then I lost track of Art, though I did hear later that his little boy was enrolled in a school for the blind and was doing very well. The things I remember most about Art were his really deep love for his children, his wanting to do what he could for them, and his making the best of a marriage that may not have been all that it could have been.

BEN

Ben came to Harmony House, and then the next time I heard from him he was in Rocky Butte Jail. He called me from there when I was still working at Matt Talbot Center. I used to go out to Rocky Butte to visit people when they were incarcerated. I don't remember what Ben's conviction was, but I went out to see him, and he was very surprised that I had done this.

I received a letter from him after I had seen him, and I thought the letter was very strange. The way the letter was written, the way he expressed himself, was very different from the way I would have expected he would write. When I saw him *before* he was in jail, I thought of him as perfectly normal; but when I read the letter, I thought some of his thinking was not totally normal.

I really don't know whatever happened to him after that.

BIG BUD

Bud always referred to himself as "Big Bud." I first met him on the streets when he was drinking. He was a very tall man (well over six feet) and *very* heavy; he must have weighed close to three-hundred pounds, at least, and moving for him was a real feat. He was a huge eater, his back hurt a lot, and he just wasn't well generally. He was from the South; his accent was southern and he spoke with a very slow drawl. He was illiterate; he could write his name but he couldn't read.

I probably saw Bud here and there a few times, but he doesn't stand out in my memory that much. He wasn't, evidently, living in Portland all the time I knew him. People told me they used to drink with him under the bridge, but I can't quite see Bud being someone who would do that, because he was an older man and not well.

Some of Bud's family didn't want anything to do with him because when he would go on a drunk he would end up on the floor and nobody could pick him up. He was finally sent to Dammasch State Hospital [a psychiatric hospital] because they didn't know what to do with him. He came to De Paul Center from Dammasch, and I remember that he didn't want to go back there.

The first time I saw Bud at De Paul, I saw this great big man sitting there, white-haired, with his face down. I looked at him a while longer and said, "You're Bud!" and he said in his real Southern drawl, "Well, Sister Kathleen, how are you?" I said, "Bud, I'm just fine," and he said, "It sure is good to see you." As time went on, he began calling me "Sister Katie."

He always figured he could drink beer and that it wasn't going to hurt him. I used to talk to him and say, "Bud, you can't drink alcohol, and beer is alcohol." "Well, maybe you're right, Katie, maybe you're right," he'd say. As time went on, he'd sleep when he should have been awake; I would go upstairs to get another client, and there Bud would be, sound asleep during the lectures. He slept a lot but claimed he wasn't always asleep. Everybody there liked him, because he was sweet, in spite of all of his shenanigans at times! He wasn't hurting anybody, and there was a gentleness about him. But he knew what he didn't want: he did not want to go back to Dammasch or into a nursing home or any similar place, where other people thought maybe he should be.

Bud was having some urinary tract problems at one point, and I took him up to the hospital. They did a few exams and then did urinary tract surgery. His family came to see him. When I went up to the hospital and his brothers and sisters were there, I talked with them quite a bit. They didn't want anything to do with him. The one sister said, "I've helped him out all I can ever help him. I just can't take this." She had made it easy for him, though, to continue drinking a lot of times when she would let him stay at her place for a long time. And his brothers were very firm that they weren't going to put up with any drinking. Bud said, "I'm not going to drink anymore. I know now that I can't drink, that I'm alcoholic. And I'm going to AA." They hadn't seen this side of him much, so I'm sure they were hoping that his treatment at De Paul was going to work out.

But Bud never did come back to De Paul after that hospitalization. I guess he must have gone to one of his brother's to stay. Even though he did have his own apartment, he apparently was not really capable of taking care of himself. I really don't know what happened after that stay in the hospital, except that I was told that Bud did resume drinking again.

BIG RUDY

Big Rudy I first met at Matt Talbot Center. He was a large man, kind of a cheerful person on the whole, and he and I became friends.

Matt Talbot used to have a Sunday meal for the occupants, which was something that Brother Eric Hobbs [one of the directors of Matt Talbot] got started. Rudy was very proud of his cooking skills, and I accepted a couple of invitations to eat with him and the people who lived there.

I knew he had an alcohol problem or he wouldn't have been at Matt Talbot Center, so I asked him at one point if he was interested in going into Harmony House. He said yes. At that time, I had quite a bit to do with anybody who wanted to be admitted to Harmony House; I would talk to the manager or whoever was doing the admitting, and the person I was recommending would be allowed in. This was the case with Rudy.

I remember that he liked to play cribbage with the manager of the house, and he would play with me sometimes, too. It wasn't long after arriving that Rudy was hired as a cook. And of course he would always want me to taste the various foods that he had prepared. Since I did group counseling there in the evenings (I did one-to-one counseling in the mornings), I usually would go to the house in time to have dinner with the men, and then I would have a group session afterwards.

We began to suspect that Rudy was drinking some. Since I always find it hard to confront somebody with their drinking unless I'm really closely involved with them and have a special reason for it, I didn't confront him. Also, I didn't think this was my place at Harmony House, but rather that of the manager and the other men. Anyway, we began to suspect that Rudy was going out to drink and then coming back; he was managing to handle his job okay at the same time. This went on for a while.

Now one of the men had a very beautiful ring, and Rudy said to him, "Could I have that? I'd like to show it to Sister Kate." Then he ended up taking off with the ring and some of Harmony House's money. And that was the last we saw or heard of him until probably a year or a year and a half after when we got a call (I believe it was from Reno, Nevada) that Rudy had died. I don't recall if he died in a detox center or a hospital, but he had been drinking. He had had a Harmony House card in his wallet, and they wondered if anybody at the house was a relative and whether they could assume any responsibility for the funeral; we didn't know of the whereabouts of any relatives.

That was a sad ending for Rudy. He had been a good person and had done a lot of good at Harmony House before he relapsed.



FROM THE TIMES

Detox

[Excerpts from "Detox—Where Do We Go From Here?," an article by Howard Jaffe, in BCC Pipeline, July 1976.]

Offering one of the few alternatives to Police Civil Hold, Detox (Portland's detoxification facility) is recognized as one of the critical first steps in the rehabilitation of the "street alcoholic." In its 55-bed facility (which will be reduced to 50 beds with a cut in county funding), Detox offers its patients food, shelter and group counseling for up to 5 days. If at the end of the five days the client requests further care, Detox refers him to a number of different treatment programs which offer extended counseling and vocational rehabilitation. So in essence Detox offers the client an open door to responsible sobriety.

However, as with any publicly funded organization, certain pressures have been placed on Detox to change its policy in accordance with the powers that be. One possible policy change would penalize those clients who choose not to stay for the recommended 5-day period. Present policy states that regardless of how long the client chooses to stay, he must wait at least 30 days for re-admittance (unless he is brought in by the police). A proposed change in policy would extend the re-admittance waiting period to six months for those who choose to leave before the five days are up. This would in effect leave more space for the police referral and at least partially transform Detox into a glorified holding tank and an extension of police authority.



Kate working with patient at Hooper Detox during her earlier years on Burnside, circa 1973, when detox was still on Southwest Pine Street between Second and Third Avenues. Photo is not part of BCC Pipeline article but is taken from *Burnside, A Community: A Photographic History of Portland's Skid Row*, by Kathleen Ryan, text by Mark Beach, Coast to Coast Books, 1979.

While one cannot argue with the need for closer police/Detox cooperation, one wonders about the plight of the individual who is locked out of the Detox facility for six months without police referral for re-admittance.

At least temporarily, we will all be locked out of Detox as the facility will be forced to vacate its current location on SW 3rd and Pine by August 25th due to fire code regulations. The Burnside community would like Detox to stay in the neighborhood, but due to a limited budget, a specific site for relocation has not yet been chosen. [Detox moved eventually to its current location on Northeast Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard at the east end of the Burnside Bridge and is known officially in 2006 as The David P. Hooper Detoxification Center. The Burnside area in which the majority of the stories of this project take place is located at and around the *west* end of the bridge.]

Clean-up Center

[Excerpts from "Clean-Up Center: Revolving Wardrobe Needs Clothes," an article by David Rath, in BCC Pipeline, March 1975.]

It seems that there are two types of people in the world. A person of the first type sees someone who has a dirty body wrapped in ill-fitting, dirty clothes, holds his breath to avoid contagion, and talks later of his narrow brush with the disgusting degenerates of skid row. A person from the second group sees the same person and realizes that far more disgusted than he, is the person who needs new clothes and a place to clean up.

Since those reading this undoubtedly are of the second group, they should know how they can help the Burnside Clean-Up Center, a program of Burnside Projects with the help of the Downtown Chapel [the Roman Catholic parish on Skid Road] (which for years has supplied the space and many of the cleaning materials) and the Public Inebriate Project (which recently awarded a grant to help with personnel and materials costs). In this program approximately 90 men a day have access to showers, shaves, the only delousing station in the city, and they can exchange their old clothes for the day before's freshly laundered yield.

The only problem with the "revolving wardrobe" system is that a good portion of the clothes have seen far too many days in the field or under the bridge to be recycled. This is where you of group II come in. If you have usable men's clothing of any type (especially the smaller sizes), shoes, caps, jackets, or towels, please bring them to the Downtown Chapel, 601 W. Burnside [...] from 9 to 5, or call the program director [...].



FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Transition from Teaching to Nursing

Ron: How did the transition occur from teaching to nursing? You taught from 1940, roughly, when you were a second-year novice, until 1965, when you received your master's degree in education. It seems odd that the very year after getting your master's in education you started working as a nurse's aid at Maryville Nursing Home. What led you to switch your focus, Kate?

Kate: Initially, when I graduated from high school, I had thought I would like to be a nurse. But at the same time, I knew that I wanted to enter the convent at St. Mary of the Valley and that they were dedicated to education. [At the time that Kate entered the convent, "St. Mary of the Valley" was a large complex in Beaverton, Oregon, that included a convent, mother house, grade school, high school, and boarding school — all operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon.]

It was after my Community built a nursing home [Maryville Nursing Home] that I began to think about it again, not knowing really if I would like to do geriatric nursing or feel comfortable about it. After it was opened, I was asked if I would assist the Sister who was on duty from eleven at night until seven in the morning, so she wouldn't be alone there. This was the first night that they had taken in eight patients.


Ron: Were the patients priests and religious?

Kate: No.

So I went with her and was doing different things for the patients, and I really loved it and loved them. At that time, in the early sixties, I thought seriously of switching from my teaching career to a nursing career.

Ron: Was this nursing experience occurring toward the end of your teaching experience?

Kate: Yes. Maryville opened somewhere in the early sixties. I had taught for roughly twenty-five years by then. So in 1967 I entered the nursing program at Portland Community College, and in June of 1969 I passed the State Board exams and was licensed as a Registered Nurse with an Associate Degree.



BILL

I knew Bill for several years and would meet him on the streets a lot. He was a heavy drinker and never wanted to go to the hospital if there was anything wrong with him. He was very independent and would only ask for help when he could no longer cope with the pain — this is why I saw him so rarely in my office. He seemed to have fended for himself on the streets.

He came up once to the Matt Talbot Center with a very swollen face and cheek, which was the result of an abscessed tooth. One side of his face was very badly swollen. He would not go to the hospital, and I thought, "What do I do?" Well, there was a cot in my office at that time, and I had Bill lie on that with a hot pack and told him I would be back soon. I don't remember where I went, but when I came back, the abscess had broken, and you cannot *believe* the amount of drainage that came out. This gave him a lot of relief from the pain.

Bill died an early death from his alcoholism. He wasn't very old, maybe in his late thirties.

BLAKE HOLLOWAY

Blake Holloway... the words that come to mind are "sad guy," "the clown," "jail," and "poet."

Blake came to the Harmony House out in Oregon City when I was there. He was somebody I felt pretty sad about and sorry for. He seemed very sad. He said that he had spent a great deal of his time in jail. He had a couple of daughters, and he said that he had been accused by his wife of molesting one of them, but that he hadn't done it. Of course, anybody who's a child molester has a strong sense of denial (which I didn't really know at that time). I took him at his word.

He was doing okay in the program. He wasn't well-educated, but he wrote a poem about a clown. I think the clown was crying, was sad. And, whereas I mentioned earlier that Clinton Tait's poetry was about the *beauty* that he saw around him in the midst of Skid Road [see Clinton Tait's story], Blake's poem was very sad. The poem was difficult for me to understand, but I remember there were parts of it that jarred me and other parts that I was delighted with.

Blake didn't stay long in Harmony House, and I don't remember the reason for his leaving — whether he had violated some probation and had to go back to jail, or whether he just decided to leave. I thought he was kind of making it in the program, but I also thought that there was too much of him tied into his family for him to be willing to stay long enough to complete the program. It seemed to me he was in a hurry to get on with his life.

I never was able to know more about Blake — the sad guy, the clown, the man in jail, the poet.

*The Clown^{the} cried They Thought
he laughed but he cried!*

*The Clown cried They Thought he
laughed... But he cried*

*They Thought he saw but he didn't
he died*

*No he never laughed before he
died The clown he didn't see before
he died*

*But he should have seen before
he died How happy he made me feel*

—from the handwritten clown poem by Blake Holloway

BLANCHET HOUSE

This history of the beginnings and development of Blanchet House and my involvement in it is based on my own recollections and is not intended to represent an official account.

Somewhere in the late forties or around 1950, I believe, some students from the University of Portland got together under Father Francis Kennard, who was a chaplain there, to start a soup line for the homeless and the street people living in the Burnside area. The building Blanchet occupies now [1988] is the building they were in right from the start. The block they're in, though, had different buildings at one time, and has gradually been turned into a parking lot.

When Blanchet House began, men lived there and there was a chapel. Father Kennard was Blanchet's chaplain, and he used to say Mass upstairs. From the time Blanchet began the soup line, they have never missed a meal. The initial students who volunteered under Fr. Kennard later became board members, and some of them still are.

My life on the streets of Burnside started at Blanchet, where I first got involved in 1970. George Dawson was director at that time. George would pay for my gas initially; and, after the first car that I drove had a serious problem, he gave me \$1300 for another car. Blanchet House, its director and board were very supportive of what I was doing, which made my ministry so much easier.

A man named Mel, whom I've discussed elsewhere [see Mel's story], was manager for many years until he was murdered at Blanchet with a meat cleaver. I remember Mel would say, "Sister Kathleen is here. If you have any questions or want any help, she's out there" — and I would be standing on the corner of Fourth and Glisan, outside of Blanchet.

My first experience outside Blanchet was one time in 1970 when several men were standing around on the sidewalk, and finally one of them came up to me and said, "Have you got any Librium?" I said, "Well, no. That's a prescription drug. I can't give you *that*. I don't *have* any." He said to his buddies, "I *knew* she couldn't help," and he walked away. But then somebody else asked for help, and from then on things started going better. In the beginning I felt very uneasy and never looked at anyone in the eye when I was walking on the streets, because I didn't know what I was going to reply if they said something! But then, from those initial street encounters my ministry evolved into what it became.

Blanchet also had a house on Northwest Eighteenth Street, which they still have, and it is where George Dawson lived. And they had a farm out at Carlton [a town southwest of Portland] — Blanchet Farm — which they still have. Blanchet houses men who are on the staff. Some of these cook, drive the truck to pick up food from various merchants, or serve the men in the soup line as they come in to eat. Others keep replenishing supplies on the tables, or participate in cleaning the tables and mopping the floor when the serving is over.

A lot of people are interested in Blanchet because it's helping the homeless and the street people; it's reliable, it's always there, and it always provides the same service.

It serves a breakfast at six-thirty in the morning, and they start lunch at eleven-thirty. They serve women and any people with disabilities first. They can seat about fifty at a time. In order to accommodate the few hundred people who came to eat at a given meal, they would stagger the servings — as people finished eating, others would be ushered in to take their place. People were welcome to take with them, in a bag, various foods that kept being replenished on the table, like bread, rolls, or cake. They could also return for seconds, but they would have to go to the end of the line for this because the main foods served were in a more limited supply.

They have had different seminarians volunteer there, some of whom were Jesuit seminarians, and they've had Holy Cross volunteers. Every year, different ones would come for a few weeks.

In my early days on Burnside, when I was still connected with the Sisters of St.

Mary of Oregon, I'd get a group of singers to come to Blanchet on Christmas and sing carols. We'd have a Christmas party, and I'd get donations of cookies and fruit and cigarettes, and have these for the guests. One time they were singing, "Silent Night, Holy Night, *All is Calm...*" — and all of a sudden a fight broke out and one guy was socking somebody else across the table over something. Some of those singing were nuns, and they just kept singing through this! The people liked those parties, and I used to do the same at Halloween. I would get a lot of volunteers to assist me. In fact, one of



Photo of Blanchet House, which in 2006 is still located at its original location, 340 Northwest Everett Street. Photo from Blanchet House web site, 2006.

my teachers in nursing wanted to send students down for the experience of this; so, for a couple of years, I had nursing students coming as well.

I was very active in Blanchet House from 1970 until approximately 1982 [and Kate remained connected with them in one way or another until well into the nineties].

BOBBY

I first met Bobby probably within the first couple of years that I was down on Burnside. I used to see him drinking, and I remember when he was pretty drunk once he tried to dance with me around the lobby of the Holm Hotel on Second Street.

One time when I was in the Holm, he came to me and said, "I'd like to move out of here." I didn't know him very well at that time, but I knew his name. Apparently on his birthday he stopped drinking, and he hadn't been drinking for some while since. He said, "I want to get out of here, to move into the Matt Talbot Center." By that time I already had an office in the Matt Talbot Center, and I used to refer a lot of people to stay there, especially if I thought they would make it better there than in some of the other hotels.

I forgot about his request completely and didn't make any arrangements. The next time I stopped at the Holm he said, "Did you do anything about my moving into Matt Talbot?" and I said no, but that I would get at it that day, which I did. I think he moved there the next day.

He began to help me in the little clinic office that I had in the Matt Talbot Center. He would clean the office. He would soak the labels off of used medicine bottles, which took a lot of time; I would then fill the bottles with vitamins. I had a quarter of a million multi-vitamins at that time, and I would give about a month's supply of them to people who were in the hotels, as well as keep Blanchet House supplied. Bobby served as a receptionist for people who were coming in to see me; he'd keep track of the order that people had come in. He'd run errands for me and do other things I needed. And he often went with me on the rounds to various hotels.

Some recovering alcoholics, once they've been sober for a while, find that it's more difficult for them to be patient and understanding with alcoholics who aren't as far into recovery as they are, and this was the case with Bobby. As time went on, he found it hard sometimes to deal with some of the alcoholics. One time, an Indian named Harry came into Matt Talbot very drunk. He had a severe case of impetigo, I believe, which is a contagious skin disease, and it was infected. His body was covered with it, and he wanted me to help him. I said, "I can't do that. You need to see a doctor. You need antibiotics and medical care that I can't give in this office." He got very upset, and Bobby got upset and angry and was trying to get rid of him. Harry picked up a heavy glass ashtray that had sharp corners; he was about to hit Bobby with it, when one of the men who had come up with Harry said, "Come on, Harry, let's go," because he knew there was trouble brewing. (It wasn't too long after, by the way, that Harry died. They wouldn't take him into detox because of his condition, but I believe he was taken to a hospital, where he died.) Anyway, Bobby had a hard time coping with this type of behavior that went on at times.

He really was a very friendly and likeable person, though, and he began to make friends with some of the new shopkeepers who were coming into the area. Old Town was beginning a renovation at that time, and he became friends with a young girl who worked in a yogurt shop close by [possibly called Hansen's]; he would be invited to her parents' home sometimes to cut the grass and have dinner. He also walked around a lot and used to like going down to the river in the morning to watch the sun rise [Old Town and Skid Road are synonymous terms, practically speaking, and are adjacent to the Willamette River in Portland].

There was another friend, a young woman named Deborah, who volunteered with me one day a week when I first began on Burnside. She would come down on a Tuesday and work in the office. She was very friendly to Bobby and began to befriend him and invite him home for dinner. After her father died, she gave him some of his clothes because he and Bobby were about the same size. When she was going to get married, she asked Bobby to give her away. So he was sort of part of that family. But sometimes he resented her kind of preaching to him about different things (although he wasn't drinking at that time).

Then there was yet another young woman, Fran, who was a registered nurse and worked with me at times, and Bobby became friends with her too. He seemed to do very well at making friends with these young women. He was good to them. He must have been

about fifty-some at that time. When Fran was going to get married, she invited Bobby and me to the wedding. Since she was going to be married in Tacoma, where my mother lived, Bobby and I drove up and stayed at my mother's.

One day Bobby came to me and said, "You know, I think I'm Catholic. I think I was baptized, and I would like to make my First Communion." He told me that he had been adopted and that he thought he had been told that his parents were Catholic. At that time I was a parishioner at St. Andrew's Parish, and so I introduced him to Father Clint Adams there. I think Clint said that I could just talk with Bobby, instructing him in what he needed to know, without having him go through the usual First Communion preparation classes. He might have started to take classes, actually, but he found it hard, because he had what I think of as a typical personality of an alcoholic who doesn't go through an A.A. support system with a sponsor — short-tempered, short-fused. (I see a difference in recovering alcoholics between those who have a support system, including A.A., and those who do not.)

At any rate, Bobby was ready to make his First Communion and be confirmed at St. Andrew's at Easter. I was going to be his sponsor. I remember that that year my mother came down from Tacoma for the service; Bobby and I drove there to pick her up, and she stayed at the convent with me at St. Andrew's. She was always very impressed with Bobby because he was so clean and neat and polite.

Then, one time at Mass, after Communion, I told him, "Bobby, you do not have to receive Communion from the cup [which had consecrated wine in it]. Most alcoholics do not. Receiving the Host is sufficient." But he did drink from the cup. Now sometime later, he was invited to dinner at the home of the woman who worked in the yogurt shop and her family, and they had wine. They asked him if he wanted some and he said, "Well, yes, I'll have some. I took a little wine at Communion." So that was the beginning of his downfall, his relapse. He had been sober for six years. This was very, very sad, and I think that the family felt very badly about it. I mentioned to them that an alcoholic cannot drink, and they said, "Well, he said he took a little wine at Communion." I said, "He told me that, too, but I told him that not everyone takes wine at Communion." Anyway, Bobby began drinking again.

At that time, he was living in the Oak Apartments, and he was what I guess you would call a manager. He didn't collect the rents, but he would respond to various requests of the tenants — if their smoke alarm went off or they had water problems and so on. He got many calls from the tenants, and that was hard on him, because I think he'd get irritated by having to respond to people doing dumb things. I remember that he bought a canary at that time, and he had a lot of things around, a lot of pictures that he used to buy and have framed.

After a while, Bobby began to drink more heavily, more steadily, more frequently, and he finally lost his job at Oak Plaza and was told that he would have to leave, that he was being evicted. Deborah helped him move to the Washington Plaza Apartments. She told me later she would never do that again for him. It was a terrible ordeal for herself and her husband.

Bobby would drink for a while and then sober up. He usually would come off of the drunk by himself, without having to go to detox.

We kept in pretty close contact. I'd go see him and encourage him, and I just was a friend; there wasn't much I could do about changing things.

One time he was in terrible shape. He had begun going to the room of a woman on the same floor. She kept him drinking, gave him alcohol, and used to get him to give her some of the things that he had (he had some beautiful pictures, beautifully and expensively framed, and she got some of these things).

On another occasion when I went to visit him, his place was a mess, and I said, "Bobby, you're really very sick. Would you be willing to go to detox?" At other times he had said no, but this one time he said yes. I said, "If I call detox, will you go?" and he said, "Yes." I don't recall anymore why I had to leave at that point, but after I called for detox I left, and when they came he refused to go with them. I will always feel very sorry that I didn't stay until they came, because I knew better — I knew that what the drinking

person says and what he or she does are two different things.

Some time later, I received a call that Bobby had fallen and fractured his skull. So I went up to the hospital, and he was unconscious, in a coma, and they didn't really expect him to come out of it. I don't recall the number of days he was unconscious, but it was quite a while, and I remember that I just said to him, "Bobby, this is Kate. I don't know if you can hear me, but I'm praying for you."

Then I went to the hospital again around Thanksgiving. The patients were given a Thanksgiving dinner, and I went into Bobby's room. He had regained some consciousness but was slipping in and out of it. They had him sitting up, and I helped feed him. I remember saying, "Bobby, do you know who I am?" and he said, "Kate."

From then on he began to improve, but he had really suffered some neurological damage as a result of the fracture, similar to a stroke. Part of his face was paralyzed, and his speech was harder to understand. Eating was very difficult for Bobby because he was unable to swallow normally, and the food and saliva would come out of his mouth. This was very messy and difficult for him. The thing that really bothered him was the continuous flow of saliva; he would often have a towel in his mouth just to absorb it. He was eventually transferred to a nursing facility.

One day it was his birthday, and I and Vic Hudson, one of the Holy Cross Associates, took him out for his birthday. We took him to a Dairy Queen; he wanted one of their ice creams with peanuts, chocolate sauce, and whipped cream. We stayed in the car while he ate this, putting a towel over his clothes to protect them. Bobby was eating the ice cream but making a real mess, and Vic would wipe his face then. Vic was so dear with Bobby while feeding him, and so patient; I just love that man for the way he handled Bobby that time. And Bobby loved it! This was the only time ever that I took him out, because it was too difficult and his condition was gradually deteriorating.

When Bobby was in the nursing home and I was there during meal times, I would help feed him. And I began bringing him Communion, which he wanted. The first time I did this, I gave him the Host but he couldn't swallow it, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, what do I do!" So I got a glass of water and tried to help him. After that, I began giving him just a little particle of the Host.

One time I think I was talking to him about the experiences that we had had together over the years and thanking him for the beautiful memories that he had brought into my life, and we somehow got on to the subject of drinking. He said in his own way that he wouldn't be where he was if he hadn't started drinking again.

I continued visiting him and bringing him little gifts. Deborah came to see him once with her little girl, Rebecca, whom Bobby dearly loved, but it was so hard on Deborah and Rebecca to see him that they didn't come back. Fran came to see him also; she handled it better, but I think she only saw him once as well.

By then Bobby was mostly bed-ridden, and you could see he was failing. He continued to smoke, with supervision, getting somebody to light the cigarettes for him. They wouldn't let him keep cigarettes in his room; so, when I would visit him, I'd bring them to him from the nurse's station, and he would smoke them in a smoking area. Because he was not too alert, and because he didn't have feeling in his fingers apparently, the cigarettes would burn down and the ends of his fingers would get burned from this, and very black.

Then one morning I got a call and was told that Bobby had died. They had gone to turn him at about five in the morning, but he was gone. We arranged a funeral service and had a Mass for him at the Downtown Chapel.

Bobby was very special and was one of the important people in my ministry. I always felt that he was a courageous person — dealing with all the difficulties involved in staying sober for six years, and then taking the different steps that he did in getting back into the faith. Everyone who met him really was impressed with him and thought a lot of him.

BOYD VANDEHEY

Boyd Vandehey was an interesting man. I saw him a *lot* in the Home Hotel, on Third. He was usually in his room, which was reasonably neat, and he'd be sitting on the side of his bed. He was a teaser and he used to tease me a lot. He had a family picture of his kids. There was quite a number of them; they were good-looking individuals, and he was very proud of them. I remember he would always say after a visit, "Come back. Anytime. Stay a little longer."

Boyd drank beer primarily. He did considerable drinking, but when he wasn't drinking he had some friends who were real buddies, and they loved to go hunting and fishing together. They used to do it a lot; they'd take a few days off and go to different parts of the state.

Later, his health began to deteriorate. His legs would be swollen, and he seemed to have a circulatory problem. He sat most of the time on the edge of his bed, as I said earlier, and eventually he developed stasis ulcers. When he would continue to drink, his circulation would become impaired, which would slow the healing.

Boyd began to see the doctor periodically, which he didn't like doing. He began to have strokes, and he ended up in Good Samaritan Hospital. He'd get well enough to come back home, he'd start drinking again, and after a while he'd be back in the hospital. I'd go and see him off and on, whenever I was aware that he was there.

During one of his stays in the hospital I didn't think he was going to make it out again, because he looked and acted like he was never going to really recover. And I thought, "This is probably pretty good, actually, because it will get him into a nursing home and he will be able to stop drinking."

He did stay in a nursing home for a while, but he couldn't wait to get out. He would always say he was well enough to leave. I tried to convince him at different times that he should probably stay there, but he would end up signing himself out and returning to the Home.

The manager of the Home had thought for a while that Boyd wasn't going to be coming back, so they packed his things and moved them out of his room. Boyd was upset when he found this out. When he returned to the hotel, he was given a different room — a room with a window — which he liked (he had been in an inside room all these years, without a window; you can imagine how depressing it could be to have no window at all).

Boyd and I talked about the possibility of his going into a nursing home again, but he said no, that he didn't want to do that. In the end, he died at the hotel, which is what he wanted. I always found it interesting that he used to be concerned about his health but never made the connection in any way that his health condition was related to his drinking.

BRAD LANG

Brad I first met at Harmony House, where he lived for quite a long time. He was a cook at the house. He was Indian [Native American]. He had a face that showed the ravages of his suffering, of his disease of alcoholism; he was puffy-eyed, and his face was lined and care-worn beyond his years. He was someone I would describe as a very angry man.

While Harmony House was not an AA program, Brad would talk up that program, say how wonderful it was for him, and encourage people to try it. He functioned pretty well.

Brad and I got along well. I used to go to Harmony House as a counselor, and when I'd have finished counseling we'd play a game or two of cribbage, after which I would sometimes have a bowl of soup before leaving.

Brad was at Harmony House for quite a few months. Then one day it was his day off and I asked where he was. They said he was in his room, so I thought I'd go see him before I left. I knocked at his door and he said to come in. He was lying on his bed, and I was aware that he might be ready to go on a drunk, because he was irritable and talking very negatively about several things, including about some of the younger people at the house. Well, Brad did go on a drunk and so had to leave Harmony House. I think he was in the house at least two if not three different times.

I would run into him downtown when he would be drinking. Usually, he'd be standing around; he'd look at me, we'd talk, and he'd say, "I did it again, Sister." He'd look terrible, and on some of his drunks he would land in the hospital.

Brad eventually moved into a hotel across the street from or near detox. He did quite well there and stayed sober. And he liked the manager and her husband; they were good to him, and sometimes, when they would go away, they would give him the responsibility of taking care of some of the needs around the hotel. They trusted him and gave him the keys to their apartment. He was very trustworthy.

He liked the attention of women. There were two women — "girls" he called them — who used to come and do exercises with some of the people who lived in the hotel. He joined the exercise class and was enjoying the sociability of it. I remember he had me come up once to see an older man who did some drinking; the man wanted some advice, I think, about his health and medications.

Brad kept a very neat apartment and did well there for quite a long time. Then he moved into the Northwest Towers I believe, which was managed by the Housing Authority [of Portland]. At that point he was drawing disability, I think; he wasn't old enough for Social Security yet.

Again, he did very well for quite a while. He used to go to Fred Meyer's [a one-stop shopping store] with Georgia, the manager of Northwest Towers at that time, and help her shop for some of the older residents in the hotel. She was a caring person and would shop for her mother, who was also a resident there, and maybe a couple of others.

Then Brad relapsed. Things got pretty bad for him, and he was hospitalized and nearly died. He went into an alcoholic seizure, and I think it scared him, so he quit drinking for a period. I'd see him now and then; he'd come to the Foster Hotel and play cribbage with Frank [see Frank's story], and sometimes he'd help me when I'd be bringing groceries into that hotel.

One time I was talking with him, and he said, "I'm diabetic and I have to take insulin. I thought I'd never learn to take care of myself, but they've given me the equipment and taught me. I do my own blood-sugar tests and give myself insulin." He wasn't happy with that arrangement, but he was handling it okay. As I said at the beginning, he was somebody I felt had a tremendous amount of unresolved anger, and I think his diabetes added to the anger.

As a new diabetic, there's usually a lot of adjusting regarding diet and exercise and the medication, and Brad began drinking again. He drank on and off for a couple of months and was in and out of the hospital. He'd ask to go to the hospital; hotel people

would take him there or send for an ambulance, because they'd think he might be in a diabetic coma, but then he would either refuse to go in the ambulance or he would go to the hospital and then turn around and sign himself out! One time he went to the hospital and stayed. I felt very sorry about this because I loved Brad. He was another man I learned to love; he really was a likeable person.

He went to the alcoholism treatment program at Holladay Park Hospital [in Portland]. He complained about all the loud music the younger alcoholics were playing, so they moved him to the senior section, which he apparently liked. But the next day he signed himself out. Then he started drinking again, was back in the hospital again, and signed himself out again!

He was probably in his early sixties at that time, and I wasn't sure what was going to happen to him. I was told that he asked to see me once or twice, but I don't think he ever recalled this, because he was probably in an alcoholic blackout most of the time. So all I could do at that point was pray and hope that somebody would be able to intervene and that Brad would be ready to accept help. I figured that his only other option might have been for something to happen to him that would require hospitalization (like a serious fall) so that he could be away from the drinking long enough to stop. But he wasn't able to stop at that time, I think; he was really a very sick man.

This was one of the cases where I felt more helpless — and I don't like being in the position of feeling helpless with the alcoholic. I didn't think I could help Brad because I didn't think he was ready for help. The other thing was that if you talked about his alcoholism he could get extremely angry. For example, in the case of the drinking incident at Northwest Towers that I described above, when Georgia and the woman who was head of the Housing Authority office told him they might have to serve him an eviction notice, one of the women said, "I thought he was going to hit me." He did strike out once at either Georgia or the present manager, but he didn't make contact.

About twelve years after this, in 1999, I received a call from one of the Holy Names Sisters who worked in the Eldercare program of Providence Hospital. By this time, Brad was not drinking and was living in a foster home. Once or twice a week he would come to the Eldercare program, which provided lunch and medical check-ups to a group of twenty to thirty individuals. I visited Brad a couple of times there.

The next call I received from the Sister was that Brad was in a nursing home in north Portland. I brought him Communion there a couple of times. He still wanted to smoke, and as his condition weakened he fell a couple of times trying to get out of bed to get a cigarette, so they placed his mattress on the floor to prevent any more falling. I talked to him a little bit about dying and if he was afraid, and he seemed at peace at that time.

I later received word that Brad had died. I'm glad I was able to follow this man off and on from the first time I met him on the streets of Skid Road, through successful efforts to stay sober, until his end at the nursing home.

FROM THE TIMES

Drop-in Center

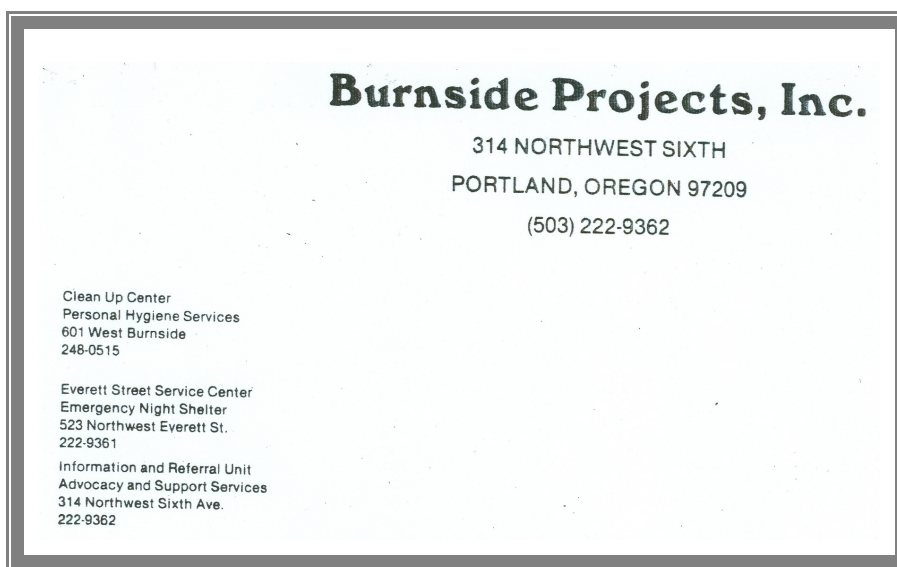
[Excerpt from "Everett St. Drop-In Center," an article by David Rath, in BCC Pipeline, April 1975.]

The Everett St. Center is a Burnside Project. People in the neighborhood generally refer to it as the "Drop-In." It has been around for over five years, first on [Northwest] Couch Street, later on at 523 NW Everett. It has always been open for nighttime shelter; currently the doors are closed less than 15 hours a week for clean-up. Many residents stay there night after night for months; others have never stepped inside because of rumors of it being a "rough" place. Some stay there because it means money can be saved for wine, some because the only alternative is a doorway or under the bridge, and some, who have a bed and four walls already paid for, because there are always people there. Sometimes the only action is a sad chorus of unhealthy snores. At other times dancing and music remind one that talent and the urge to celebrate are shared by all persons.

Some of the staff is college-educated and has had to learn the way of the avenue; others on the staff have known only the street and must learn the satisfaction and costs of responsibility. They are lucky to take home \$300 a month and normally succumb within a year to "Burnside Burnout," a malady caused by the depression of seeing the people you spend a good part of your day with disappearing to jail, the rails, or sometimes the morgue, and the anxiety of enforcing on those same people, rules ("no drinking") which are often fundamentally opposed to their lifestyle. [End of article.]

Service Center/Night Shelter

["Everett Street Service Center Fact Sheet," typed on Burnside Projects, Inc. letterhead (sample below). Date unknown, but possibly from the 1970s. The text has been re-typed (unedited) due to legibility problems with the original. Fact sheet provided by and used with permission of Transition Projects, Inc., formerly Burnside Projects, Inc.]



Everett Street Service Center Fact Sheet

Purpose:

To provide Burnside residents and transients with an Emergency Center that can provide overnight shelter facilities for washing and shaving, first aid, meals, the opportunity to develop options in their lives and the opportunity to socialize with their peers. The Center serves 118 people per night, or approximately 500-700 different people each month.

Hours and Location:

The Center is open from 6pm to 8am every night of the year at 523 NW Everett Street.

Eligibility:

Everyone over 18 years old is eligible. We give priority to women and men over 35 who are not receiving financial aid (Welfare, SSI, Pension, etc.). These people are admitted at 6pm, if they register first at our main office (314 NW 6th, just around the corner). The only information asked is their name, age, height and weight. At 9pm we open the doors to anyone until we reach our legal capacity of 118 people.

History:

The Service Center opened on Everett Street on March 1, 1970. On April 10, it moved to 25 NW 3rd Avenue, and on September 11 of the same year, it moved to 216 NW

Couch. On September 1, 1972, the facility was moved to its current location at 523 NW Everett and opened with expanded program and facilities. The Center is an outgrowth of the Burnside Hotel.

Services:

Shelter The ESSC (Everett Street Service Center) provides one of the few alternatives to sleeping on the street for people with little or no money. The sleeping facilities consist of wooden pallets and benches. The Center also provides blankets.

Checkroom ESSC provides a checkroom service whereby people staying at the Center can check their belongings. Clients can check their belongings for the night while they are staying at the Center [or] for the day while they are looking for work or working.

First Aid All the Floor Managers at the Center are trained and certified by the American National Red Cross to provide First Aid to the injured.

Food The Staff, through the voluntary efforts of Church groups and other concerned individuals, provides some meals and food at the Center.

Center's Needs The Center is always in need of donations of shaving equipment, first aid supplies, blankets, tobacco for the clients and concerned individuals willing to donate food or provide evening meals. In addition to the above mentioned needs which are constant, we also have some special needs. They are donations of:

- paint for the Center
- people to paint the Center
- minor carpentry work
- minor television repairs


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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Neither Mission Nor Plan*

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- *I didn't have any particular thing in mind.*
  - *...I had no idea of what I was going to be getting into.*
  - *...I didn't know where to start.*
  - *I still wasn't sure what I was going to be doing...*
  - *It wasn't planned; it just developed from one stage to the other...*
  - *When I started meeting the men... I had no idea that I would be doing massive dressing changes and would need a place to work out of and the supplies to do this.*
- 

**Ron:** You have mentioned more than once that when you first started on Burnside you did not have a mission in mind. You did not go there with a plan. You had no idea what would happen. This intrigues me because it seems so contrary to the way we are conditioned nowadays to pursue a career; we are taught to do much planning, for example. Talk about your lack of a plan and how you coped with this.

**Kate:** First of all, when I was nursing at Maryville [Nursing Home], I saw two articles, one about a priest working on Skid Road — Father Jim Lambert — and the other about some Holy Names Sisters hosting a sing-along at Blanchet House. This made me think that there might be a way for me to be involved. I didn't have any particular thing in mind. I know that when I asked to go down on Burnside, I had no idea of what I was going to be getting into. I guess something within me was urging me to something — and I like to think of it as the Holy Spirit.

So I met and talked with Father Lambert about whether there would be anything that someone could do down there with my background, education, and nursing degree. When he said yes, I didn't know where to start. I just went down to the Blanchet House and talked to Mel [the manager] [see Mel and Harvey's story], said I was a Sister, and asked if there was anything I could do. And I don't think Mel had any idea either of how I might fit in, but he did make the announcement, when the men were in the soup line, that Sister Kathleen was there and she was a nurse and if anyone wanted to talk to her she would be there.

That was the beginning. I stood on the corner of Fourth and Glisan. I had a little purse with things like Band-Aids, peroxide, and aspirin. I still wasn't sure what I was going to be doing, but I continued to go to Blanchet House and give out vitamins at the soup line.

Then, as it became evident from the soup line that there were more needs, I began to provide a service of doing some dressing changes, in the office next to the manager's. That became very, very complicated for the Blanchet staff as they were trying to feed this on-going line of people that came in to eat.

So I began to look for a place to have an area where I could function properly. I still never thought of having a whole office. It *wasn't* planned; it just developed from one stage to the other until eventually I had the little clinic at Matt Talbot Center.

There were second-hand stores up and down Northwest Third Street, and some on Burnside, and since the people didn't have access to much, I could buy clothes or

shoes for somebody if they came up to Matt Talbot and needed these. There were just a lot of opportunities to do simple, little things for people at that time, whether it was getting clothes, giving medication, doing a dressing change, or getting glasses, for example. And I remember I used to give away reading glasses that were given to me, or I would buy glasses and give them to the individuals. This was always possible because of a very generous donor who began giving me a thousand dollars a year. There were also lesser donations that came from others, and some of these have continued to this day [2001].

**Ron:** Do you think that your lack of a clear plan is one of the reasons for the lack of support of your Community at the time — that they couldn't themselves see clearly what it was you were getting into, so how could they support it?

**Kate:** Not at that time, no. And they did, finally, let me go down to Skid Road. As for not having a plan, this is the way I function all the time. I go from moment to moment, from request to request, following through. There always seems to be something for me to do, and each day I am not always sure exactly what is going to come.

**Ron:** That's interesting, because I have noticed that you do deal with people starting simply with the need they present to you. They tell you where they want to go, as it were, and you help them get there.

But the other important piece to your not having a plan is, as you said, that you follow through. So, in a way, not having a plan maybe didn't matter that much, because each little helping task that you did for the men was a complete act. You may only have driven a man to the hospital, for example, or paid for a night in a hotel for him, or cleansed his wound, but those were complete acts of assistance — they weren't planned, but what needed to get done got done.

**Kate:** You're right. I let the day unfold. I might have a plan for a given day, but sometimes I have to make adjustments, and in my times on Burnside I think it was pretty much the same. When I started meeting the men, for example, I had no idea that I would be doing massive dressing changes and would need a place to work out of and the supplies to do this.

**Ron:** Now did Jim Lambert, once he knew you were a nurse, indicate that there were nursing needs down there?

**Kate:** No. But he told me about Betty Stevens. Shortly after I started volunteering down there, she wanted to follow me around on Burnside to see what I was doing, because I was a nurse who was not part of the county system as she was. As I recall, she was in charge of those who had tuberculous and seeing that they followed through with the medications they were given, which was very important. She wanted to be sure that she could approve of whatever I was doing because I was in her territory, so to speak. She went around with me as I worked, she seemed very satisfied, and we became friends at that point.



## BRUCE

I knew Bruce for many years. He did his share of drinking and smoking and living in the hotels downtown. I'm not sure which hotel he was living in when I first met him, but he was a very good friend of somebody else we have talked about: Gregory Marsh [see Gregory Marsh's story]. They were buddies for a long time.

Bruce had a car, and he would take Gregory on trips. They'd often go fishing at Sauvie Island. They loved to fish, and they even took *me* fishing once.

Bruce was in the Veterans Hospital a couple of times and had some surgery done for cancer; he had a bowel obstruction, I think, and also a urinary tract infection. The day after the surgery he was sitting up and was very active and feeling fine. Then, a couple of days after that, he wasn't doing so well at all; he was miserable and wasn't able to eliminate. When I visited him in the hospital, he had several monitoring devices and IVs connected to him. But he was a fighter, and he just kept on going through what he had to go through and kept on rebounding. Gradually he began to recover, but he did have to go back and forth to the hospital after getting out. He took it pretty easy, he would tire more, and he lost a fair amount of weight, but he remained a kind of joking, teasing, loveable person. He was a real plucky fellow. He just kept on doing what he wanted to do, which was to enjoy his friends, go fishing, drive his car, go for rides. I don't think he drank much after this; he would drink the occasional beer, but he wasn't getting drunk anymore.

One night, Bruce woke up and somebody was crawling in through his window. He kept a gun under his pillow, and he said, "Don't come in or I will shoot." He said it was a young black fellow and that the man just kind of laughed and kept coming. Then Bruce said, "Stop!" but the guy kept coming. So he shot him, though he didn't aim to seriously injure him. The man immediately turned around and scrambled down the fire escape on the outside of the building (which was the way he had come up) and took off running. Bruce immediately went downstairs to have the police called.

The police came, and Bruce described the man. They confiscated Bruce's gun for evidence (and returned it to him later). They were very good and kind to Bruce.

They caught the man, who had been injured in the leg and had apparently left a trail of blood. They had found him in a parking lot, taken him for medical help, and then booked him. The man threatened to come back and kill Bruce, and the police thought he was very serious about that; they suggested to Bruce that he move out of the hotel. Bruce told me later, "I've lived here for many years. I don't want to move." And he didn't move. If the man Bruce shot had been on drugs or been drunk at the time of the incident, my own thought was that he was probably not going to recall a lot of what happened or want to follow through with the threat. And Bruce didn't have a problem after that.

Bruce and Gregory's friendship was one that was very interesting, partly because it lasted. A lot of the friendships that the men on Burnside had ended up in *broken* friendships. The trust level would break down when they would start drinking; when they would be drunk, for example, very often one of them would rip off his own partner or real good friend, and that would end what had been an otherwise good relationship. But Bruce and Gregory maintained a close and really good friendship.

### **the appeal to the men of living in the Skid Road hotels**

Most or many of the people living on Skid Road were down there because of the lifestyles they had lived. They often didn't have families or were no longer in contact with them. They had made their friends down there during their drinking years. They were satisfied living there. I know that a lot of the people who had been living on Skid Road — at Blanchet House or in the Chicken Coop Flophouse, for example — chose to remain on Skid Road and move into low-income rooms there when they were sixty-five and able to draw some income. A lot of the men were far more comfortable in the Foster Hotel [on Skid Road], for example, than in some of the other hotels they could

have been in instead, because they could sit around with buddies they had known for quite a number of years and feel comfortable with them. If they wanted to get away from them, they could go up to their rooms, or they had their own escapes.

So Skid Road was where a lot of these people wanted to live. And some of them felt they had it pretty good just having their own place, because many of the men had come from missions or very rundown hotels or doorways or under a bridge. Even though some had other options under the Housing Authority or Section 8, they still chose to remain in the Burnside area.

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## BRYAN

Bryan is someone who came into my life early in my ministry downtown. He was manager of the Butte Hotel, which was on Northwest Sixth and Davis.

Bryan was a large man, quite obese, and he had a heart as big as he was. At the time I knew him, I believe that the St. Vincent dePaul Society owned or managed the building and that Bryan had been hired by them. I first became aware of him when he called me one time; I guess he was hearing from the streets that I was putting people up in different places (which I did a *lot* of in those days with my ministry funds). Anyway, he phoned me at the Matt Talbot Center. He called me Sister Kathleen, seemingly knowing who I was, and said that if I ever needed a room for any of the men, I could send them to the Butte Hotel. He said that if he didn't have room he would *make* room for them. So that was the beginning of a friendship which really was neat.

I began to take advantage of his offer. I would call, and even if he didn't have room, he somehow would make room. As I said, he had a heart as generous as you could ever want. He would give up his own bed a lot of times to let somebody have a place to sleep, and I don't know how he slept at those times, possibly in a chair.

As time went on, I kept on sending people to the Butte, and I'd stop by, pay the bill, and visit with Bryan a little bit. I remember that he always referred to himself as "Big Bryan." I used to kid him a lot because he was always eating sweet rolls and cookies, and I'd get on my little bandwagon about healthy eating.

Bryan stayed sober for quite a while; then, at some point, he started to drink. Of course, when this happened, he wasn't in much favor with any of the St Vincent dePaul men who had hired him, but they did not fire him, because he was a good manager when he was sober; he was honest and they could depend on him. Then, when he would sober up, he would continue managing the hotel. Usually, most hotels had a part-time assistant who would cover when needed, and this would be the case at the Butte when Bryan would be on a drunk. This situation went on for quite a while.

One day, Bryan was on a drunk, and one of the St. Vincent dePaul men, Gerald, asked me to talk to him and see if I couldn't get him to go to detox. Bryan was down in one of the taverns, Marlene's, which was on Sixth Street. I went in there, and Big Bryan was sitting at a little round table. I sat down. Somebody came in at one point selling flowers, and Bryan said, "Come 'ere. I want, I want to get some roses for my girl here." And so he bought roses and gave them to me! He really was very, very drunk, and I could have cried. I felt awful, because he was so special and he had been so good to others. Then, when he started to get up he needed to lean on the table, and because he was such a large man the table tipped over, the coffee went all over me, Bryan fell on the floor, and the coffee went all over him, too. It took several people to get him up from the floor because he probably weighed close to three-hundred pounds.

I remember that one time he asked me to keep some money in the bank for him. I think he had been drinking when he requested this. He said, "I know that I'm capable of just taking it and drinking it, so I'd like you to take it." He had eight-hundred dollars (I think it was), and he wanted me to put away five-hundred and send three-hundred to his sister, who lived down in Texas or Arizona, in one of the warmer Southern states. So I did that.

At some point, I think they changed the focus of the Butte, fixed it up, and were beginning to bring families in, so there weren't single beds available for me and I wasn't seeing Bryan so much anymore.

One time, I had parked my car on Sixth Street. I saw Bryan but didn't recognize him at first. He came up to me and asked me if I could help him out. I honestly hope my memory serves me correctly that I gave him a couple of dollars. He needed the money for a drink; by that time I understood that when alcoholics are coming off a drunk they sometimes *need* a drink in order to avoid tremors or going in to the d.t.'s. He said, "Would you help old Bryan?" — I remember his words. I said, "I don't want others to see me giving this to you, Bryan" while I stood close to him and gave him one or two

dollars. By then I had two approaches for people who were asking for money to buy drinks: I would generally give them money if they seemed to need a drink to avoid tremors or the d.t.'s; otherwise, I would suggest the detox center.

Bryan died of his alcoholism. I don't remember the circumstances exactly, whether he died in the hospital or was found dead in the hotel. Anyway, his sister was there for the funeral, and I also was there. I don't think I conducted the service, but I remember talking about how generous he was to people and how willing to help others.

Bryan was really very special, and we had become very good friends. I loved him very much and I know that he loved me. He always seemed to be proud to be associated with me, I think also because I was a nun. All I can say now is, "Look down and bless all those you loved, Bryan, and who loved you. And thanks for all you did."

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## CARL

Carl was a man I evidently had seen at times but never really met. He apparently had gone to detox once when he was on a drunk that he couldn't come off, and from detox he came into Harmony House. Harmony House was a halfway house for non-drinking, recovering alcoholics that I was involved with at that time. It was a very simple program.

Very soon after Carl's arrival, we needed a cook at the House because the previous cook had taken off with somebody's ring, suitcase, and part of Harmony House's money. Carl seemed to be a very dependable person, so he began working as a cook. Then he asked if he could try being interim manager while they were looking for a new manager. He seemed to be doing all right at it, with help, and he said that he'd like to continue, which he did do. He stayed with Harmony House for several years. When the House got a little more involved with the Public Inebriate Program and other programs, there was a lot of paperwork that was involved, and Carl received help with that.

Carl later worked as manager of the Foster Hotel and did a very fine job of it. He had one or two people working with him as a part-time manager, who also had been in Harmony House.

By 1986 the Foster Hotel was one of the subsidized housing units operated by the Housing Authority of Portland. It was one of the first such units for Skid Road people. When it was renovated, they made small efficiency apartments. The units had a linoleum flooring and a little bathroom with a toilet, wash basin, and shower. There was a small, two-burner stove, and, under the stove, a very small refrigerator with a small freezing compartment. There was a sink by the stove, and a little cupboard space with a shelf and two drawers. The apartments had a bed and basic furniture (most of the Housing Authority's units were unfurnished). This housing was a simple arrangement, but for many of the men who had only known the flophouse, or living under the bridge or at Blanchet House, it was more than they had experienced for many years. And they had their own room.

Carl did a fine job of managing. He tried to make the hotel work. It was a clean and neat environment. He was concerned about the people and was very aware of them. Hopefully, he was able to refer various tenants to different resources as needed, like helping them begin the process for getting social security or welfare assistance or whatever else they needed.

I think he would have done anything I would have asked of him. One of the things he did was to store Frank's things [see Frank's story] for about a year and a half when Frank left the Foster for the hospital and then the nursing home; and this took up a lot of space — three boxes in the basement. He was very willing to do things for other people, too. He was a friend I knew for quite a number of years. While he was doing very well, he wasn't in the best of health. He had a lot of foot surgery. And, when he would get a cold, it really would take a lot out of him; in fact, I think his last cold I was aware of ended in walking pneumonia.

The Housing Authority let the hotel be more for older people, most of whom were sober. Some of the tenants were able to come into the hotel on what was called "zero income," but they had to have fifty-two dollars to get in initially. I helped a couple of people by paying the fifty-two dollars out of my ministry funds because they had no other way to get it.

## Photo Gallery I: The Early Years



Kate as infant. Born July 2, 1921.



As toddler.





With brother, Al, as young children.



A boarder at St. Mary of the Valley School in Beaverton, Oregon. Age 13.



Shortly before entering the convent the second time. At home in Victoria, B.C. Canada, 1939. Age 18.

## FROM THE TIMES

### *Language and Math Classes*

*[Excerpts from "English Classes," an article from BCC Pipeline, July 1975. Author not indicated in article. Complete copy of article follows.]*

Basic English and math classes are now available to Burnside residents. Anyone who has problems with reading or writing is eligible. The classes, which are sponsored by SISCO [source of acronym unknown], are held at the Matt Talbot Center, 222 NW Couch, from 6 to 8 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Instructors are teachers and university students.

To sign up for the class, contact Father Paul Brunell at the Downtown Chapel on 6th and Burnside, 228-0746.

## English Classes

Li alguno quiere aprender ingles y matematica para mas tarde poder iniciar un curso vocational en el community colleges las clases estan abiertas en el Matt Talbot Center, 222 NW Couch. Bajo los auspicios de SISCO se dan tres veces por semana, lunes, miercoles y viernes a las 6 a la tarde. El programa es gratis y conducido por expertos enseriantes.

Por las inscripciones llarme Fr. Paul Brunell, 601 West Burnside, Downtown Chapel, 228-0746.

Basic English and math classes are now available to Burnside residents. Anyone who has problems with reading or writing is eligible. The classes, which are sponsored by SISCO, are held at the Matt Talbot Center, 222 NW Couch, from 6 to 8 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Instructors are teachers and university students.

To sign up for the class, contact Father Paul Brunell at the Downtown Chapel on 6th and Burnside, 228-0746.

## ***Two Roads...***

*[On the following pages are various documents concerning Kate's transfer of religious orders from the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon (SSMOs) to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJMs). The local mother house of the SSMOs is in Beaverton and that of the SNJMs is in Marylhurst, both suburbs of Portland.*

*These documents are offered here for readers who might be curious about how the transfer process worked in those days and who might appreciate seeing religious orders a little more from the inside. The documents are presented in chronological order, from June 1973 when Kate is accepted into the SNJMs for the first year of her leave of absence from the SSMOs, to August 1975 when she makes vows as a Sister of the Holy Names.*

*In order to allow for larger and more readable images, the margins of the original documents have in all cases been eliminated, and in some cases it was necessary, regrettably, to omit the letterhead as well.]*

June 26, 1973

Sister Kathleen St. Martin  
St. Andrew Convent  
827 N. E. Alberta  
Portland, Oregon 97211

Dear Sister Kathleen,

This letter comes to tell you that the Provincial Team has decided to accept you into our Holy Names Community for a period, at least a year, of orientation. As we see the purpose of this year we understand that while you are still under the vows of the Sisters of St. Mary's of Oregon, you are getting acquainted with the Sisters of the Holy Names, with our spirit and the history of our congregation. With us you can study our new Constitutions. You will gain experience in our community upon which you can reflect and discern if this is what will bring peace as God's Will for you. It will be time for working toward the decision either to make vows in our community, return to the Sisters of St. Mary's, or whatever options unfold during the course of time.

As for canonical aspects:

- 1) You are still under vows as a Sister of St. Mary's of Oregon.
- 2) Upon date of joining us, we Sisters of the Holy Names will assume responsibility for all aspects of living and consider you as any other Holy Names Sister (financial, spiritual, educational, and apostolic service).

We will assume these responsibilities as of August 12, 1973. We invite you to be present at our Final Vow Ceremony at 2:00 p.m. that day and to participate in our Provincial Chapter August 13-16.

We will be in communication about your apostolic Mission after we hear your response to our acceptance. Please fill in the enclosed preference form and return it to Sister Kathleen Stupfel as soon as possible.

We look forward to sharing this year with you and no matter what the outcome we know that both we and you will be richer having worked through and lived through this year together. May the Lord Jesus who is the bond of love and unity be with us to guide us through the days ahead.

Sincerely in the Risen Christ,

*Sister Mary Beatali*  
Provincial Superior

SMB:sa  
encl.

cc: Most Rev. Robert J. Dwyer, Archbishop of Portland in Oregon  
Mother Mary Consilia, SSMO, Superior General  
Sister Clare Murphy, SNJM, Coordinator of Education

Kate is in her first year of what will become a two-year leave of absence from the SSMOs and is being accepted for orientation with the SNJMs. The terms "apostolic service" and "apostolic mission" refer basically to service to the world at large, in the spirit of the example of the original apostles of Jesus; familiar examples of this are working with the poor and disadvantaged, teaching, and nursing. The final vow ceremony referred to does not regard Kate's own vows, as she is still a SSMO. The letterhead in the original document reads "Oregon Province, Provincial Administration, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Marylhurst, Oregon 97036." St. Andrew Convent, which is named in the inside address, was part of St. Andrew Parish of which Kate still, in 2006, is a parishioner.

Sister Kathleen St. Martin

August 6, 1973



Dear Sister,

We mission you to the following service as your special expression of our shared faith and shared apostolic vision made concrete:

Outreach R. N. on Skid Row  
Community living group - St. Andrew's Convent

Your response to this mission in 1973-74 will enrich not only your own life, but our Community's life, the Church's life.

As we all emerge renewed through the discernment process, we are much more aware that our apostolic commitment is a radically communal affair.

We have entered into a deep, mutually binding covenant with God, with each other, and with God's people.

The Community (all of us) are saying to you:

We promise to support you in whatever you do in our name, in the Holy Names.

We will be with you in His Spirit, believing in what you are doing,  
in what you are becoming.

Wherever a Holy Name Sister is, there we all are present--  
Encouraging, strengthening and challenging each other by our shared  
faith-hope-love.

Living fully, loving deeply, giving totally...  
is worth any price.

We need your own gifts, your unique input, your hope and help  
in our present struggle to create a FAITH-COMMUNITY.

We need your apostolic vision, your renewed sense of mission to  
make His presence felt among us.

We need your response saying to all of us in Community:

To respond to God's call, I need Community. I need mutual love, mutual  
commitment, deep mutual trust. I promise to help create such a climate  
among us. I won't give up in our common struggle to find a more satisfying  
community life--a deeper faith life, so we are able to experience a real  
FAITH-COMMUNITY.

You can count on me to support all of you in carrying out our common mission,  
to participate in the give and take of developing our  
vision, planning our future.

You can count on my "yes"--to give myself to the apostolic thrust which  
is impossible to attain alone.

Lovingly,

*Sister Mary Bertoli*  
Provincial Superior

Kate is allowed to continue working on Skid Road. The partially cut off picture at the upper right is a stylistic depiction of a dove, representing the Spirit of God. Several times during the course of the project Kate told Ron that one of the reasons she chose to remain a Sister was the value she found both in living life in Community and in experiencing the strong support of her Sisters individually and of her Community generally; the above letter addresses this support squarely — note the phrase "radically communal affair" in the 3rd paragraph.

March 10, 1975

Sister Kathleen St. Martin  
St. Andrew Convent  
827 N. E. Alberta  
Portland, Or. 97211

Dear Kathleen,

In our last conference I outlined for you the process necessary for obtaining an indult of transfer from the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon to our Holy Names Congregation.

Now would be a good time for you to begin the process.

1. A letter to Mother Consilia (see step one on enclosed sheet)  
It would be a courtesy to deliver the letter personally to give both of you a chance to discuss the contents or clarify the procedure. Mother has a copy of the procedures for transfer but I'd suggest you take yours for discussion purposes.  
Make a carbon copy of your letter and send to me ---  
- along with -
2. A letter to the Provincial asking for acceptance in our congregation giving the specific reasons for wanting to join us. The reasons for leaving the SSMO's will be covered in your letter to Mother Consilia.
3. A letter to Sister Marthe Lacroix, Superior General, asking to be accepted in our Congregation (Can be the same letter content as one sent to Provincial - no need to compose two different ones.

The Provincial Team will respond to your request and forward our recommendation to Sister Marthe, along with your request for transfer. When she responds officially, I will take all necessary documents out to Mother Consilia, (you will already have seen her). She would then officially request the indult of transfer and complete the process with Rome.

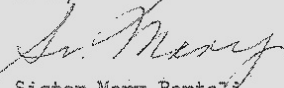
Since we have not been through this process before I do not know how long it will take. As soon as we have an answer from Rome, we can make plans for your making vows in our Congregation. Happy day!

In the meantime, keep growing as you respond daily to the Lord. May we all be open to His Will, His timing, His plan for us.

If the above is not clear, do not hesitate to call me.

Happy Springtime - Hope-time - New life-time -

Love,



Sister Mary Bertoli  
Provincial Superior

This correspondence came six months after Kate requested and was granted a second-year extension of her leave of absence from the SSMOs. She had requested a second year due to various circumstances in her life that resulted in the need for more time before deciding whether to request the transfer to the SNJMs; by the time of the above correspondence, however, she had already made her decision. The "indult" referred to in the first paragraph is, put simply, a special permission granted by the Church to deviate from a Church law. The correspondence was prepared originally on SNJM Oregon Province letterhead.

827 N. E. Alberta  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
March 16, 1975

Mother Mary Consilia  
4440 S.W. 148th Avenue  
Beaverton, Oregon 97005

Dear Mother Consilia,

The time has come when a very important and difficult decision must be made. Much prayer and guidance preceded the request for a leave of absence almost two years ago when I felt that I was in danger of losing my vocation because I no longer felt at peace or comfortable with myself or within the community. During these past years I have continued to pray and reflect on the value of religious life and my commitment to a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Much time has been devoted to the study of the spirit and history of the Sisters of the Holy Names and for the past two years I have experienced living in the context of this spirit. The great peace and happiness as well as renewal in religious life that I have experienced prompts me, Mother, to ask you to request an indult of transfer from the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

I will always be grateful to the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and have a deep love for each Sister. I will pray daily for each of you and in the deeper union of Religious committed to the Church, may our love for each other continue to grow.

Lovingly in Christ,

*Sister Kathleen M. McMartin*

Request to transfer from SSMOs.



827 N. E. Alberta  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
March 31, 1975

Sister Marthe Lacroix  
Superior General  
187, chemin de Cap-St-Jacques  
Pierrefonds, P.Q. H9G 2H3

Dear Sister Marthe,

The time has come when a very important and difficult decision must be made. About three years ago I no longer felt at peace or comfortable with myself or within the community of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. Because I valued religious life and my commitment to a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience I began to consider and pray about the possibility of a transfer to another community. Much prayer and guidance preceded the request for a leave of absence.

In August of 1973, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names accepted me for a period of orientation. During these past years considerable time has been devoted to the study of the spirit and history of the Sisters of the Holy Names and for two years I have experienced living in the context of this spirit. This has been a period of growth, renewal, peace, and happiness. I honestly feel that the Holy Spirit is with me as I request your permission please, to make vows according to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names.

I am very grateful to the Holy Names Sisters for having given the opportunity to prepare for this choice.

Gratefully in Christ,



Sister Kathleen St. Martin

First sentence: It is with a great peace and joy that I am requesting your permission to make vows according to the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names.

Request to transfer to SNJMs.



Sister Kathleen St. Martin  
827 N.E. Alberta Street  
Portland, Oregon

Dear Sister Kathleen,

It is with great joy that we accept to receive you definitively into our Congregation. We cannot always understand clearly what are God's views concerning us personally, and this causes suffering and anxiety. I know that you have gone through these feelings and I think that the sincerity you brought in the discerning process to discover His will is the reason for your peace and the joy you have today.

May the mystery of the passion of our Lord in which you have participated bring you a fruitful life in our Congregation.

In union with the Risen Lord,

*Martine Lenoir, S.M.F., C.M.*  
Superior General

General Administration  
Pierrefonds, April 7, 1975

Acceptance by SNJMs to receive Kate.

*Sisters of Saint Mary of Oregon*

SAINT MARY OF THE VALLEY  
4440 S.W. 148TH AVENUE  
BEAVERTON, OREGON 97005

June 1, 1975

Sister Mary Bertoli, S.N.J.M.  
Provincial Superior  
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary  
Marylhurst, Oregon 97036

Dear Sister Mary Bertoli,

Enclosed is a photostat copy of the indult received from the  
Sacred Congregation of Religious granting Sister Mary Kathleen  
St. Martin's transfer from our Congregation to yours.

I have requested Sister Mary Alberta to forward the contents of  
Sister Mary Kathleen St. Martin's General File and Education File  
to you.

Sister Mary Kathleen came to us without a dowry.

I pray, Sister, that the Holy Spirit who has directed Sister  
Mary Kathleen to your community will enlighten her way of life,  
that He will bring understanding of the Constitutions and Rules  
she has begun to meditate and live by, and that happiness in  
faith and love will be hers.

With our best and prayerful wishes,

The Sisters of Saint Mary of Oregon

*Mother Mary Consilia*

Mother Mary Consilia, S.S.M.O.  
Superior General

Enclosure: Indult

Transfer accomplished.

In the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, I wish to continue my commitment in a loving relationship with God, in the spirit of Christ's love, and with an openness to the Spirit. With a free and joyful heart, I, Sister Kate St. Martin, renew the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience according to the Constitutions of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.  
So help me God.

Words of commitment at commitment ceremony and Mass, SNJM Provincial House Chapel, Marylhurst Oregon, August 12, 1975.

## CASEY

Early in my work at the Matt Talbot Center, a tall, dignified-looking Indian [Native American] came into my office. His name was Casey, and he was very friendly, I think in part because I was a sister and because he was Catholic.

The first thing that I remember about him was his request for treatment of his infected wine sores. Anybody who got an infection and was drinking a lot would be malnourished, wouldn't have enough protein, and usually would be slow to heal. If he had a cut or a wound or an ulcer on his leg, for example, it would become deeply infected, and the wine sores (as they were called) that developed would scab over and not heal underneath; he would think the sores were healing because they weren't open or draining. I remember taking care of Casey's wine sores.

Casey had quite a severe drinking problem at that time — advanced alcoholism. He would be more drunk than sober and not too interested in doing anything about his drinking at that point in his life. In talking with him, we got into talking about his family, and he told me that he had stayed with his wife and children until the children were finished with college. He said, "I put them through college before I left home, and then I found myself down here."

I saw him off and on, and then I didn't see him for a long time, until one day when I was in Milwaukie [a town adjacent to and south of Portland]. I had stopped in a restaurant, and there was Casey! He was clean and sober, and he told me that he had been doing very well. I don't know if he was with his wife, but he was with someone. That was the last time I saw Casey, so my last memory of him, then, was of a sober and seemingly very happy man.

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## CHARLIE

Charlie was somebody I used to see off and on. I think he knew about me sooner than I got to know about him. He knew my name, whereas I would continually forget his! Even in those days, when I was younger and had a better memory, I often used to have to whisper to Charlie and others, "I can't remember your name!"

Charlie had a deep respect for me because I was a religious; in fact, he used to tell me that he had a sister who was a religious. He loved me as a friend. He was a nice little guy, and we used to play cribbage together.

He was at Harmony House for a while. I got to know him pretty well there because I was frequently involved with Harmony House as a board member in those days, and I served also as a support to the director of the program.

At that time, at the Harmony House on Southeast Thirty-ninth Street, just north of Division Street, there was a small, three-legged dog. Her name was Missy. She looked like she was part Maltese and part poodle. She was a darling dog. It was while she was at the house that she lost one of her legs. One of the newer members, thinking that she wanted out, let her out the front door rather than the back (the front door was close to the street, which was a busy street). When one of the men asked where Missy was and realized what had happened, a couple of the men went outside immediately to look for her. By that time, a number of people were grouped around the dog, who had been hit by a car. She lost her leg as a result of this accident. Everybody loved Missy — Charlie, too, and he used to take her for walks all the time and play with her. She's at the Foster Hotel now, with the manager of that hotel.

The most responsible man at Harmony House was usually selected as manager of the house. We'd take whoever had the longest sobriety and looked like he could probably manage. Charlie had been sober maybe three months and was a pretty efficient man, so he was made manager. He did a pretty good job for a while, but I began to see the build-up of a dry-drunk syndrome. Many alcoholics who make an effort to remain sober for a while will begin to be frequently irritable and display outbursts of temper. This period was usually referred to as a "dry drunk" and sometimes would lead to relapse. Charlie, for example, would irritate others, or be irritable himself. He would snap at individuals or turn the TV down very low so others couldn't hear it.

As his irritability continued, we thought it would be best if he went away for a while, so we recommended that he take a vacation. Since he had some family in Reno, he was told, "Why don't you just take a week off or so, go visit your family in Reno, and then come back?" He responded with, "I know you just want to get rid of me." This type of response was typical of many of the alcoholics I knew — they would try to justify their behavior, and they would usually end up drinking.

Charlie did finally leave town and go to Reno, though he apparently only stayed there one day. He called one of his sisters and said he'd like to see her and others, but she said, "Don't come. We don't want you." As I look back, and after talking to his daughters (which I discuss later on in the story), it was that incident that I feel was a breaking point for Charlie. He started drinking again during that period, and then he came back to us drunk. This, of course, ended his days at Harmony House.

He moved into the Arlington Hotel, on Sixth Street. I used to see him in the window of the hotel lobby. He'd wave at me, and sometimes I'd go in and we'd talk. His drinking increased. I remember going to see him there, and he wouldn't look good. I would talk to him about making a go of it again, but he'd say no, that he was all right, that he was fine.

Another time, he told me, "I'd sure like to see Missy" (as I mentioned earlier, he loved this three-legged dog). So I said, "I'll bring her down." I made sure somebody was in the car with me when I brought her, because the dog was wild in the car, jumping all over. As soon as she saw Charlie, she remembered him, and she leaped at him, seeming happy to see him. And he was just as happy to see her.

Not long after, the manager of the Arlington called me to say that Charlie was in

the hospital — his liver was failing. So I went to see him, and I couldn't believe the change in him. He was very sick and was showing symptoms of liver disease. His skin was yellow and parched-looking, and he was thin and seemed to be wasting away.

The next contact was a call from the hotel manager again. Charlie was back downtown! He had signed himself out of the hospital. I went to see him. He looked terrible, and his skin was jaundiced. I said, "Charlie, were you discharged because you were okay, or did you talk them into it, or did you just walk out?" And he said, "A little bit of everything. They weren't helping me." Well, that was a typical response — most of the people I knew did not want to stay in the hospital, and many left before they had been discharged. Since his condition by that time was irreversible, I said, "You know, maybe they were doing all they could for you."

Now the Arlington Hotel didn't have a working elevator, and Charlie was on the fourth floor. He was getting so weak that going up and down stairs was hard on him. He mentioned that, so I said, "Charlie, why don't I see if I can get you into the Foster, across the street? It has an elevator." He said, "Okay," so I checked into that and made arrangements for him. I found two people — Sam and Larry — to help me get his things together, and we moved him over to the Foster Hotel [see stories of Sam and Larry]. He was much relieved with this new arrangement because he no longer had to climb stairs.

Charlie didn't live long after that. Only a few days or so later, I received word that he had died.

Now during those years, when indigents like Charlie died, with no known family, funeral arrangements were made on a rotation basis at different funeral homes. This was done so that one or two of them were not always called upon to bear the expense — the state or county only paid a minimum of the burial costs.

When I heard that Charlie's body was at a funeral home in Gresham, I contacted Father Briggs, who was the pastor in that area, and asked if he would say a Mass, since Charlie had been Catholic. There were maybe about three people present who had known Charlie from Harmony House. After the funeral Mass in the church, I talked to one of the funeral directors, mentioned that Charlie had been Catholic, and asked if he could be buried in the Catholic plot of the cemetery. He agreed to that, so there was a simple service at the grave site.

I had notified some member of the family (I believe it was a nephew in Arizona) and asked if he wanted any of Charlie's personal effects. He asked for any letters and said to just give away the rest of the things, which we did.

At some point after the article "I Wish I Could Serve 'Em Like My Sister Kate" [an article about Kate] appeared in the October 1978 issue of *U.S. Catholic*, I received a letter from a nun who had read the article. The letter arrived sometime after Charlie had died, and the nun was Charlie's sister. She was older than Charlie — I think she was seventy-some — and was still teaching first grade. She wrote a beautiful letter in appreciation of what had been done for her brother.

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*My dear Sister 'Kate' [...] I feel as though I know you through [...] [Charlie's] letters & pictures to the family. They sent me his picture, also one of yours. None of us were ever able to get in touch with [...] [Charlie]. He always moved from place to place. I had not seen [...] [Charlie] since he left home at the age of twenty or so. My family and I can never thank you enough dear Sister for all you did for [...] [Charlie] while he was near you. It took you and only you to bring him back to God.... You are really one of God's chosen ones dear Sister Kate.*

—excerpts from a letter to Kate by Charlie's sister, the nun

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Not too long after that, she apparently wrote to two of her nieces (Charlie's daughters) — one in Texas and one in Alaska — telling them about his death.

I came home one night around ten or so and had a message to call an Emma Jones about Charlie. She had used a name that wasn't "Charlie," but was a name she used to call Charlie, so the message didn't make too much sense at that point. I called the number and gave my name as "Sister Kate St. Martin." She said, "Jim Lambert told me that you might have known my father who lived on Skid Road in Portland." She was calling from Alaska. Once I figured out she was talking about Charlie, I said, "Charlie! Of course I knew him, I knew him well." She was surprised at the name "Charlie." She said, "You're calling him Charlie," and I said, "Well, that's the name he was using."

We talked for probably forty minutes. She cried on the phone. She said that she and her sister hadn't seen their dad since she was one and a half years old and her sister was three, at the time their parents divorced. She asked so many questions. She said she had been seeking information about her father for years. She said that her mother had tried to turn the minds of her little daughters against their dad — never saying anything favorable about him — but that the children somehow had always had a sort of longing to know what he was like.

Rather recently — and this was one of the reasons Emma called me — her mother had told her that her dad had a sister, who was a nun in Colorado (the nun I mentioned earlier), and some other relatives (cousins I think) down in Arizona. Her mother apparently had figured that everything was long gone that could lead to any contacts between the girls and their dad, but the information about the relatives had, instead, kind of rekindled Emma and her sister's desire to want to see their father.

Now after Charlie and the girls' mother had divorced, the mother remarried. The girls asked their stepfather at some point if he had ever known their dad, and he said, "Yes, I saw him, because once he came to Alaska when you girls were about eight and eleven. He came and stood across the street and watched as you were coming out of church. He just stood there looking at you." Although the girls hadn't been aware of Charlie's presence during that incident, their mother apparently had recognized him and had told her husband. He became resentful and went over to Charlie and said, "Don't you come near those girls or lay a hand on them or..." Well, Charlie was a small man, but, even *with* this, he just had no intention of causing harm — he only wanted to see his girls. So he turned and just walked away and didn't try to make any contact with them; he felt at that point that he was an outcast and an outsider. But knowing about that incident had made the girls feel good — knowing that their father had cared enough to try and see them — because before the incident they hadn't known whether he cared or whether he just walked out on them because he didn't care about anybody, including them.

So Emma had kind of mixed feelings, but she did feel that she loved her dad very much, and she was grateful that we had known him and had been able to help him.

The next morning, I got a call from Vera — Emma's sister and Charlie's other daughter — and we talked for quite a while. She was calling from Texas.

The two of them eventually met in Seattle and called me, asking whether, if they came to Portland, we could meet so they could find out more about their father. We agreed to meet at a motor inn in Portland, near Holy Rosary Church [on Northeast Clackamas Street]. They asked if there was anybody else who might have known Charlie, who might also talk with them. The first person who came to mind was Scott, because Scott had hired Charlie as a manager at Harmony House [see Scott's story]. So I asked Scott if he would be willing to come, and he said yes.

I went through my box of pictures and found a Polaroid photo of Charlie. Then I made a kind of folder for each sister. I duplicated the picture and several other photos to put in each folder, including pictures from Harmony House and pictures of people Charlie had known. And I added a copy of the article, "I Wish I Could Serve 'Em Like My Sister Kate," because it was what their aunt had read and referred to when she contacted me.

Scott and I arrived at the motor inn before they did. He brought a silver buckle with a liberty dollar in it that Charlie had given him, thinking he would give that to one of the daughters if she wanted it, and I brought the folders.

We had a very, very nice meeting. Scott offered the buckle to them, but they said,



"No, dad gave it to you. You keep it." One of them had a picture of Charlie as a high school graduate, I think; he must have gone to a military school, because he was wearing a uniform.

Both of them cried because they were hearing a lot of positive things about their dad. They were hearing that he was special, that he must have really loved his family, and that a lot of his drinking had been because of the hurt about the loss of contact with his children. I was sorry they never had a chance to meet their dad in person.

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*Dear Sister Kate—*

*The remarkable visit in Portland with you last week has totally preoccupied my thoughts. I cannot remember anything that ever impacted me as much. [...] Meeting you and Scott has softened the sadness and grief that learning of my dad's death created — particularly knowing that he became a loving, caring man before he died. In the last few days, I've been experiencing great peace and comfort, with the inward awareness that he loved me, even though we were not together in this life.*

*—excerpts from a letter to Kate by Vera*

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*My dear Sister Kate,*

*Meeting you and Scott, and the subsequent meeting with my aunt [...] [Charlie's sister, the nun] was pretty overwhelming for me. [...] There is so much to assimilate, that I am struggling with all the new information, new feelings, all sorts of emotions, some new to me. I tell myself to go slowly, to take it a day at a time, sometimes even a minute at a time, that it will all work out [...]. [...], let me say as sincerely as I know how, thank you and Scott from the bottom of my heart for sharing your memories of my father with me. You both loved him, and it showed in the way you related your recollections of him. I am rather bewildered at the moment about how I feel about him; any love would be an abstract one, but somehow after talking with you, I do feel closer to him, knowing that there have been parallels in our lives, and I believe today that he has played a role somehow in my sobriety. [...] it is as if he found us, in the end. [...]*

*—excerpts from a letter to Kate by Emma*

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I took them out to the cemetery. It was rainy that day and not very pleasant to be outdoors. One of the cemetery staff led us out to where the plot was. I told his daughters the rest of what I knew about my contacts with Charlie, including about his efforts to stay sober by staying in Harmony House, and about his final illness. They were happy to know that his final service was a Catholic Mass and that he was buried in the Catholic section of the cemetery. I think it hurt them, though, to see him in an unmarked grave, and one of his daughters who wanted a headstone sent a check later, asking me to select one. I should add that while the cemetery was not Catholic, part of it was designated for Catholic burials, and that usually those like Charlie who were indigent were buried in another part, in a section reserved for indigents.

I received a letter from Emma saying that the two had had a pretty severe fight and had split; they hadn't continued their plans to visit relatives together upon their return to Seattle from Portland. Vera went back to Texas, I guess, until later in the year, when she went on her own to visit some of the relatives in the Seattle area. Both sisters had reasons why they couldn't seem to make it together. Emma brought it up again later when she called me. She said, "We are better. I've made some peace with Vera, but I don't think things will ever be the way I'd like them to be between us."

## CHESTER TABOR

Chester Tabor I first met when he came into Harmony House. He was a small man. I think Chester was Catholic. A lot of people would (I'll use the expression) "shine up" to me because I was a Sister, a Catholic nun, and Chester was one of these. Some people had a feeling that they were special because they were connected with or knew a Sister.

Chester was a people-pleaser, and he wanted to sober up for the sake of his family. I met his parents once at bingo at Central Catholic High School. At that time, I would go to Central with some of the Harmony House people for bingo, which was held on Thursday evenings.

Although Chester was a nice person, a lot of the men in the house didn't overly care for him; he may have been aware of this, but I don't know that it bothered him much. He talked a lot, for one thing, and alcoholics don't want any one person to monopolize the conversation; I mean, they *all* want their share of time to talk!

Chester left Harmony House and eventually went down to California, and so he was out of my life for quite a long time.

Then one day I was walking down Third Street, south of Burnside, and along came this man who said, "Sister Kathleen, do you remember me? Chester Tabor." I looked at him, and he had lost probably about thirty pounds. He said he had cancer and had had surgery; I can't recall if he had cancer of the brain or if he had primary cancer in the lungs and it had metastasized to the brain. He was on a fixed income. He said, "I haven't been drinking for some time," which I don't think was all that long. He wanted me to come and see him at his hotel, which I did. He wanted to talk about death, prayer, where his fate was, and about his condition.

I didn't see Chester again until sometime after this, and I think he had been hospitalized again in the meantime. He was put in the Foster Hotel, where, as far as I know, he kept pretty much to himself. I saw him there a couple of times, and at that point he really was a dying man. I don't think he was there very long — maybe a week and a half — before he was back in the hospital.

And that was the last I heard of Chester, except that he had died. And he wasn't old when he died — around fifty I would say.

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## CHRIS

In the days of my little clinic at Matt Talbot Center, I used to visit various hotels, in addition to working at the clinic. One of my favorite of these hotels, and the one I most frequently visited, was the Holm Hotel — the "Chicken Coop" rooms or "Chicken Coop Flophouse" — on Second and Burnside. It was nicknamed "Chicken Coop" because of the chicken wire that covered the top of each partitioned sleeping space. The main purpose of the wire was for ventilation and lighting. It also prevented a man from tossing his empty wine bottle into the next partitioned space when he was finished. Each room had a door that the occupant could lock. The Holm was a flophouse where a man could stay for one night at a time, for fifty or sixty cents. By contrast, the Home Hotel, on Third and Burnside, had more stable residents and slightly larger rooms, with regular ceilings.

I first went to the Holm Hotel by invitation from the hotel manager. He knew I was a nurse, and he thought maybe there might be something I could do in that capacity for the men. It was a men's hotel and, from what I was told, I was probably the first woman to be allowed to go in. I don't remember exactly that first time going to the hotel; I think I just went upstairs and said, "I'm a nurse. Is there something I can do?" Anyway, I got to be friends with the manager and several of the people who lived there.

Chris lived in the Holm. He was a small, short man, probably in his fifties. He was alcoholic and almost always had been drinking a few too many. Each time we met, either at the hotel or Matt Talbot Center, he would say, "Sister Kathleen'll fix me up. She always fixes me up."

At that time in his life, I don't think Chris had any specific problems, but if he *did* have a complaint, I was usually able to help. If his stomach bothered him, I'd give him Maalox. If he had a cold, I'd give him some cold medicine. Sometimes I would just listen to him and talk with him.

I don't remember Chris ever asking for money for cigarettes or alcohol or anything out of the ordinary; but, if he ever had asked, I'm sure I would have given him what he asked for, because he wasn't a regular panhandler and he probably did need it.

Chris died quite a few years before the Holm closed. After he died, the medical examiner got in touch with me to ask if I could locate the names and addresses of any of Chris's relatives, so they could be informed of his death. I remembered that I had been told that the manager of the hotel had the name and address of Chris's sister and brother-in-law, who lived in one of southern states. I obtained their names and address and gave that to the medical examiner, who then notified them in writing of Chris's death and asked them if there were any special arrangements they wanted. The mortuary held the body while the attempted contact was being made; unfortunately, there was no response, so the funeral was held without the family present.

I might add at this point that when contact was made with the family of a person on Burnside who had died, the relatives would often say they didn't want anything to do with him or the situation — they had become alienated from him. Often they would say that he had pulled away from their lives after causing a lot of havoc, and they felt resentment and hurt over this. And sometimes they were afraid they might be asked to cover the expenses of a funeral.

At any rate, about two weeks later, Chris's sister and her husband came to Portland. They had been on vacation when the medical examiner's letter arrived. They said they would have come in time for the funeral if they had known. The couple learned about me during that visit, probably from the medical examiner. After they returned home, they wrote me a letter telling me they had *wanted* to see me during their visit, because I was someone who had known Chris and they thought I might be able to give them information about him. But somebody had discouraged them from going to my office at Matt Talbot Center. They had been told, "Oh, you don't want to go down there. You don't know what'll happen. It's no place for you." They had no one to turn to at that point and no reason for staying in Portland, so they went back home without

seeing me.

I'm sure that what they were told was in total ignorance on the part of whoever suggested the danger, because *nothing* would have happened! In those days, the violence on the streets occurred usually when an older alcoholic would be "jack-rolled" by a younger one for any money he might have. This usually would happen at the beginning of the month, when SSI or veterans' checks were issued.

I wrote back and said, "You would have been safer on Burnside than in many other places in a big city. The people down there would never have hurt you in any way. I'm so, so sorry I didn't know about the incident, because I could have taken you to the Burnside area myself — and it would have been a good visit." I told them some of the details about what Chris had been like, how dear he had been, and other things that I thought would be comforting to them. I really felt very badly that I was not able to meet with them.

Chris's sister was very glad I wrote to her. She and her husband sounded very dear, and they loved their brother. She regretted that they had not known previously all the information that my letter provided, but at least they knew that Chris had been receiving some care and kindness.

This concern from others for various Burnside men who died seemed to mean a lot to some of the relatives and friends when they would make a contact with me after the person's death. Though they might not have seen their loved one for many, many years, some held a deep love and feeling for them, nonetheless.

So, this was the way it had to be with Chris, I guess. He died alone. And his family wasn't there. No one was there.

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#### **when Kate would give money to a man**

There were times, through the years, when I would give money to someone who was obviously very sick with tremors, because having a drink could stave off the possibility of the d.t.'s. At the time of Chris's story, there was no detox center yet where a man could receive care; and later when there was, there were often no beds available.

Other times when I would give money to one of the men, I would take him to Gus's Café, on Third and Couch, and buy him soup or a hamburger, and coffee. He often was not able to eat this, however, because he wasn't sober enough and food had no appeal for him.

At times, when a person had been drinking very large amounts of alcohol, he would get to the stage where he *needed* a drink but it wouldn't stay down. Some told me that they would swallow a raw egg when this happened, to settle their stomach. It was a sad, scary situation when a person *needed* a drink to stave off the possibility of going into the d.t.'s, but the alcohol wouldn't stay down.

#### **before there was a detoxification center**

In the days before there was a detox center, the police would often pick up a man who was sleeping off a drunk on the streets; they would put him in the paddy wagon and take him to the "drunk tank" in the county jail, where he would be kept for thirty days and then be released. With no treatment, no money, and no place to go, he would begin drinking again. There was sometimes an opportunity for a man who wanted to stay sober to go to Blanchet House where he would have a place to sleep and meals, but he would be required to help at meal times and with the operation of feeding breakfast and lunch to hundreds of people daily. Also during that period, a halfway house called Harmony House provided housing to those who wanted to stay sober.

#### **alternative sources of alcohol, and fortified alcohol**

There were some unusual ways that people would obtain alcohol when they didn't have enough money to drink. There was a small drugstore on Third, for example, where they would obtain a cough medication that contained enough alcohol to temporarily

satisfy their need. One patient in the County Hospital, who needed dressing changes, and so had alcohol swabs in his room, would chew or suck on the swabs to obtain the alcohol. And a woman I knew drank Listerine [an antiseptic mouthwash] as her drink of choice; this was simple to obtain, and no one suspected it was being used as a source of alcohol.

The alcohol that was sold in the stores was chemically fortified, which enhanced its effect; it was more satisfying than regular wine and was also another cause of stomach problems. For many years after many retailers discontinued selling fortified wine, it continued to be sold by various local stores in the Burnside area.



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FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Dealing with the Challenging Physical Reality of the Men
and Their Surroundings*

Ron: This question, Kate, is on a rather delicate subject and, for some reason, is difficult for me to ask, yet I feel compelled to ask it: How did you manage to deal with the *physical* reality and surroundings of the people you served on Skid Road? I'm talking about the lice and cockroaches, the heavily soiled clothes that often smelled of urine and other things, the body odors, the foul-smelling breath, the unkempt and unwashed bodies, the stench of environmental smells when you went into their rooms, the smoke-filled rooms, the oppressive air from insufficient air circulation, the challenging behaviors and language. In short, I'm talking about the sheer raw humanity of it all, something which, all sum, I think most people simply would not have been able to handle emotionally or physically. How did you manage to deal with all these situations?

Kate: The first thing that comes to my mind, Ron, is that *people* were there. People superseded any of the other, apparently, for me. All the things that you named are part and parcel of a human being, a person whom God certainly loves unconditionally. I learned to love them for themselves. The smell and the dirt and the lice, which could be at times repulsive, or certainly unpleasant, you either forget or ignore or don't notice when you see a *face*, a human being, in the midst of it all.

Ron: And they did come to you in the ways I have described.

Kate: Oh, yes. Certainly. The smell was frequently present. I'm thinking of the time I was dealing with someone's leg, that was full of you'll remember what [fecal matter], which I had to remove before I could cleanse the leg and put a dressing on it. (Now that was not a daily occurrence.)

You know, you have to say this in their defense: If you were homeless, and your body was malnourished and possibly had infected sores, and you didn't have restrooms available to you, and if you weren't living in the hotels because you didn't have the money to get in, you wouldn't have had much choice. And if they were inebriated and they were passed out, they would lose control of their bodily functions. They didn't have much going for them. What would you and I do in these circumstances? If we were down on the streets, homeless, hungry, no money, and nature called and we had an urgent need, or we had what *they* used to call the "wine shits" — diarrhea — there wouldn't be a choice. They really didn't have a choice.

Ron: So you somehow managed to get through this when you went to their hotel rooms or they came to you.

I know you got lice once.

Kate: No, I got them three times!

Ron: And it's not that your own work environment wasn't clean. Certainly your little office space at Matt Talbot Center was clean. It's not that you lived in that squalor.

Kate: That's right. And, too, a lot of the people weren't living in squalor, either.

Ron: By contrast, and again on the question of the physical side of things, you have said about many of the men that they were as "neat as a pin." You've said how organized and orderly many of them were, which most people probably wouldn't think.

Kate: Well, they didn't have much, just a small space.

Nick had been exceptionally neat [see Nick's story], but he had been a merchant marine and had special training, and rolled his clothes and towels as they did in the navy. Others possibly were this way through their home training when they were younger.

A lot of the rooms were cluttered with things the men had accumulated. Many of the men had so little that when they would see something they liked, they would buy it if they could. Then you had someone like Kurt [see Kurt's story], who had a room with his little kitchenette and a bathroom but his bed and floor were so cluttered that I had to make way to get in to see him — it wasn't dirt; it was *stuff*!

Ron: But you have mentioned several men whose cleanliness and neatness was noteworthy.

Kate: Yes.

Ron: Which only points out what we all probably know: that the way they came to you in your office — in their "physical humanity mess" I will say — was not really them.

Kate: Yes. But these others that I was just talking about were living in what were called "SROs" — single room occupancy units. If they were in the Chicken Coop Flophouse (Holm Hotel) or in the Home Hotel, there would always be ashtrays and butts and bottles, empty or half-filled, in their rooms or in their little space.

Ron: Even so, if part of the reason that some of these men were neater was that they had a place of their own, that their lives were more "together," then it's not unreasonable to think that if these people who were in the Holm, for example, had gotten *their* lives together to the extent of some of the others, *they* might have been neater and more organized, too; whereas the view, perhaps by a lot of people, is that these people are that way by *nature*.

Kate: Yes.

Ron: Well, this whole question was one I hesitated bringing up because it is rather delicate and I felt uncomfortable asking. But I'm glad I asked and glad you named some things so clearly.

You saw *faces* in all of this. You saw the *person* first, not those other appearances. And this, of course, may be the central key to helping others, and something which a lot of us lose sight of.

Kate: And I think that more recently in my life I realize that I can be quick to judge — although I didn't judge down there on Burnside. I don't like to make judgments, because I don't know the person's circumstances. I don't know the person; I haven't walked in their shoes. When I find myself making a snap judgment of somebody, I say, "Now Kate, stop. Back up."

Ron: You *didn't* judge in your ministry, not at all. I mean, that really comes through. So, are you saying that you have become more judgmental as you've become older?

Kate: No. It's a different situation for me. It's an *inner* judgment that I sometimes sense in myself — that I could judge unless I stop myself. I mean there are things in each of us that we'd like to see changed and get rid of, and judging is one thing that I try to stop from doing. I don't do it very often, and I do it far less than I used to. But if I just see somebody in passing and make a snap judgment — somebody I am not getting to know — I think to myself, "You're making a judgment. You don't know this person, you don't know anything about this person. Why do you think this?" I don't like to even harbor the thought when it's somebody that I don't know.

And this all has nothing to do with your initial question!

Ron: Yes it does, I think, and it may be even central. This judgment piece *is* related to my question, because if you had had those judgments in those days on Skid Road, you probably would have left. Most of us could not have been down there. We would have been judging the individuals right and left. We'd have gotten out.

Do you see what I mean?

Judgment *is* involved in this, and it sounds like one of the very things that helped you start and continue this work on Skid Road was the ability not to judge, was the ability to see and focus on the *face* of the person in the midst of all of the misery (as you have said), rather than focus on the misery and the squalor itself.

Kate: It wasn't a conscious effort, though, not to judge. *Now* it's a conscious effort.

Ron: But you weren't judging!

And, in fact, don't most of our judgments of others often diminish or even stop once we get to *know* the person, as you got to know the men on Skid Road?

Kate: Well, yes.



FROM THE TIMES

Matt Talbot Center

[Excerpts from a Matt Talbot Center brochure, circa 1979.]



The Matt Talbot Community is a private, not-for-profit organization of socially isolated men in the Burnside area of Portland. Thirty-six at a time, community members are assisted in the acquisition of the social and living skills their more fortunate brothers developed in childhood and adolescence.

The Center is named for an Irish Catholic alcoholic who struggled to overcome his own addiction and went on to serve his fellow man for over forty years. Though we

work in the spirit of the community called church, we have no formal ties with any denomination, do not consider ourselves evangelists and operate under an independent, non-sectarian Board of Directors.

For eight years men have been joining the community with a wide variety of needs. We serve the lonely, the outcast, the frightened, lost and addicted. Those needing specialized treatment are referred to area resources; those in need of general lifestyle changes stay with us until necessary growth has taken place.

We start simply teaching how to get up on time, the hows and whys of personal hygiene, nutritious meal planning, how to deal with feelings and behavior problems and how to confidently get and keep a job.

Acceptance procedures include a personal and treatment history, medical and health needs assessments, referrals to the needed services of other agencies and orientation. Personal growth goals are set with the help of the counseling staff. A socialization program of Sunday dinners, toast-masters, house meetings and shared responsibility foster the growth of the community. A Health and Community Outreach Program, including a clinic operated daily by a registered nurse [this was Kate], meets medical needs of community members and a great number of walk-ins from the Burnside area. An "alternative lifestyles development program" offers access to recreation, cultural events, community resources, personal business management and exercise, yoga, diet, massage and meditation. Finally, a re-entry program is designed to help prepare members to meet their needs in education, vocation, housing and therapy after they leave the community. Aftercare groups are available to our "Alumni."

The Community does not replace or deny personal responsibility. Membership does not mean a retreat from the daily hassles of existence. Fees are charged, based on ability to pay and everyone provides their own contributions to the community kitchen.

Matt Talbot relies on the generosity of the Oregon Community* and its own resources. This allows freedom and flexibility in meeting the incredibly varied needs of community members. Naturally, we seek cooperation and funding from the public sector when the arrangements are mutually productive.

* Donations and other contributions to our work are completely tax deductible. We are a tax exempt organization under Internal Revenue Service determination 503(c)1.

[Below is excerpt from other side of brochure.]

Today Skid Road is changing, and the older, traditional population of derelicts is being replaced by a younger group (under 35 years). The problems of this group are not strictly ones of alcoholic/drug treatment. These people have not taken their "final vows" to the transient-alcoholic lifestyle, and so are candidates for a more general rehabilitative process. This younger group can respond to a change oriented therapy process that is directed toward taking them off Skid Road. They are capable of change and growth, and consequently our task is to meet these needs rather than the needs of "maintenance" ably provided by the more traditional "Rescue Missions."

Our program is to meet our people "where they're at," then give them access to a process of self-help. In addressing this need of the young residents of Skid Road, we are unique.

Hobo Jungles

[Excerpts from "Portland's Hobo Jungles," an article by Michael P. Jones, in BCC Pipeline, April 1975.]

"My name is Jack but they call me Sodden Hat because my hat is always dirty," said the old man kneeling over his campfire. Sodden Hat is a 65-year-old tramp who makes up a rare breed of men who live in hobo jungles as an alternative to Skid Row. Dressed in a pair of blue-bib overalls, a red bandana, work boots, red undershirt, and topped with an old hat, his days are spent in his jungle marking the time reminiscing his railroad days along the West Coast and creating what has been said to be some of the best known stews of these times.

"Been down under this ramp for six months so far. Not too bad of a place for a guy who wants to save a little cash from his Railroad Retirement check. Flops are too expensive and I like to eat and drink good. Down here I can cook-up and relax without anyone bothering me."

Jungling-up in Portland is not a rare occurrence. It is estimated that eighty to a hundred people jungle-up hobo style along the banks of the Willamette River or along the many freeways leading into the city. [...] Most of these people live in shanties and shacks built out of plywood, scrap metal, tin, shrubs and anything else they can salvage. Some jungles utilize abandoned buildings, freeway ramps and even dug-out caves [...]. One of the most unique jungles which is still under construction, is owned by a black man who calls himself Charlie. Charlie's jungle is part of a freeway ramp which he has blocked off on three sides with tin, lumber, dirt and old highway signs. Inside he is dividing the area into seven rooms and is presently laying a wood floor. Outside the structure he is crushing up red brick to decorate the many pathways he has built to give his "jungle" property a sense of order.

In Southeast Portland a group of tramps live under a freeway ramp for protection from the weather and intruders. According to one of the dwellers who has resided under the ramp for over ten years, "safety of the home and oneself comes first."

"I learned fast living in the jungles. I had to if I wanted to remain down here in this life I chose. And I'm not ashamed to tell you that my first two years were hard ones. I lost four riverbank camps to kids and fishermen who burned my shacks down and threw rocks at me. My neighbors' jungle houses were also attacked. Some of them were not as lucky as I was. They got hurt real bad. One guy got his teeth knocked out. We weren't bothering anyone. Why hurt us? [...] Why? Can us being so different be so wrong?"

Some people living in jungles are self-sufficient and do not accept Welfare Assistance. Instead they work farm and casual labor or pick up scrap metal [...], newspaper, glass, and anything else they can sell. Charlie, for example, has a truck come up once a month to pick up what he's collected.

"I ran the Welfare man off. I don't want assistance just because I live under a bridge. I can work! I'm a junk man! Self-taught and educated by the stuff I've collected around here. I save glass, tin, lumber, old furniture, and anything else that's good. You might refer to me as a tramp ecologist or recycler."

Today at the writing of this article, decisions are being made whether to force the "jungle" people out of their shacks and camps. [...]

RAPPROCHEMENT I

I saw an old man on skid row sitting on the steps of his palace, holding the achievements of all his years in the palm of his hand. As I passed before him I felt his eyes at the very core of my being — scanning, searching, scattering.

And I wondered what he saw there. Had I locked it all up so loosely? Could this brief chance-moment reach through all those years of hiding?

And I wondered what dreams we had shared and why on awaking he was there and I was just passing.

Then I turned around to venture one last glance at one man's future — past — and I wondered how often any of us really chooses.

1973

[The reflection on the preceding page regards my first face-to-face encounter with Portland Oregon's Skid Road and one of its residents. It was at a time when Skid Road had not yet been touched by inner city rejuvenation and when it still had little appeal to the masses. It was not, for most people, a desirable place to go.

The man I encountered that day was drunk. He was holding a bottle of booze. He was sitting at the dark bottom of a dark flight of stairs in an old, run-down hotel.

On that day in 1973, in that moment, I had my first direct encounter with material poverty and hopelessness. With poverty of spirit. With shattered dreams. With the sting of numbness.

I was twenty-eight at the time and was in the area because I had gotten lost on my way to some other area. I could not wait to find my way out.

In contrast, Kate, who turned fifty-two that same year, was already in her third year in the area and eager to spend as much time there as possible. She could not wait to find her way deeper within. -Ron]

CLARENCE

I met Clarence in the early seventies at Blanchet House, in the soup line. He would go to work in the berry fields and do farm labor in Hillsboro. He was a big, tall man, a *strong* person, and he was always friendly. He was a periodic drinker — he would drink till he was sick; then he'd quit, he'd be sober, and he'd go to work.

As I said, I first met him at Blanchet, but then I saw him a couple of times at Matt Talbot Center. He would come up after a drunk and ask me for enough money to get back to Hillsboro. Then maybe I'd see him in Portland a month or so later, after he had worked a few weeks and would have the urge to come back in town and drink again.

Another time when he asked me for money I gave it to him, but the next day I saw him again. I said, "*Clarence!* I thought you were going to Hillsboro!" He said, "Well, I didn't. I had a drink. But I'll go if you give me the money again." I said no; I turned him down.

Eventually he moved into Blanchet House and was helping them as a volunteer. But when he turned sixty-five and had a fixed income, he wanted to move into the Rich Hotel, which he did do. The Franciscan Sisters were there for a while, managing it, and Clarence liked it there. He liked the nuns; they were good to him. But there were too many people coming in with mental illnesses, and he wanted to get out of there. So he came to me wondering if I could help him get into something like a Housing Authority unit. I looked up information about this and gave it to him, and let him handle the situation. He ended up moving into the Williams Plaza on Northwest Twentieth and Everett Streets, near Fred Meyer's.

He started getting Sony equipment; he had a *fortune* tied up in Sony equipment! He had a large TV, cable, a VCR, and speakers. He learned how to tape because he couldn't stand watching the shows on TV with so many commercials; and he had the HBO channel for the same reason. He had at *least* three long shelves of tapes in his closet, that he has taped!

Clarence had a telephone and called me often. He *loved* the apartment and was very happy there. He was another of the men who was very organized and neat about his room and possessions. He was active; he'd walk to Fred Meyer's to shop, for example, even though he had some trouble with his legs.

I remember he sat close to me a couple of times and put his hand on my leg. He would call me "babe" or "sis" or "sweetheart," but I asked him not to call me babe. He told me he had been married and had a good wife; and I think he had a daughter, but his drinking had messed up the marriage. He'd get lonely; he'd tell me something like, "I'll find somebody like *you* in my life, who doesn't drink and will keep me straight." Now with Frank I could be affectionate [see Frank's story]; I could put my arm around him and give him a hug. But I didn't do that with Clarence; I was a little cautious about this because I had a feeling that that would not have been a smart thing for me to do.

Clarence had some stomach problems, and so he'd come to me for antacids. By this time, he hadn't been drinking for quite a few years, but he still smoked. He never attended AA to stop his drinking, and he did not have "serenity" in his sobriety. There's a *big* difference between just being sober and experiencing the dry-drunk syndrome a lot of times, and being sober with a serenity that can come with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Clarence couldn't handle a lot of conflicts, and he'd get upset with people and situations a lot of times. He was pretty much of a loner and didn't mix too much with the people in his apartment building, and I don't think he went on the outings that they offered for the senior citizens. He just didn't *like* a lot of people and he didn't *trust* a lot of people. One time there was an older man, about seventy-five years old, who lived in the room next to Clarence. There were a couple of guys that Clarence said were mentally ill who used to tease this man. They'd taunt him; I don't know what they would taunt him about, but the man had *had* it at a certain point. So one day the man went up to his room, got a gun, came down to the little courtyard at the apartment building, and shot both of the guys, killing them. And Clarence said, "You know, they should have

known better than to tease and taunt him, because he couldn't handle it. You could see that he was somebody that had a lot of stress." Naturally, the man was taken away.

Clarence was somebody I'd try to see often. He'd *always* thank me for coming; *always* thank me profusely for even calling. He'd say, "It just makes a bright spot in my life when you do this."

One day someone at work told me that Clarence had called and said that he needed to see me and that it was urgent. I called him several times but got no response. I began to feel that something was wrong, so I went to his apartment. I knocked on his door but didn't hear any response. The door was unlocked, so I went in. Clarence was conscious, lying on his couch, but seemed very weak. He asked if I could help him sit up and give him some water. I told him that he seemed very sick and that I would call the paramedics to take him to the hospital. He didn't want to do this, but he agreed when I told him I would follow the ambulance and stay with him. He was admitted to the hospital. I stayed several hours and told him I would see him the next day.

Clarence died in the hospital. I notified George Dawson of Blanchet House of his death [George was director of Blanchet House at the time]. George told me that Clarence had said at one time that after he died he wanted Blanchet to have his audio-visual equipment and tapes. So George sent two people from Blanchet to help me sort out Clarence's possessions, and I gave many of the things to the men at Blanchet.

I took his bills, letters, and pictures. When I went through his bills, I found that he had paid all but one and had marked each "paid," with the date he had paid it. I took care of the unpaid bill with my ministry funds.

His letters were from his sister, with news of family members. Clarence had always said I reminded him of his sister. He had showed me a picture of her once, and there *was* a strong resemblance. I wrote to her and sent her anything I thought she might like to have.

I arranged for cremation, and George Dawson and I took his ashes and went to Blanchet Farm in Carlton [Carlton is a small town about forty miles southwest of Portland]. We scattered his ashes along the edge of a garden area. Clarence had stayed at the farm during one period, helping with the walnut crop, so I figured this was a place where he would like to rest.

Through my many visits to Clarence at his apartment, I had gotten to know the man who had grown up on the family farm and been a very hard worker. He had had a keen ear and love for music, for example, and was never satisfied until his equipment gave him the exact tone quality that he wanted.

I feel honored to have known and been loved by this man. I will always be glad that I responded to his call that day and was able to get him to the hospital, and that he didn't die alone in his hotel room. To me this was another indication of God's timing that I have so often experienced.

CLINTON TAIT

Clinton Tait was a tall, lanky, and seemingly very gentle person, with a sweet smile. He wrote poetry. He wrote about many beautiful things, including trees and flowers. His poetry had a lilt; it was happy, joyous, hopeful, accentuating the positive. A lot of his poetry was based on the Burnside area, Skid Road people, and the scenes that he would see.

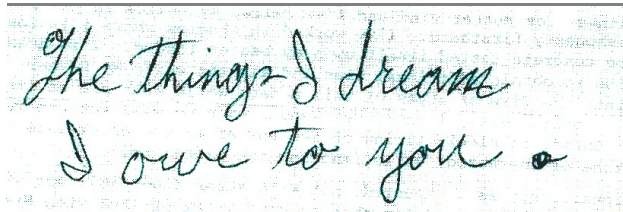
Clinton made friends with a religious minister and his family, and this minister was taken with Clinton. He invited him out to his home and small farm in the Beaverton area, letting him live there and work with him. He was very good to Clinton. And Clinton would write his poetry.

Clinton was what you would call a periodic drinker, although when he would be on a drunk he would be just like the alcoholics who were maintenance drinkers and drank daily. When he would be ready for a drunk, he'd come to Portland. He'd get pretty drunk and be in bad shape, and it would take him a while to get over that.

One time I had gone to the Saturday Market, and I saw Clinton. He was pretty drunk; but even so, he had taken a brown paper bag that was open and scribbled a poem on it. I stopped to talk to him and he gave me the poem, which I have among a collection of his poems that he has given me through the years. One of the poems he wrote he dedicated to me. He would remember a lot of his poems and quote parts of some of them. Someone he knew would write some of Clinton's poems in calligraphy and also draw designs on some of the pages. Clinton made friends with different merchants in the area, and one of these printed some of the poems, even in booklet form.

I remember that Brother Eric Hobbs [a director of Matt Talbot Center] said he thought Clinton plagiarized in some of his poetry, but I don't know that he did. There may be some little phrases he took from others here and there, but basically I don't think Clinton plagiarized, because I would *see* him write; also, I don't think he had the *books* to plagiarize.

Writing was a very creative way for Clinton to both express himself and not feel resentful. He lived in poverty, and he didn't have financial assistance for a long time because he didn't qualify; he wasn't old enough, and he certainly wasn't handicapped. I know I put him up in hotels a lot.



—words written by Clinton to Kate

Clinton was very dependent and needy in a way. He would latch on to somebody and sort of follow them around, and sometimes it would be very difficult for the other person. He gained a lot of respect and attention from his poetry, because there really was something delightful about his poems; and these were positive strokes for him.

The last time I saw Clinton something had happened to one of his eyes; it appeared he had been hit or had fallen and injured his eye, which altered his appearance some.

I haven't seen him for a while now. I know that the family I mentioned earlier would take him back over and over again when he would sober up, so maybe he's with them. They understood the disease, and I think Clinton really tried to overcome it at times, even though he could become pretty defensive if he was confronted about his drinking. And that defensiveness may have been a barrier to his being successful in treatment.

CORNELIUS

Cornelius was a very tall man who walked with a considerable limp and used a cane. He wore a little blue hat, like a conductor on a train wears. He was white-haired and blue-eyed, and he lived in the Foster Hotel. He was a chain smoker, but he said he'd just let them burn out, more than smoke them completely.

I remember he asked me once if I would take him to a shoe store where he had seen a pair of boots that he wanted. He bought the boots, which were brown, then he dyed them black. Periodically he'd have new heels put on them, and he was still wearing them even seven or eight years after he bought them.

When he found out I liked cribbage, we started playing it. He'd bring his board down to the lobby or we'd borrow one from the desk. The cards were very grubby; I don't like dirty, grimy cards because they are hard to shuffle — but we used the cards anyway.

Now it was unusual for men on Skid Road to be late risers. If they were on a drunk, that would be different; then they'd be on their beds a good part of the day and night. The men that I knew would be up early for one of two reasons basically. First, many of them did farm labor, and the trucks or buses would start loading about four-thirty or a quarter to five to take them to the fields. Secondly, they'd wake up and need their next drink. So they just established patterns of being awake and up early.

But Cornelius would get up late in the morning. One time, I thought I'd stop at the Foster on my way to work. I wanted to go up and get him, to play some cribbage, because I knew that he just lived to play it. When I got to his room he said, "I'm not even up yet!" — this was about a quarter to ten. He said, "I'm just getting up. I've got to get up and get dressed and go and get the paper and get my breakfast!" So I said, "Oh. Well okay. I'll see you again!"

Cornelius later moved to another hotel. I think he wanted to get away from the Foster, and the panhandling, and the people who managed to get in in spite of the security system (because others had let them in).

CRAIG

Craig lived in the Holm Hotel on Second and Burnside; this was the hotel with the chicken wire that served as ceiling above the tops of the partitioned rooms. One day the manager, Oliver [see Oliver's story], asked if I would go see Craig (whom I had never met, though I used to go into this hotel frequently). Oliver said, "He has a burn, and I think it needs attention." So he came with me and knocked at the door and said, "Sister Kathleen is here. Will you open the door?" The door opened, and I saw this white-haired man in a very small room, cluttered, extremely cluttered, with change and dollar bills on a little table by his bed, where he had a coffee pot and also a pot of something on a little electric burner. Many of these men used the burners for two purposes: to heat their room and to heat coffee or a can of pork and beans or whatever they were preparing. They weren't supposed to have a cooking appliance, but many of them did, and Craig was one of these.

Craig was sitting on the side of his bed. He looked at me, and I said, "I hear you have a burn." He said, "Yes." I said, "Would you let me see it?" And he said, "Yes." He had a very ugly burn on his left hip. Apparently he had fallen asleep while smoking and was burned by the smoldering blanket. The burn appeared to be infected, but he had refused to go to the hospital. I said, "Well, is it all right if I try to clean it?" and he said, "Sure, go right ahead" — he had a kind of curt, clipped way of talking. So I dressed the burn, and I kept going back to visit him. He would always let me in to change the dressing, and the burn began to heal.

During the course of that we got to know each other better. Sometimes when I'd come I'd knock on the door and say, "Craig? Sister. How are you?" and he'd say, "Fine," but he wouldn't open the door. Other times he would open the door and we would visit. He was a very intelligent person, well-educated. He told me that he was from back East originally — Philadelphia, I believe.

He stayed in the Holm until it was forced closed due to a fire. After the closure, many of the residents — at least the old-timers — moved into the Home Hotel, on Third Street. These two hotels were back to back, and both were managed by Oliver. It seemed that people from the streets would often live at first in the Holm Hotel; then, as they got older and began to get either Social Security or SSI checks, they were able to move into better-equipped and managed hotels. But Craig moved into the Home, instead, so then I used to visit him there. He had a room with a window this time, a bigger room, his own room, not just a "chicken coop" room as he had had at the Holm. And he had his little pot of coffee, various foods to eat, and a small package of Roloids.

One day, he said, "See this?" and pointed to a big wine bottle. "That's water. I'll bet you thought it was wine, didn't you?!" I said, "Yes, I did, as a matter of fact!" and he said, "I haven't been drinking for —" I think he told me it was about eight months or so. And he never drank again. He still smoked quite heavily, though. Anyway, I'd stop in and visit him, but I'd never stay too long. He always seemed glad to see me, and, sometimes, if I had young student nurses with me, I'd bring them in, and he always enjoyed that too.

Then one day a young man came and said, "My friend, Craig, is going to die. Would you come and see him?" I said yes, but I didn't go for about three days. And then when I did see him he had lost quite a bit of weight, and he found it very, very difficult to swallow. I said, "Craig, would you be willing to go to the hospital if I take you? I don't know what's going on with your throat." He was even having trouble swallowing coffee.

"Yes, I would go."

"I'll take you, I'll stay with you, and if they don't keep you I'll bring you back home. But if they want to keep you would you be willing to stay?"

"Yes. Would you give me about fifteen or twenty minutes to get ready?"

"Sure." So I went out and visited someone else. When I returned, he had put on a clean shirt. I said, "Do you want to take anything with you?" He took some cigarettes

with him.

I took him to Good Samaritan Hospital [in northwest Portland] because he had social security and a Medicare card. We went through emergency, and they put him in a wheelchair. He did a lot of coughing. I remember one comment that was kind of cute: He had run out of tissue, so I went out and got some tissue or paper towels, at which point he said, "You're kind o' handy to have around, aren't you!" — he was very dear! They did admit him.

Later he was transferred to the Veterans Hospital because he was a veteran. I used to go up there to see him. They eventually did a tracheotomy on him. He was unable to communicate except by writing, so I brought him pads and pens, and he would write me notes. He had such a sense of humor; I wish I could remember everything that he wrote. One thing he wrote was, "They found a 'glob' down there, and I don't know quite what they're going to do. They found a malignant glob. I don't know how serious it is"; his terminology was always unique. As time went on, I think Craig began to realize that he had cancer.

Once I knew that he was probably going to die, we talked about death a little bit during the course of one of our conversations. He wasn't afraid. He knew that his time was very limited. I asked if there was anything I could do for him, and he said, "No." He was so simple in his needs and desires at that time. I found this to be the case with many of those that I knew and had seen before they died.

Craig used to want me to bring him cigarettes, even though they didn't permit him to smoke in his room; he would have to go out into the hall for this. At that time, he also asked if I would go get his income checks. He told me where I would find things in his room, or to ask the manager to find them. He told me how much money would probably be found and where the checks were. He signed them and asked me to pay some bills for him, which I did.

In February of last year [1985] there were two of my friends in the same hospital: Frank and Craig [see Frank's story]. I gave them each a valentine which said, "Will you be my valentine?" Craig looked up at me after he read his; he smiled and put his finger over the tracheotomy opening and whispered, "Yes, I'll be your valentine." That was the last time I saw Craig alive. Frank told me that he simply found an empty bed one morning when he went to visit Craig.

The funeral arrangements were at Willamette National Cemetery (for veterans). I went out there with Oliver, who had been Craig's hotel manager and friend for twenty-five years at least, maybe thirty or more. There were at least two veterans present, who worked at Willamette — the chaplain, and I suppose another officer. The minister conducted a very simple service. A flag had been draped over the coffin. The minister asked if I wanted to say anything, and I said, "Yes." Among other things, I mentioned that Craig had been a very gentle person. At the end of the service, one of the veterans took the flag off the coffin, folded it up, and gave it to me. This was very special for me, since Craig had not been drinking for some time. He had been in recovery at the time of his death, by his own choice, and doing it on his own, which I'm sure wasn't easy. I brought the flag to De Paul Center, where I was working at the time, and I guess they used it at their youth [treatment] center.

There was something very dear about Craig. He really was a beautiful, delightful person, and was just very special to me and will always be. He enriched my life. He was one of the many men who brought something of God into my life. I saw him as part of the Body of Christ — Jesus in Craig and Craig in Jesus.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Differences Between Life as a Nun Before Vatican II and After*

**Ron:** When the Second Vatican Council came along in the sixties, from 1962-1965, the Catholic Church was renewed, and that resulted in a major upheaval of changes.

You entered the convent in 1940, made Final Profession in 1946, and thus were a Sister for roughly twenty-five years before Vatican II. And you're still a Sister today, in 2001, roughly thirty-five years *after* Vatican II. So, you've been through all the changes and plenty of them! You know the way nuns used to live before the changes, which was the way things had been for at least hundreds of years before that, and you know the way things are now, a good thirty years after those changes.

Now, you don't wear a habit; *before*, you wore a full habit. Before, you lived in a convent with other Sisters; now, you live in a regular apartment complex where Sisters and lay people live side by side. Before, you had just a room of your own; now, you have a fully furnished two-bedroom apartment. Life before was quite structured; life now offers you significantly more freedoms. These are only a few of the differences between then and now.

Give a flavor, Kate, of the differences between your pre-Vatican II life as a Sister and the way things are now in 2001. For starters, wasn't there a greater discipline before than there is now?

**Kate:** Describe discipline as you mean it.

**Ron:** Rules and regulations. Things you couldn't do.

**Kate:** Okay. I can only speak personally, and from 1940 on. The Church, before Vatican II, had many demands and rules and regulations in religious life that later seemed petty. People lived through them, and many people lived them joyfully.

When I entered, they told you that you couldn't talk in certain rooms at all, and to speak softly or whisper in a *doorway* rather than in a hallway, not to talk in the dorms, not to talk in the dining room, not to talk in the chapel.

I could understand part of it, but not, for example, having to talk in a doorway rather than in the hallway. It wasn't like we took a vow of silence; it was a *rule* of silence. I broke the rules a lot of times. I broke the rule of silence.

I remember that on Saturdays, in the novitiate, we used to be assigned to work in the kitchen, the garden, the laundry, or the chapel. My favorite place was working outside. I never did like to dust, so I didn't like working in the chapel. I liked working in the kitchen, too, because there was such a lovely Sister who was in charge.

It was hard to keep silence in the laundry. We did it, but this one time we were in the laundry, and... well... you get some teenaged girls together and they're not going to really want to keep still, especially if no one's around. So we'd be talking, and as soon as we'd see a Sister we would start as though we had been saying ejaculations. Eight-hundred four "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." Eight-hundred five...!

**Ron:** You mean you would *count* out loud, as well?

**Kate:** Well, yes — just *then*, just to impress them! I don't know how many times we did that, but we did do it. And then when they were gone we continued talking. And when they returned, we raised the number we were on!

Silence was not easy for us when we were young.

Those regulations were hard. I'm sure they were well thought-out by the founders of the religious community, but, as you said, they were things that went on for many, many years before Vatican II rolled back the curtain and let the fresh air into the Church. That was just one instance of how things were when I first entered.

**Ron:** What about the frequency of family visits?

**Kate:** When I entered, families could visit once a month, for a few hours on Sundays, until prayer time. And those of us who came from a distance, as I did, from Victoria [B.C. Canada], didn't see our families that often. My parents would take a little trip down to see me once or twice during the year.

This is off the point, but there was one Sunday we called "Death Sunday," when we were supposed to reflect on death and dying and read Thomas à Kempis [ca. 1380-1471, Christian theologian, probable author of *Imitation of Christ*, a devotional book considered to be one of the most influential works in Christian literature].

**Ron:** Why would you have to read him?

**Kate:** I am not too sure why — because they thought it was good reading. It was a little book and we all had a copy of it.

**Ron:** What about entertainment?

**Kate:** We had our recreation. On Sundays, if it was nice outside, we could go for a walk with a couple of our Sisters, or sometimes play tennis.

Once in a great while, some theater would present a movie that we could go see. *Shoes of the Fisherman* and *Sound of Music* were two of these. I remember that whole busloads of Sisters from all over the city went to see these.

When TV came, I remember I was going to summer school at the University of Portland and a group of Sisters was staying at the convent at Holy Cross parish. One night we wanted to watch something on television. We asked our superior, who was young, and she said no. I said, "Why not?" and she said, "You find it hard to take no for an answer, don't you." I guess that partly was true, but it just seemed unfortunate that adult people had to ask permission to do something like that and be told no. This would have been in 1964 or 1965.

**Ron:** What about prayer life? What was your regimen?

**Kate:** When I first entered, prayer life was very structured. We got up at five to five in the morning — until so many of us used to come in to chapel a little late that they changed the time to ten to five! I remember dressing very quickly and getting down to chapel so I could maybe be the first in chapel. Sister Carmelita always beat me, except once I think. I would make the Stations of the Cross very meditatively. Then morning prayer started at about twenty-five after five and was followed by an hour's meditation. After meditation, I think we had about a ten-minute break and then Mass would follow.

After Mass, we would file down in silence to the dining room and stand at our places (I believe) until everybody got in; then somebody would lead the Grace before Meals.

After breakfast, we had charges to do. Somebody, for example, would have to sweep down the stairs with a brush and a dustpan or help with dishes or dust-mop a hall. We all had a charge, which changed on a monthly basis during those first few years.

And then we usually went to class. During the Canonical Year (the first year as a novice), we took only religious courses.

And that was the way the day began in the novitiate.

We said the Divine Office in the morning, after lunch, at four o'clock, and in the evening I think. Then we said night prayers, and lights were supposed to be out at ten after nine. But on laundry days, we were supposed to be in bed by seven thirty, because some of the Sisters had worked so hard in the laundry that we *all* got to go to bed early!

Another thing was trying to stay up long enough, when we were going to summer school, to do some of the school assignments. I remember some of us sitting on the stairs between one floor and another, trying to study there, by the green covered light on the stairs. We could ask for permission to stay up to study until ten o'clock, and we usually received it.

Later on, in February of my second year as a novice, I was sent to Sublimity [a city located about fifty miles south of Portland] to teach piano. That was very different and difficult. It was very difficult because my novitiate was not completed, I was away from my novitiate companions, and I had been asked to fill in (in an emergency situation) as a music teacher, for which I was not totally prepared. I was living in a house with nine other Sisters. I think we only talked at the table on special feast days, just as we did at the mother house.

**Ron:** When did you stop using the name "Sister Elphége"?

**Kate:** When I was going to the university during summer school, sometime in the early sixties, I was in the full habit, and one of the professors thought he was funny and he called me Sister "Alfalfa." I was so embarrassed. I asked the superior general if I could use my given name — Kathleen — instead of Elphége. I gave the reason, and she said, "Well, yes, as long as it's *there*. But you have to be Sister Elphége at home" (at St. Mary's). So that's what I did.

Before summer school the following year, the Community had made a decision that at the end of another year we could go back to our baptismal names if we chose, so I was Sister Kathleen from then on.

**Ron:** And, of course, nowadays it's completely different for you. Every one of these limitations we've talked about is no longer required of you.

**Kate:** Yes, but some of the Sisters of St. Mary still choose another name [different from their baptismal name]. Legally you have one name you vote under and so on, and why they didn't just abolish the second name I have no idea. Incoming Sisters of the Holy Names don't change their name; they keep their baptismal name.

**Ron:** So, now you can stay up as late as you want; there's no rule of silence; you can dress in normal clothes; nobody would know you're a nun just to look at the way you are dressed; your name, except for the title "Sister," is your original name; your prayer life is what you choose to make it; you are not necessarily assigned to a certain place; and you can choose to look for work that is outside of Community structures as long as it's feasible and you can support yourself. So many permissions are no longer required of you.

What *is* there that's left over from the past?

**Kate:** Community — a wonderful support system in the different members of the Community. And we have a lot of associate members in the Community, who do not live in community with us but participate in retreats and other activities; these members share their gifts and enrich our lives.

We still take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

In regard to poverty, we budget for a fiscal year whatever we think we will need of our salary, and we send the surplus to the Community. We don't own the cars we use; the Community does. We're given what we need. They're very supportive that way.

Chastity... we still don't get married. If we want to, then we leave, getting dispensed from our vows, as many Sisters have done.

And our obedience is living out our lives within the parameters of our religious Community. Decisions are made after consultation with others with whom we're living, or by a process of discernment with the Holy Names Community.



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Housing I*

*[Excerpts from "Burnside Group Hits Downtown Plan," an article in a newspaper dating probably from early 1973. Names of newspaper, author of article, and photographer not determinable from original source document.]*

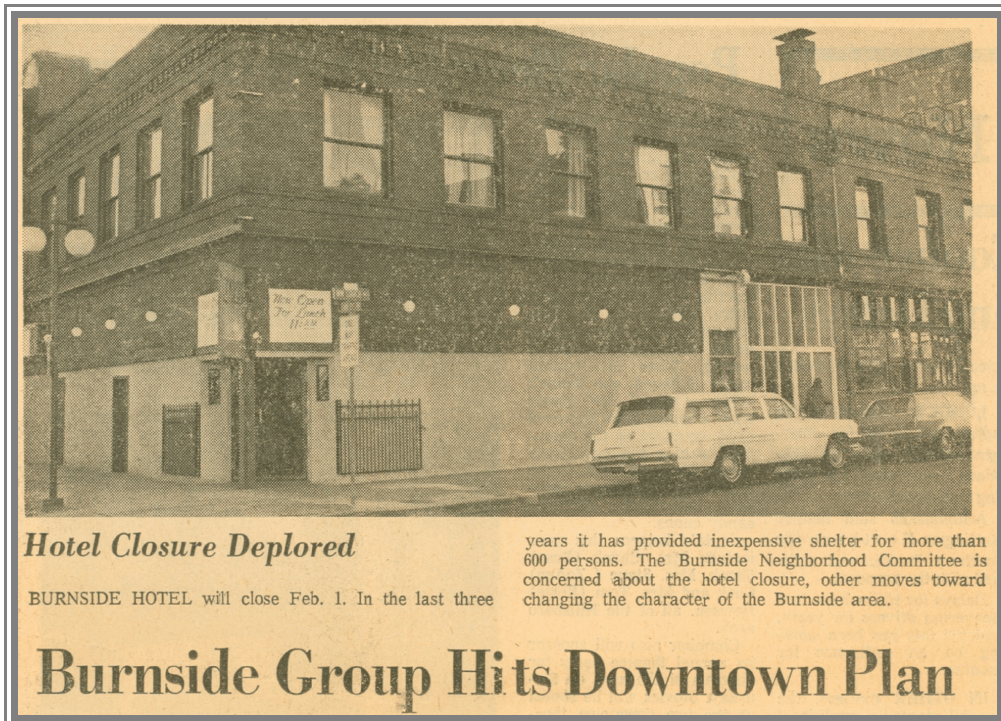


Photo caption: Burnside Hotel will close Feb 1 [1973]. In the last three years it has provided inexpensive shelter for more than 600 persons. The Burnside Neighborhood Committee is concerned about the hotel closure, other moves toward changing the character of the Burnside area. [Sign above door at corner reads: "Now Open For Lunch 11:00 AM."]

Portland's Downtown Plan [...] came under attack Monday at a press conference launching the Burnside Action Week.

The press conference held at the Burnside Hotel<sup>1</sup> [...] was called by the newly formed Burnside Neighborhood Committee to publicize both the closing of the Burnside

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<sup>1</sup> The hotel was located at 208 N.W. Couch Street, Portland, second floor. In the photo, the long side of the building is on Couch Street and the short side is on Second Avenue. The hotel is at the corner of Couch and Second, second floor. The entrance is across from the front end of the long white vehicle. The hotel runs down Couch until it butts up against what was at the time the Matt Talbot Center (the three-story building), which then continues to the corner of Couch and Third Avenue. Both structures still exist in 2012.



Hotel Feb. 1 and activities designed to combat the near-death of the downtown neighborhood.

The committee is composed of residents, area merchants, social service workers, and interested citizens.

Gil Lulay<sup>2</sup> of the committee said the small hotel has provided "clean, safe, warm rooms to more than 600 men in the last three years." However, he said the owner has given notice to vacate the building. The hotel may be turned into an artists' workshop and gallery, he said.

"This is a graphic demonstration of the pressure being put on low-income housing in the area," Lulay said. "The Burnside Hotel is one of many facing similar speculative development."

Linda Blackwelder Pall, a committee member, told newsmen that the Downtown Plan has left the Burnside area "out of its own destiny." She said the plan as outlined will eliminate 40 per cent of the Burnside area housing.

"The city would like Burnside to go away, but it's not going to go away," she asserted. [...]

The committee has planned activities focusing on problems of housing, medical care, nutrition, and justice in the area. Community involvement and citizen participation are urged.

Events include a party Thursday night at the Downtown Chapel<sup>3</sup> and emergency first aid care at the Everett Street Drop-In Center<sup>4</sup> Friday and Saturday nights.

The Burnside area, which runs roughly from NW 14th Avenue to the Willamette River, and from the railroad yards to SW Morrison Street, is the only area in town where many persons can afford to rent a room, the committee says. They maintain that Burnside has been "voiceless" and that the neighborhood is being pushed into a commercial district.

The area is dotted with art shops, "hip" taverns, boutiques, and renovated office buildings.

Lulay says the Burnside Hotel will attempt to relocate in the Northwest or Southeast area of the city.

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2 Gil Lulay was a Catholic priest who leased the Burnside Hotel in 1969 and ran it. He is Fr. Jim Lambert in the stories. It was an article in the newspaper about him that first sparked Kate's interest in volunteering on Burnside.

3 Roman Catholic parish in the Burnside/Skid Road area, which also paid initially for the renting of the Burnside Hotel by Lulay.

4 Located at the time at 523 Northwest Everett Street.

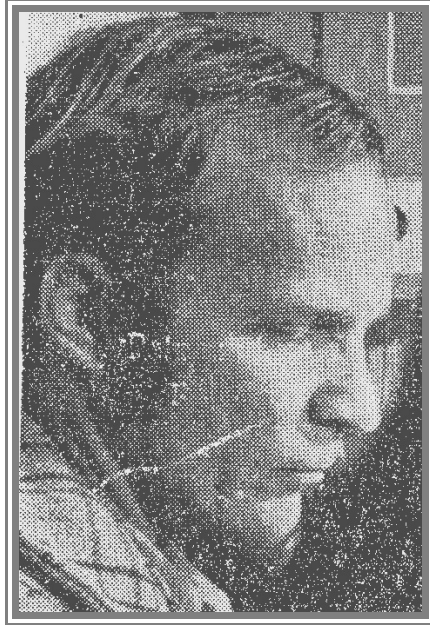


Photo of Gil Lulay, from same article as above. Gil is Fr. Jim Lambert in the stories. Reprinted with permission.

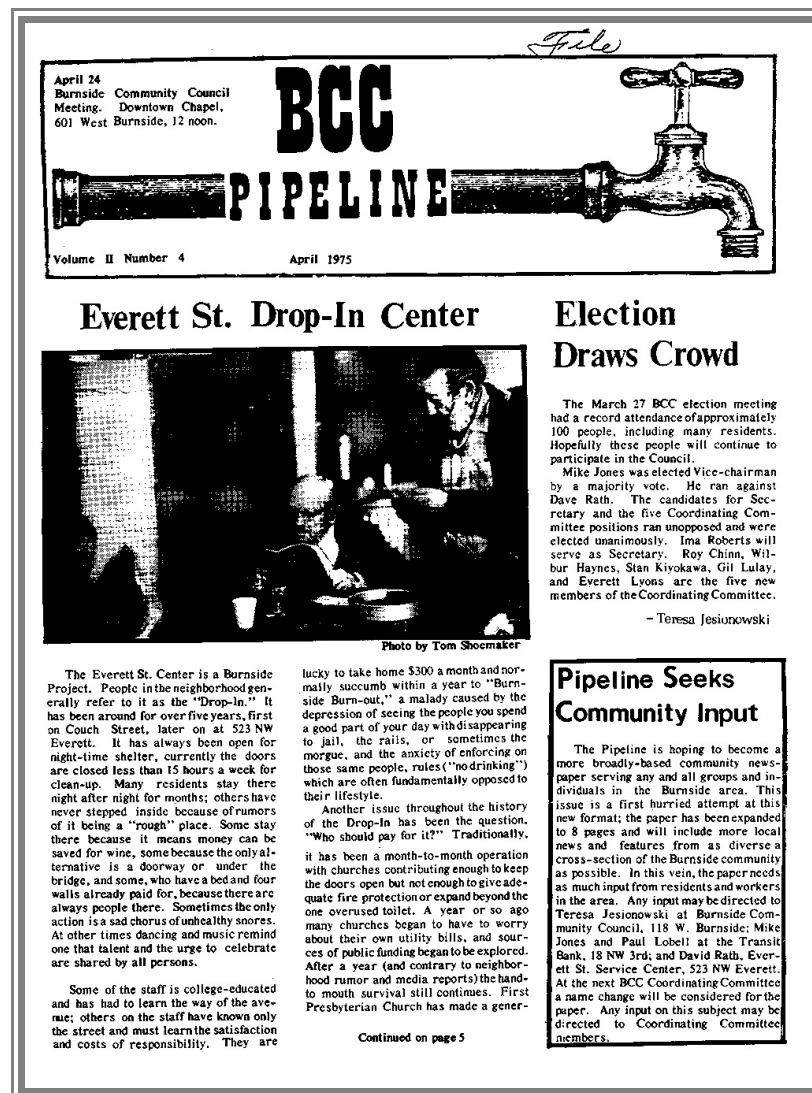
## Housing II

[Excerpt from "Foster Hotel Reopens in June," in BCC Pipeline, April 1975. Author not indicated in article.]

The Foster Hotel [...] [216 NW 3rd], is scheduled to reopen in June. There will be 96 partially furnished studio apartments, each with a bathroom and a kitchen facility. There will be an elevator in the building. Rent is on a sliding scale based on income.

To be eligible to live in the Foster, you need to be either 50 and disabled or 62 and over. Income for a single person can be no higher than \$4600 per year ((\$384 per month) and the applicant may have up to \$12,500 in assets. Couples may live at the Foster.

Priority is to be given to those who have been displaced by closures of hotels in Downtown and Burnside.



Cover of issue of BCC Pipeline April 1975 in which article "Foster Hotel Reopens in June" appeared. The word "File" at top of image was written by Kate.

## DALE STOUT

Dale is a man I met in my early days on the streets. I cannot recall when I first met him, but we would talk, and we got to be pretty good friends. He was a pleasant person, with kind of bright blue eyes, and he was always clean when he was not drinking. He was somebody I would see standing straight against the side of a building, usually on Third Street. Dale did *not* want to be reprimanded or have suggestions made that drinking was a problem for him; he just would immediately get on the defensive about this.

One time he told me that he wanted to go back to Virginia (I believe it was) to visit his family. He was wondering if I had a little suitcase he could borrow. I did have a little bag and I said, "You can have this." So he packed his things and I took him to the depot. He called me once at the Matt Talbot Center, from Virginia, and told me he was doing fine and would probably be staying there for a while. We had a good little chat.

I didn't see Dale again for a long, long time. Then, quite a number of years ago I was down at the Saturday Market. I was near the Skidmore Fountain and I saw somebody coming on crutches. It was Dale. I walked toward him and said, "Dale! How are you?" He hugged me and said, "*My*, you're getting gray!" and I said, "Well, gee, you've gotten a few gray hairs, *too*, since I've seen you!" He looked much, much older, and I'm sure that while he was in Virginia he continued his drinking off and on. He said he wanted to move into the Foster Hotel, so I told him that I would go through whatever process was necessary to get him in there. I don't remember what this involved at that time, but he did his part, too, and was accepted.

I would see Dale now and then after this.

I think he went into the hospital for something, and the next time I saw him he was in a wheelchair — no longer on his crutches. I think using crutches was just too slow for him and he wanted a wheelchair instead.

His room was bare and dull and dark. It was an inside room. It had a table and chair, and I believe he had a small TV. When he wasn't drinking he would be trying to eat, but his health began to fail and he used to tell me that he didn't think he was well and didn't know what he could do about it. Once in a while, he would ask me if I could see about his getting into a nursing home. I would get some information and give it to him, but he would have changed his mind by then because it would be getting near to payday and he would be thinking more about drinking. We went through this a couple of times.

I didn't stop by to see him as often as I could have, partly because sometimes he was so irascible. I was never comfortable if he got upset, though I was not afraid of him physically; I would just try in those moments to talk to him very gently, which he could usually handle.

Later he said to me again, "I'm really not able to take care of myself anymore. Do you think you could help me get into a nursing home?" Either he or one of his friends told me that he had been told he had cancer. He had lost a lot of weight and was very pale. I said, "Dale, if that's what you want — yes — I'll have somebody come here and talk to you about it." At that point it was no longer necessary for me to go through much of a process to help somebody with this; I could usually just make a referral to Aging Services [Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services Department] or to someone else who might provide this service, depending on the case. So I called Aging Services to have a social worker evaluate his condition. They found him a nursing home, and I didn't see him again after that. When he got there he said, "I came to die" — and he did die within a week after moving. He would have been somewhere in his mid-sixties.

### **regret at not being able to have more time for everyone**

I did not attend Dale's funeral. There isn't enough time in my life or my schedule

to be able to attend all the funerals or to visit everyone who's sick. I'd give *anything* if I had the time to be as attentive as I want to those who are sick, and to visit them, either in the hotels or in the hospitals, as well as to attend their funeral services. The only individuals I really keep up with are those I've known well or had a lot to do with. I'm hoping that when I can afford to retire I will still have the energy to do this, because this is what I want to do with my retirement time until I can no longer do it physically or mentally. But it is a deep regret to me not to have more time for everyone.

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## DAN

A man came up to me in the street one day and said, "Well hello, Sister Kathleen. My name is Dan." Dan was one of the first people I met on Skid Road, and someone I saw many times after that. He was young, probably nine or ten years younger than I. He was a nice, personable man — pleasant. People liked Dan. He seemed to enjoy walking and talking with me, basically I think because I was, quote, "a nun." He told me later that he had been quite drunk that day, but I hadn't recognized it because he had already begun to hold his alcohol in such a way that he didn't stagger around the streets. He had enough in him to keep him from shaking and going into the d.t.'s.

When I first began down in the Burnside area, I wasn't aware of the manipulation and the control that some of the people would try to exercise. And because I hadn't had experience in alcoholism issues, and certainly didn't have any training in treatment for alcoholism, I had to go by my own judgement and instincts.

Dan came around a lot. He was nice and I fell for his needs, trying to meet them. I now recognize this as enabling behavior.

I tried to help him get a job. I got him out to Beaverton to work at Our Lady of Peace Retreat House. He stayed there a short time, then took off with some of their cash. Everybody trusted him, but he was a typical alcoholic: it wasn't that he was dishonest, he just was ready to drink, and he didn't have much money to do it with.

Dan would always work when he was not drinking — washing dishes or something like that. He was a good worker, a hard worker, clean and dependable; but he was not always dependable if he was drinking.

He also got a job at the Carriage Restaurant, which was downtown on Broadway, but he didn't last there either. He'd stay there maybe a couple of weeks until he would get a paycheck, and then he'd be off and running.

This was a typical behavior pattern of the periodic drinker — to be sober for maybe three or four weeks, and then to go on a binge. A maintenance drinker, on the other hand, is one who has to begin his day with a drink, and who then continues drinking all day. To put it simply, a maintenance drinker is someone who lives to drink and drinks to live. When I say, "drinks to live," I mean that without the alcohol he can go into severe tremors, the d.t.'s, or an alcohol seizure. Severe tremors are usually the sign of impending d.t.'s or alcohol seizures; when someone has severe tremors, he or she needs either medication or alcohol to prevent going in to the d.t.'s or alcohol seizures. Alcohol seizures are more serious than the d.t.'s because they can lead to death; Librium is one of the main medications used in a medical setting to help forestall seizures.

As time went on, I realized that Dan had more problems than just alcohol abuse. For example, he used to get very angry when he couldn't get what he wanted, and he told me that he mixed drugs with his drinking at times. Sometimes his behavior was quite bizarre. Per his request, I and another person took him out to Dammasch State Hospital once, in Wilsonville, on Christmas. At that time, Dammasch had some funding for alcoholism treatment.

At some point after the incident with Dan, there was a van that would take people from Portland to Dammasch for alcoholism treatment, and I would sometimes refer people to take that van. Sometimes I would accompany the person to the pick-up stop and stay with him until he boarded and the van took off. I would make this special effort because, even though one of the men might agree to take the van on his own, he might not follow through. Lack of follow-through was also typical of the alcoholic. One thing I learned early on from alcoholics is that "tomorrow never comes."

Dan had a way of getting in touch with me and letting me know that he needed help. While it's true that contacting me was a call for help, it was also a way of controlling — of saying, in effect, "I want you to be here to do such and such for me."

He taught me a lot of what I knew up to that point about alcoholism. He taught me, for instance, what alcoholic blackouts were: these are memory losses related to drinking. He told me that he would get really scared when he would realize that he was

having blackouts. People would tell him that he had done or said this or that while he was drinking, or afterwards, but he would not be able to remember these moments; they were just total losses of memory for him.

Then one day on a Sunday, while I was still living at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, I got a call while I was at Mass (which retired Archbishop Howard was saying). One of the Sisters who was going to be cooking us breakfast, and so had gone to an earlier Mass, called me out of chapel and told me that there was somebody named Dan on the phone who said he had a razor blade and was going to cut his wrists if he couldn't talk to me. Since I had gone through some of this before with Dan, and it had never resulted in an actual suicide attempt, I thought, "Well... I'm going to receive Communion first." So I went back into the chapel, received Communion, and then went out; but by then he was off the phone.

There were different times when Dan did cut his wrists and would land in emergency. He would ask the staff to call me and let me know that he was in the hospital, and I would go to see him.

I didn't really know how to help him because I didn't really know very much about helping alcoholics at that time. Also, as I said earlier in this story, I didn't know that I was an enabler; even so, when sometimes I would pay for a room for him, I knew enough not to give him the money that he could use instead for drinking. The money that I gave people at that time was from the J. Arthur Young award that I had received and from donations for my ministry from friends.

One time, Dan took a cigarette and burned his hands. When he would take drugs and alcohol together, his behavior would be very unpredictable. It would be bizarre sometimes, and sick. This cigarette burning incident was an example of his mental sickness.

When Dan would be doing these self-destructive acts — burning himself and things of this nature — he would be both calling for help, I think, and trying to control the people around him. He would sometimes come to me so angry and so drunk and say, "You don't know anything about alcoholics or alcoholism!" It would be a rather ugly scene, and all I could do in those moments would be to mirror back to him things that he had said to me. I might say, "From what you have told me, you *can* get help; there *is* help for you. You're making a choice right now whether to get help or not."

He told me one day that he engaged in homosexual activity to get money, and he claimed to be bi-sexual.

Dan was born at a time when his mother was ready to split with his father. He said he was an unwanted baby and was put in an orphanage after the split, early in his religious formation. The orphanage was Catholic, and I think that that early contact with religion contributed to his attraction toward me.

Dan was in the old Rocky Butte Jail for a period, and I remember going out there to see him once or twice, though I don't recall if I knew why he was there. When visitors arrived, they had to explain who they were and why they had come. And there I was — a nun in my veil, alone, in those times in the early seventies, going to a jail to visit an inmate! This was really quite an experience for me at the time.

The jail had a line of about twenty booths with phones, at which visitors would sit to talk with the person they had come to visit. Visitors would have to sit right beside each other. There was thick glass between the visitors and the inmates, and all parties would be talking through phones. The connections were very, very poor, and this was made worse by the fact that you could hear the persons to the right and to the left of you all the while that you were trying to hear the person you had come to see. [This is not the inmate who wrote Kate the touching letter from jail.]

One day, Dan invited me to the Spaghetti Factory restaurant. He had been drinking but I didn't really realize or recognize it. In the early years of my ministry, if a person wasn't drunk, it was sometimes difficult for me to discern if he had been drinking. Dan didn't eat during that visit because he was too sick to eat; usually when alcoholics are drinking they're not eating much. That experience at the restaurant was

another very different experience for me.

He eventually left Portland and went to Seattle, but I have seen him within the past year — he came to Portland and wanted money from me. "No, Dan, I'm sorry," I told him. "It's good seeing you, but I can't give you any money." Of course, I had different answers for him then than I did before. He was sober, or reasonably sober, during that visit. He was grayer, too, and he was still very pleasant to talk to. But I don't think he would have been down on Skid Road if things had been going well for him elsewhere.

Dan was someone who really learned to use the social service system to get his needs met. He knew where to go for help; he always knew, for example, where to get food, temporary housing, or medical help. And though I still have his birth certificate, which he gave me for safekeeping, I don't know what has become of Dan. I just leave him in the hands of God, and I trust and hope that he is all right.

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## DELBERT MARTENS

Delbert Martens was a tall and very good-looking man when I first met him. He had kind of a military look about him, in the sense that he had a good posture and a dignity in the way he carried himself.

He was a *terrific* alcoholic! He would get *so* drunk and *so* sick. I used to stop and talk with him a lot about maybe trying to change his drinking pattern. He would be willing but never seemed to try any program. His drinking continued over the years, and you could see the progression of the disease very much in him.

At one point quite a few years ago he tried to get into De Paul, but I don't think he was able to follow through on whatever the requirements were in order to be added to or remain on the waiting list.

I remember Delbert was injured, probably while he was drunk, and he ended up in a wheelchair down in the Burnside area; this still didn't deter him from continuing to drink. I think he either went into a nursing home from there, or is dead — I really don't know for sure.

### **about burnout**

[See *From the Interview Sessions: Burnout* for more that Kate has to say on the subject.]

Delbert was always a very friendly man and a nice person, but he was someone who would be in *such* bad shape, when I used to talk with him, that I often felt very helpless. That was a difficult feeling for me, and one that I experienced a lot in my work on Burnside; it had a tendency to lead me closer to burnout, which never really happened, however. It also led me to begin to look into options for changes in the lives of some of those who were ready to try or risk trying to leave what had been for them a pattern of periodic or maintenance drinking. And it had me making some changes in *my* approach, as I began encouraging people to try abstinence in a halfway house or to consider inpatient treatment in a program such as the one at De Paul Center. I believe that seeing the *success* of some of the men at that time had much to do with my never really experiencing burnout and leaving the residents of Skid Road as a result.

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## DENNIS POWELL

Dennis came to Harmony House, the one on Southeast Thirty-ninth Street. He was a very clean, nice-looking man, somewhat overweight, and in a lot of emotional pain. At that time I was doing the counseling at the House. After the first session, he said, "I'd like to talk to you, Sister." His first words to me were, "I didn't think the Catholic Church believed in divorce." Then he poured out all of his frustration, anger, and hurt about the fact that his wife had divorced him. He just didn't think the Church could permit a divorce. A lot of times — especially at that time, in the early seventies — people on Skid Road who had been baptized Catholic had very strong negative ideas about the Catholic Church. Even though the Church had begun a reform movement in the sixties, which was due to the Second Vatican Council, these people were not aware of it yet, partly because they had fallen away from the practice of their faith. They were out of touch with the current situation in the Church, and they didn't know about some of the positive changes that were beginning to take place.

As time went on, Dennis seemed to do very well in the program at Harmony House, and he got a job dishwashing. Being in the house wasn't easy for him, because he was a little older than many of the other people who had come into the house, and he certainly had known better circumstances. As time passed and he began to trust me, we talked more.

He had lived with his family in Tillamook [a city on the northern Oregon coast], and he told me about some of the circumstances of his drinking. His background had been strict. When his dad said something, that was *law* for them, and he must have tried the same tactics on his own family, his own kids. He had a very attractive wife, whom I met once or twice, and a couple of sons and daughters.

He worked at his dishwashing job for a while; then we needed a manager for one of the houses. Dennis seemed to be a good candidate, and it appeared that he was going to maintain sobriety, so we asked him if he would be manager and he agreed. He was pretty good as manager, but he never got very close to the men; he did what he had to do, but he didn't mix that well with them once he had that position.

He was promoted from being manager of that house to doing bookkeeping at the office on Southeast Taylor Street. He had had some experience in accounting, and he did pretty well at this. Later he became director of the program, and I worked with him in that capacity for a while.

As time went on, Dennis grew heavier; he was a junk-food junkie and ate a lot of things that weren't good for him. He also had a bad leg, and he became pretty immobile. He had a cataract removed, after which he had very good vision for about two weeks — then all of a sudden he had none. Apparently a suture or something had been left in and had scratched the retina, and he lost the vision in that eye completely. He had no redress and so he could get no compensation from that. He eventually had the other eye done, and that operation was successful.

Dennis was responsible partly for the firing of two of the staff [see Scott's story regarding another firing at Harmony House]. Later on, he himself was fired by the board of directors.

When he lost his job, he moved into an apartment and lived there for quite a while. He told me, "Who wants to hire a fifty-some-year-old man who's blind in one eye?" Of course, his obesity I think was also a strong point against him.

I didn't keep in touch much, and then one day I got a call from his son. He said, "Have you got time? I'd like to talk with you," and I said, "Yes," so he came up to De Paul. We had quite a visit. He had grown up with a lot of bitterness and anger against his dad because of the way his dad had treated him when he was a child, when he was drinking. And I guess that when Dennis would start drinking, his daughters wouldn't have anything to do with him, either. He apparently had an autocratic way of raising his children; what he said was the way things had to be, and the rest of the family had to obey. His son said, "You know, there's not much I really want to do for him. I don't have

any real strong feelings for my dad. And I have my own family I've got to support; I can't be supporting two families. It's not fair to my wife and my children."

"I found my dad," he continued. "He had sold his car to pay for his rent. He had gone through all of his savings (and he had had quite a bit). And he had been drinking; when I moved him, there were about twenty whiskey bottles laying around. I told him, 'I'm going to move you to a place that at least is more affordable.'" So he moved his dad to a place on Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard. He said to me, "He thinks a lot of you. Would you be willing to see him?" I said, "Yes. But I don't want to go alone the first time" (because I had never seen Dennis drunk and I didn't know what to expect if he was drinking).

We went that same day to visit him, and his son said, "Dad, it's Keith. I've got Sister Kathleen here," and Dennis said, "All right." So we went up, and I was very shocked. I mean Dennis had always been very large, but he must have put on forty or fifty pounds since I had seen him, and he didn't have a shirt on. He had what looked like rolls of fat as he sat there. He used to be so neat and meticulous, but his hair was uncombed and his apartment was pretty messy. He was not drinking, though, and apparently he hadn't been drinking for a while.

So I talked about some options that he had for getting a job, and his son said, "I can pay the rent one more time or so, but that's it." I named different places where Dennis might be able to find housing. He didn't have a car, and it was hard for him to get around, so I said, "Dennis, I'll get you a bus pass and some money for phone calls, but nobody can do this for you — *you* have to take some steps." I think this man really was in a lot of deep depression, so I don't think he did much with my suggestions. His son later set up a mental health appointment for him.

I saw Dennis a couple of times after that, without his son, and then I didn't see him again. He told me that he had never dreamt that he would lose his job. He had thought he would work for ten years or so and then retire and live out the rest of his life in Tillamook. But it didn't work out that way; instead, he ends up a poor, old, and sick man. If he managed to get on SSI, which he should have qualified for, he would have been able to live in a Section 8 hotel, which would have required only a third of his income. Many of the hotels had several units that were classified as Section 8, which meant that the rest of a person's rent was subsidized by the government.

Dennis died at some point, and I remember meeting the rest of his family at the church, at his funeral. He had been a very good man who could not cope when he lost his position at Harmony House, and I loved him very much.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Where Were the Women of Skid Road?*

**Ron:** When you were talking about Donna, one of the female residents on Skid Road [see Donna's story], I realized that, basically, she is the only woman you have talked about in these 100+ stories.

What about the *women* of Burnside? Why haven't you talked about women, Kate? Where are they? Where *were* they?

**Kate:** They're certainly very visible now. But for most of my time on Skid Road, particularly earlier on, there were only a few women.

One woman [**Woman with Name Unknown 1**] came into Matt Talbot Center once, very badly sunburned. I think she was so badly sunburned that it was like a real burn, almost blistered. I medicated her, and, after a year or a couple of years without seeing her, she came back and said, "I don't know if you remember me." She gave me her name, which I don't recall, and she said, "I'm the one that came to your office at Matt Talbot so very badly sunburned. You gave me something that gave me a lot of relief and started the healing right away." I never saw her again.

There was another woman — **Marsha**. She was Indian [Native American]. I think when I first was on Skid Road, Marsha had a considerable drinking problem. I remember her coming to me one day and telling me that she was doing very well; she wasn't drinking and she had a job as an assistant clerk in one of the hotels. The last time that I saw Marsha — this was quite a few years ago — she was a clerk in the Broadway Hotel, off Burnside, and she still seemed to be doing fine. The hotel changed hands, and I haven't seen Marsha since.

There was a lady [**Woman with Name Unknown 2**] who came to me once. She was probably middle-aged, but she dressed rather quaintly, kind of towards a little old lady look, yet not exactly. Someone had referred her to me; she wanted help with some rent. She said, "I am not a street person. I have never been a street person. I find it very hard to be homeless, but I don't have the funds for a room." I named one or two places she could stay. She said, "I can't go to just anyplace. This hasn't been my life," and I said, "Well... you know, there's not a lot that I can offer you, because most of the places that I refer people to only take men." She said, "Well, if I could just pay the rent where I am." I asked her how much the rent was, and I ended up giving her the money. I said, "If you could pay it back, fine; if not, that's okay too." Usually I would tell the people that if they were able to pay back the money, it would give me something more to help someone else. I later saw her again and she seemed to have things going for her then. She had a steady income and was able to make her payments. She came up one other time, but I don't recall if that was to ask for help, medication, or a referral. And that's all I saw of her.

There was a woman [**Woman with Name Unknown 3**] who came to me accompanied by a man. She was a younger woman in her twenties and she wanted a place to stay. I said, "I can get a place for you, but one of you is going to have to be in one hotel and one in another, because the hotel where I can place you" — and at that time it was the Estate — "will not take couples." The hotels figured it just meant trouble to have couples, both because at that time many of the couples were not married and because most of the hotels just had a small room with a single bed. There were a few times when I would offer to have the man in one hotel and the woman in a hotel that would accept a woman; but this couple did not want that. So I said, "Well, I don't make those rules or regulations." Finally they came back and said they would take my offer. I think their plan was to sneak one of them into the other one's room. I told the one hotel manager, "I think she's pretty determined to see him and to be with him," and he said, "We'll watch it. If they're pulling anything, we'll just send her out."

Another woman [**Woman with Name Unknown 4**] came and she brought her little child who needed medical help. I was able to help her, but — there again — I never saw her after this.

There was **Rita**. Now Rita was definitely a street person, but she had come to the streets by choice. She had come from a wealthy family, and she had a lot of children who used to try to get her into better circumstances. But Rita, at that time in her life, *wanted* this; this was her life. She was neat and clean, and people really liked her and were nice to her. She wasn't battered or abused apparently. She never seemed to have any money, or she had very little, even though her family would send or bring her money. I don't remember what she used to come up to my office for, but we used to talk. She always had a little hat on. She didn't look like she belonged, say, in the West Hills [an affluent area of Portland], but she was a little classy-looking for Skid Road. She dressed with a little flair, albeit her clothes were probably second-hand. But she was a really sweet person, as I recall. (Now this all happened within the first seven years of my being down there [on Skid Road].)

Then Rita disappeared. I heard that her family had finally persuaded her to come home. I think she basically had raised the children, or had taken most of the responsibility there, and then she just let loose and did her own thing for a while. I don't know whether I would classify her as having had some mental illness or not, but it certainly wasn't a natural type of choice that she had made.

**Ron:** There is still a mystery to me in all of this. Women are not prominent in your ministry. Where were they? Were they not to be seen because it was more shameful to be an alcoholic woman than it was to be an alcoholic man, and so they remained hidden?

**Kate:** I think there was something of that, true.

**Ron:** So they hid, then?

**Kate:** No, I think some of them were "kept" women — many of them, probably. They were kept by men who had the money to keep them; but I don't think these were long or permanent relationships as a rule.

There was one woman who was married [**Woman with Name Unknown 5**] to a very good-looking Catholic Irishman who thought he was God's gift to anybody because he was Catholic and he was Irish. He came once for food and told me about his wife at home, that they had no food and he had no money, and that he had a check that would be coming — mainly it was a case of money running out towards the end of the month. And, of course, he was a drinker. So I said, "Okay," and that I wanted to meet her.

She was a small woman with kind of straggly, shoulder-length gray hair. She didn't spend much on her appearance, maybe because there wasn't that much money, since her husband drank so much.

One woman [**Woman with Name Unknown 6**] came to me once and said that she used to go and keep somebody warm under the bridge.

One time I had gone to the bus depot to drop off one of our Sisters, and this woman [**Woman with Name Unknown 7**], obviously quite poor, came and asked me for some change. My hands were full with a suitcase and things, and I said, "Yes, I'll give you some money, but I have to go in here first; my friend has to catch a bus." When I came out, I didn't see the woman at first; but then I did see her walking kind of slowly, so I walked and caught up with her on the next block, and I said, "You know, I wasn't saying no to you; I just had my hands full and couldn't get at my wallet." I think I had a couple of dollars, and I said, "Here you are." But before I gave it to her I said, "Have you ever gone to...?" — and then I named some of the agencies. She was closed to every suggestion that I made to her. It was obvious to me that she didn't want anything different than what she had at this time, at least at this stage of her life. So I gave her the money and figured, "Whatever it goes for, that's hers and not mine anymore."

Those first years that I was at Blanchet, I doubt that any woman ever got down there in the soup line.

Also, there never used to be a place for women in the Drop-in Center.

The same thing was true in detox, when I worked there for two years in the early seventies [this was when detox was downtown, on Southwest Pine Street between Second and Third, before it moved]. Once in a while we would have a woman, but we had no separate place for her; we would sometimes put her down in an end room and not put any men in there. But a couple of times when we needed beds for the men where the woman was, we put a couple of them in with the woman — and she would be the one and only woman in the detox center. This did not take place on a regular basis.

**Ron:** They just weren't on Skid Road?

**Kate:** They just were not that visible. I'm sure that some of them were there, because I remember various men telling me about having a woman for a while. And some of the women probably were friends with more than one person. I don't think there was a stability in many of the relationships, though there would be in some of them. There were some Indian women [Native Americans] I used to see off and on quite a bit who were always with other male Indians.

I've named some of the women who used to come into the office, but there really were not that many of them. As time went on, their numbers began increasing. I see [Kate observes the presence of] a lot of women down there now, and there's a fair amount of services for them.

So it's true that women weren't around as much as the men. If they were street people or drinking out of control or they just couldn't make it any other way, they could make it down on Skid Road because someone would feed them, someone would take them in.

I was not aware of women being battered or abused at that time. A lot of the men were compassionate and were willing to share what little they had with a woman. I felt they sensed some dignity in the companionship of a woman, and it seemed they had a respect for women. And the women were a comfort to them. Some of the women who were drinkers would go to anybody who could give them wine. So there was an exchange.

**Ron:** Still on the question of where the women were: in the situation where there was a kept woman, the man might go down on the streets during the day and she would stay in the room?

**Kate:** I don't think I have the answer to that. I mean you would maybe see a woman going into a store or something like that, but they weren't making use of a lot of the social services at that time. And, too, a lot of them could sometimes get on welfare and be in hotels themselves. The welfare system was much more lenient *then* than it is now.

**Ron:** Okay. So maybe that's part of it — they might not go down on Skid Road because they had a source of income which made them more independent.

**Kate:** Yes. And those with children could get on welfare, too.

I had worked with *men* for so many years — in the Burnside area, in Harmony House, at the detox center, and at Matt Talbot. The population in all of these different areas was predominantly male.

Then when I went to work in 1982 at De Paul [which served women as well as men], and I was going through the orientation and was asked if I'd sit in on some of the women's therapy groups, one of the things that I noticed was so much emotional outpouring. I found it difficult to deal with all the crying that I saw going on.

Anyway, it wasn't that I was more interested in working with the men [on the streets and in the hotels of Skid Road]; the women just didn't seem to be there. The Burnside Hotel, for example, was for males, and Harmony House was for males.

At one point, I remember that Harmony House obtained use of a house for women, but that fizzled out because the women weren't interested in going to work, which was a requirement. They just sat around and ate potato chips and drank pop and let the cat

mess around in what was a newly renovated house. Finally, we just let the women know that the house was going to be closing; then when they found a place, we moved men in.

So, in a way, I did not find myself drawn to the women, to seek them out, to see if they existed, to help them, anymore than I do now.

**Ron:** It was interesting when you said it was hard for you at De Paul to relate to some of the women with all their emotions. I assume the men were not as emotional.

**Kate:** At that point, no. I mean, I think there were some sessions where men did get pretty emotional, but I think they were maybe not as expressive as the women. I hadn't ever worked with women, other than [with girls] while teaching school [before Kate went into nursing and then on to Skid Road]. When the women in the [therapy] sessions at De Paul would start to talk, and then start breaking down and crying, and then have everybody comforting them, I wasn't used to it or comfortable with it at that time. I had felt more comfortable working with the men on Burnside because it's where all of my work had been up to that point.

**Ron:** Was some of this related somehow to your training as a Sister, to the "professional detachment" you perhaps learned when you were becoming a Sister? I mean being encouraged maybe not to get emotionally involved in people's lives, which resulted in making it easier for you with the men, because they didn't show their emotional sides as easily?

**Kate:** I don't think so.

**Ron:** No? Okay.

**Kate:** I think it's just a case of my having worked so long with men.

**Ron:** I still find the case of the women enigmatic, and I'm still very curious about them, but — you said earlier in this interview that there are more women on Skid Road nowadays [late 1980s]. Why do you think this is so?

**Kate:** I think because there are so many women now using drugs as well as alcohol, who need help, and there are so many services available for them now.

**Ron:** Do you think that the increased numbers are a reflection at all of how it's easier for a woman to come out as an alcoholic now than it was thirty years ago?

**Kate:** I'm not sure, but it is easier now for women (and others) to accept their disease. It's easier now for both women and men to admit their alcoholism to themselves or to their families. Also, being told that it's a disease is a relatively new concept. For years before, alcoholics were condemned, put down, judged — so who was going to come out and say they were alcoholic and needed help?



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Award*

*["Sister Kathleen given J. Arthur Young award," an article in a probably Beaverton, Oregon publication, circa 1970-71. Author not indicated in article. Larry Alberton, photo]*





## Sister Kathleen given J. Arthur Young award

Dedicated service to alcoholics, winos and bums on Skid Row brought selection of Sister Kathleen St. Martin from Maryville Nursing home as first winner of the Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce J. Arthur Young award.

She was honored at the chamber's general membership meeting Friday. The J. Arthur Young award will be presented at monthly chamber meetings in honor of dedicated service by members of the community.

J. Arthur Young, an elderly commercial photographer in Beaverton, was one of the organizers of the chamber some 15 years ago. In the opinion of many who worked with him he epitomized the word dedica-

tion.

Sister Kathleen St. Martin typically several days of the week has loaded her car with boxes of donated used clothing, samples of medications, tooth paste, razor blades or food contributions.

She will be seen at the Clean-up Center in the basement of the Downtown Chapel, or at the Burnside Hotel, which serves as a halfway house, or at the Drop-in Center, or the Blanchet House.

It was for her work on Skid Row and for helping alcoholics and people with drug problems in Beaverton area that she was named as first winner of the Young award.

Kate received this award along with two other recipients. While the last paragraph of the article might lead one to think that she worked with chemically dependent individuals in the Beaverton area (a suburb of Portland), this was not the case; rather, Kate worked with individuals on Portland's Skid Road, some of whom were *from* the Beaverton area.

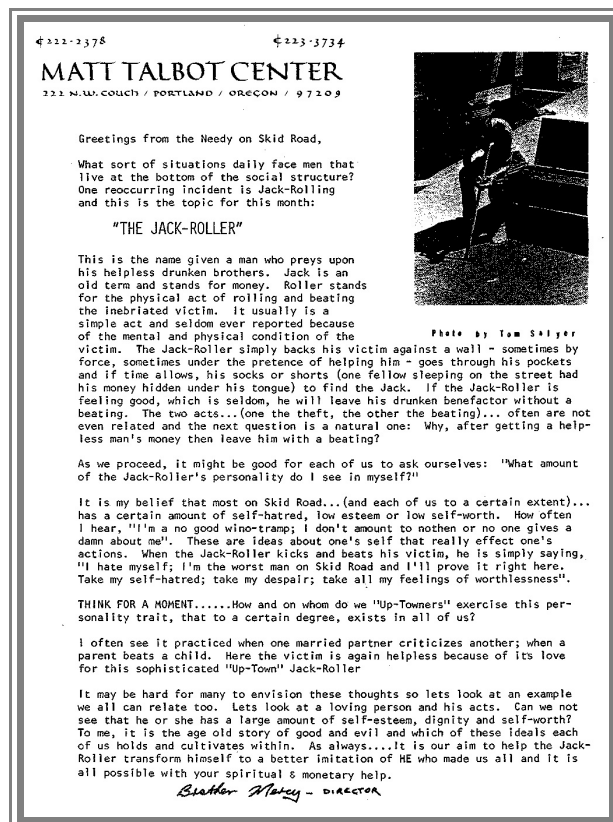
## Jack-roller

[Excerpt from a Matt Talbot Center newsletter published somewhere between 1971 - 1981, written by Brother Fred Mercy, S.J., director of the center at the time.]

### "The Jack-Roller"

This is the name given a man who preys upon his helpless drunken brothers. Jack is an old term and stands for money. Roller stands for the physical act of rolling and beating the inebriated victim. It usually is a simple act and seldom ever reported because of the mental and physical condition of the victim. The Jack-Roller simply backs his victim against a wall — sometimes by force, sometimes under the pretense of helping him — goes through his pockets and if time allows, his socks or shorts (one fellow sleeping on the street had his money hidden under his tongue) to find the Jack. If the Jack-Roller is feeling good, which is seldom, he will leave his drunken benefactor without a beating. The two acts (one the theft, the other the beating) often are not even related and the next question is a natural one: Why, after getting a helpless man's money then leave him with a beating?

[...] It is my belief that most on Skid Road [...] [have] a certain amount of self-hatred, low esteem or low self-worth. How often I hear, "I'm a no good wino-tramp; I don't amount to nothen [sic] or no one gives a damn about me." These are ideas about one's self that really effect one's actions. When the Jack-Roller kicks and beats his victim, he is simply saying, "I hate myself; I'm the worst man on Skid Road and I'll prove it right here. Take my self-hatred; take my despair; take all my feelings of worthlessness."



Copy of newsletter from which preceding excerpts were taken. Matt Talbot Center newsletters appear to have been generally one page in length.

## DERALD ULRICH

Derald Ulrich was someone I met before I worked on Burnside. Right after I graduated from nursing school and was working at the county hospital to gain additional experience, a patient was brought in who had been, as they described it, "bleeding from all orifices" — I remember that phrase. I think it was due to brain hemorrhaging; I know his central nervous system was affected.

He had been found in one of the Skid Road hotels. They didn't know his name, so he was listed as John Doe on the charts, and I don't think they expected him to make it at all. They weren't able to find anyone who seemed to know him.

The people in charge were quite upset because they figured the ambulance drivers should have found out who he was and not brought in a totally nameless person without at least checking with some other people in the hotel. I think they found him in the Holm Hotel, on Second and Burnside. At any rate, he came in totally unidentified and in terrible shape. They worked on him through the night. He was unconscious for a long time, just hanging on by a thread, and he had IVs connected to him. He was a total mess.

He began to regain consciousness and be aware a little bit, but he was unable to talk. I remember on the morning shift the doctor had said, "If any of you can, try to find out his name." I was working with him that day, and I said, "You know, John Doe isn't your name." He was looking at me and he seemed to understand what I was saying. I said, "We know you have a name, but you haven't been able to tell it to us yet. Could you tell me what your name is?" He looked at me and said very, very slowly, and not too clearly, what sounded like "Derald." I said, "Derald?" and he said, "Yes." I said, "Okay, Derald. Now can we come up with your last name?" He went through the same process, trying to get it out, drag it out, until finally I was able to make out "Ulrich." And I said, "Is it Ulrich, then?" and he said, again very slowly and drawn out, "Y... e... s. Y... e... s." I told the doctor.

Derald finally was getting a little better. They had a social worker trying to obtain more information about him, and they were able to locate his parents, who were living someplace south of Milwaukie.

Derald eventually got well enough to go back on Skid Road, but he had suffered brain damage. He qualified for SSI at that point, and he obtained it, which meant that he could get into a hotel that had some rooms designated for those who only needed to pay about a third of their income in rent [Section 8 housing]. In those days, they could rent one day at a time; some years later, individuals could only get into most hotels by paying for a *week* in advance.

A couple of years later, when I was working at the Matt Talbot, Derald used to come to see me off and on. I'm not too sure now if he came for medication, or if he came when he needed a little bit of money because his funds had run out. He didn't do much drinking, if any, and I don't think he drinks now [1988].

He moved into an apartment, and I would visit him there. I don't know if, at that time of his life, he remembered that I had taken care of him when he had come to the hospital, but he did remember me from the Matt Talbot.

Derald is an older man now. He has a nice apartment and seems content with his life. I've run into him occasionally while shopping. The last I knew, most of his needs were pretty well being met.

## DONNA

Donna told me during this past year [1986] that when I began on Burnside I used to see her in doorways and try to help her find a place to live.

Donna would call herself a "wino." When she wasn't living with men, she probably lived on the streets, in doorways, or wherever, and had a hard time.

One time, she had gotten into some kind of a fight, and someone had slashed her arm quite badly. She had to have sutures in it, and she later came up to my office and wanted to know if I would take them out for her; she did not want to go to the hospital. Since the wound looked reasonably clean and was healing properly, I removed the sutures.

Donna has come a long way through the years. She's attained some notoriety recently because last year she was elected Queen of the Hobos, as part of the Hobo Parade. That was last summer, when I too was in the Hobo Parade. I visited with her for a while after the parade, and she told me that she had just begun being sober. A nice apartment had been found for her, so she's no longer sleeping in the women's section of Baloney Joe's, where she had been sleeping for probably the last few years. She began to pull herself up by the bootstraps. Now she is going on twenty months of sobriety and is very proud of this and happy about it.

When Roger Peters, who was director of Baloney Joe's, was going to be given the Hunthausen Peace Award at St. Ignatius Church, I attended the event. I saw a lot of people I knew and hadn't seen for a long time. Donna was there, too, so the two of us reminisced for a while.

She's been a very good advocate for the homeless. And because she herself has been homeless, what she says has a lot of credibility; people will listen to this older woman. But her life was a very, very hard life before that, and so she continues to work, doing whatever she can to get laws passed on behalf of the homeless. She evidently goes along with Roger on some trips to speak, and probably speaks very eloquently.



## DOUG

Doug is another of my old-time friends. I first met him drunk on the streets. He would usually be standing on the sidewalk, leaning against the wall of one of the buildings down on Couch Street.

I remember when I first met him and when I first probably found out his name. He told me he had a daughter who wouldn't have anything to do with him. Once, he had sobered up long enough, which resulted in her making some contact, but then he began drinking again, so he didn't hear from her anymore.

Doug had a vascular problem, and his legs would get very ulcerated and very painful; he never did anything about it at the time because he would be drinking so hard and heavily. When he finally sobered up, he went into a halfway house (not Harmony House); a man named Steve Whitman had a couple of programs/houses, and Doug went into one of those. He cooked there, and he also had a driver's license. He was very dependable when he was sober, extremely so, and he could be trusted with anything, including the money. Then after maybe two months or so, you could see the build-up of what we call a dry-drunk syndrome — irritability, short fuse, but without the drinking — and Doug would go on a drunk. And of course he would be asked to leave.

Time after time they would take Doug back after he sobered up. Then, one time, he had pulled this once too often, and they didn't rehire him. He was very bitter and angry about that because he felt he had given them a lot of service (which he had). But, after all, the programs were developing more, and they needed somebody who wasn't going to be reliable just while he was sober, but who would stay on, somebody they didn't always have to substitute for when he was gone.

Doug is sober today [1986]; he does not go on drunks and is living probably in a Section 8 room, although he wouldn't have to be, because he's a veteran (I think he has a pretty good income now, with Social Security plus veterans income). Section 8 housing is for people with very low income who pay about a third of their income as rent.

Doug is a very delightful person, and I always enjoyed talking when I would meet him, whether he was drunk or whether he was sober.

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## DWIGHT

Dwight was a very small man who was in the late stage of his disease of alcoholism when I first met him, which was on the streets. He used to come around to Matt Talbot Center. He was somebody who had been beaten and picked up by police; he'd struggle, and they wouldn't be too gentle. He said once that they kicked him, and he was hospitalized as a result of some of the treatment. He could be so harsh and feisty; and, of course, a lot of times the police don't want to handle that feistiness. There were some police who were really very difficult and hard on the men and women; others were very gentle, very kind, considerate and sensitive. But Dwight seemed to always antagonize and bring out the worst in the officers when they were going to arrest him.

Dwight was in De Paul several times. He was sober for thirteen months once. He bought a bike — he even bought a car, got his license, and drove to Spokane and back. He told me he fell in love with Sister Margaret Ellen, the Franciscan who works downtown, and he used to come up to De Paul when he was drunk and tell me about her. We would always try to get help for him, have him wait, have the detox wagon come.

This one time he was downstairs at the entrance to De Paul and I remember him calling out, "Sister Kathleen, come down and help me." So I went down and was talking to him, and he was telling me that he fantasized about Margaret Ellen. I didn't say much; I just listened. He wanted to know what he could do. He pulled out a picture that he had of her, which was a treasure for him. He had pretty far-fetched fantasies regarding her.

Dwight didn't have good health, and he used to have severe seizures when he'd be withdrawing from alcohol. Plus he had been battered. I'd meet with him, and he would ask for help; he really seemed to want to try. During that year that he was sober, he used to go to AA meetings a lot. I remember that he invited me to come to the Eye Opener meeting on his first birthday [anniversary of first year of sobriety], which I did.

At some point Dwight relapsed, and he was never able to make it back again. He would want to, he would try, he would cry, but then he would get to where he would say he didn't care. He would express that despair and hopelessness and be despondent. I think he knew that he had closed a lot of doors and felt that it just wasn't worth it to him to continue trying.

Then Dwight died. I can't remember the circumstances of his death.

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## ED & GINA

Ed and Gina were a couple I first met when I used to go into the Home Hotel, on Third Street. Gina had a blind eye; apparently, one time when Ed had been pretty drunk he hit her and injured her eye so badly that she had to have it removed. She wore a prosthesis as a result. Ed was maybe fifteen years older than Gina. The two of them got along generally very well and were very, very nice people.

The Home was one of several rundown hotels in the area that people could stay in for a night or two. These hotels were usually dirty, dark, and kind of smelly. Some of them, I found out later, were owned by some of the very wealthy people in Portland. The buildings had steadily deteriorated over the course of many years, before any improvements were made. Perhaps the owners foresaw that these properties would later be developed for housing and businesses, and so would increase in value, and just let them deteriorate in the meantime. I remember feeling angry when I realized that the owners were benefitting financially at the expense of poorly lit, poorly ventilated, poorly heated buildings that had been left to deteriorate.

Many of the residents of the hotels were fond of cats, and the manager often had one or two. Actually, this was probably a good idea because it certainly would have helped to keep the mice population in control. These cats were just gray, nondescript alley cats, but the men really liked them. One of the cats in the Home Hotel was fondly referred to as "Mama Cat."

Ed and Gina were pretty steady boarders at the Home, and they possibly assisted in managing the hotel for a while. I'd stop to see them off and on. Gina was the only woman in the Home Hotel at that time (and there were no women in the Holm Hotel). The two of them were very good to the tenants in the hotel; they were concerned about them and often fixed extra food for them, got help for them when they needed it, and did similar things.

One day, someone came up and started a fight with one of the men. Ed tried to break up the fight and was thrown down the stairs, which resulted in a broken hip. At some point after this incident, they decided to move out of the Home; they figured they could get enough social security and disability compensation between them to make a go of it elsewhere.

So they moved into an apartment at the Oak Apartments, on Third and Oak Street. There are ten stories to this building, and Ed and Gina were in what I always referred to as their "penthouse" — they were on the tenth floor looking east, with a view of the river and the mountains. And while many of the apartments in their building were studio-style apartments, they had a bedroom. Their belongings were arranged beautifully, and the apartment was always very clean; Gina was very neat and a meticulous housekeeper. I remember she would always have a bowl of candy around, and snacks, which they would offer.

Ed fed seagulls by putting food for them on a little shelf he set up outside the window. Some tenants didn't appreciate this because the droppings would fall on different ledges, but he enjoyed feeding them anyway!

Ed and Gina really were enjoying their retirement years. Every time I stopped to visit them, they would be playing cribbage or dominoes. One of Ed's hobbies was taking photos of seagulls and sunsets. Also, he had a family in the Midwest from a previous marriage, and once in a while he and Gina would visit them (or Ed's children and grandchildren would come and visit the couple).

Then in 1986, Ed had gone out shopping, and when he came back to the door of his apartment, he was carrying bags of groceries and was struggling. Gina went to open the door to help him, and he collapsed — he had suffered a stroke.

It was a very, very severe stroke, and he ended up in a nursing home. He was able to talk some when he remembered to cover the opening that resulted from a tracheotomy. He couldn't eat for a long time, and swallowing was difficult for him. He would become very, very frustrated with his condition and his helplessness. He wanted

to go home, but there was no way Gina could take care of him, and she knew this. Also, his judgment was impaired, and Gina had to be very careful, because at one time he actually hit her.

Ed finally died in the nursing home. I visited Gina at the apartment a couple of times after that. She had a deep respect for me and told me that she had cancer and would undergo treatment. I later was told by someone that she had died.

Gina had been good to Ed. She really loved him a lot, and he loved her a lot. They were a beautiful couple, and their love for each other was beautiful to see.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Financial Backing*

**Ron:** From when you first started doing paid work on Burnside in 1972, after roughly two years as a volunteer, *through* to your retirement in 1998, to what extent did you support yourself financially, Kate, versus did you receive support from your religious Community?

**Kate:** That's a good question.

At the beginning, in 1970, my Community in Beaverton loaned me a car when I went to volunteer on Skid Road on Tuesdays, which was the way I began — going down one day a week. At the same time, I was working five days a week at Maryville Nursing Home. Then I asked for two days on Skid Road, while continuing to work five days at Maryville. This meant I was working seven days a week, though I didn't stay the whole day on Skid Road at the beginning. During that period, I was supported by the Community. Different people would donate partly used boxes of Band-Aids and I would buy peroxide and a bottle of aspirin — I didn't have much to begin with. Then I asked and was allowed to volunteer three days a week.

The following year, in 1972, when I asked to volunteer full-time and live at St. Andrew parish in northeast Portland, I was asked by the Community to find some means of subsistence, some kind of a job. Again, up until this time the Community had supported me.

I got a job at Hooper Detox, which had opened during the course of that year. I received a very small stipend because I was not in their budget. When they prepared their next budget, they included funding for me, and I received a salary, which I turned in to the Community. The first year I worked as an outreach worker, which is what I had been doing on Burnside as a volunteer. The second year I was an evening staff nurse, and the only nurse on duty from three to eleven.

After two years at Hooper, I was offered a job as counselor and liaison person at Harmony House, for which I received a full salary. And from then on I never lacked a paid job until I retired in 1998.

**Ron:** So you basically supported yourself.

**Kate:** Yes. Actually my salary went to the Community, and then I received a budget from them — fifty or sixty dollars a month in those first years, just to get personal things; my rent, food, and other things were taken care of by the Community.

**Ron:** And when you worked at De Paul Center from 1982 to 1992, you got paid, and that money went to the Community?

**Kate:** Yes.

**Ron:** So you were employed for pay for most of your stay down on Burnside. The money you were paid went back to the Community, and they in turn gave you a modest monthly amount as spending money and paid for your living arrangement, food, gas, and so on. But you also had the confidence that a religious order was behind you, and the knowledge that it acted in part as a safety net in case things didn't work out.

**Kate:** Yes, though I never thought of it that way.

## Photo Gallery II: The First Twenty-Five Years as a Sister



1940: Kate as postulant, during her first month after re-entering the convent of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, in Beaverton, Oregon. She is nineteen. While this is her first year, she had entered the same convent once before, at age fourteen, but had been asked to leave due to immaturity. She is wearing the habit that is special to the postulant period. With Kate is younger brother, Al, who has come down from Victoria, B.C., Canada to visit his sister one month before going to New York to enter the Irish Christian Brothers (now Congregation of Christian Brothers) to become a religious brother.



Sister to Sister: 1942, holding hands with her little sister, Peggy. Kate is a novice now , which is the second stage of becoming a nun, and has taken the name Sister Mary Elphège (Elphège was the name of her father). She is wearing the habit that is special to the two-year novitiate period. During this period Kate will start or continue with education or training in a field the Order wants her in, or at least she will begin helping out in a field, with supervision.



1945: With her sister Peggy and new little sister, Bernie, who have come for a visit from Victoria, B.C., Canada. This is Kate's second of three years of temporary profession, a period during which she commits to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for three years. With temporary profession, she begins wearing the complete and formal habit of her religious order.





1961: At age forty, Kate is wearing the first modification of her Order's original habit, which was modified that same year.



Kate with boarders in about 1963 while she was boarding school mistress at St. Mary of the Valley Academy (elementary school) in Beaverton, Oregon.



With a family, circa 1967.



Nurse's Aid at Maryville Nursing Home, 1967. Kate would wear the white habit while working at the nursing home and the black version at all other times.



Twenty-fifth anniversary as Sisters, 1968. Kate is first at bottom of staircase.

**FIRE IN THE DARK**

## EDWIN

When I would see Edwin he would always have a dressing over his nose, for whatever reason. I believe that he probably had an untreated cleft lip.

He came to me at Matt Talbot Center one time and had written me a note. He seemed intelligent, and he had had some education, because he certainly spelled well and wrote very nicely. He was a tall man, not very old, and not what you would call good-looking. He had kind of thick lips, and his speech was difficult to understand.

I remember one time he tried to get housing and they wouldn't take him. He said, "They said I'm lousy," and I said, "Edwin, I'm going to give you a new shirt. I want you to go to the Clean-up Center and get a shower. Put on the shirt, get clean clothes, come back, and then I can refer you to Eric Hobbs," who was the director of Matt Talbot Center at that time. "I think maybe he'll take you then." I knew that Eric wouldn't want to take him if he thought he was lousy; and I knew, too, that Eric had seen Edwin around a lot.

So Edwin did that, and Eric *took* him, and he stayed at Matt Talbot for awhile. As I recall, he became kind of a pack rat in time and had quite a collection of discards. Also, I would say that he was mentally sick enough that he couldn't deal and cope with a lot of the simple social graces of community living that were encouraged at Matt Talbot. At any rate, he didn't stay there long; I don't know how long he was there, but finally I think Eric felt that he had to encourage him to move on.

I didn't see Edwin for quite a while, and then I began to see him at Blanchet House. He would be wearing a blue stocking hat in the soup line. The hat would be down over his face; he'd lift it up and put food in his mouth and then pull it down again. I felt so *sorry* for this man, because it seemed like he had *no* self-esteem and maybe had been rejected a lot. If I ever didn't believe in an Eternity, I certainly would have *hoped* for one for people such as Edwin, whose life was so hellish, with so little of anything in it for him. To me it was very sad to think that someone would have to go through life like this.

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## ESTEBAN

I must have known Esteban first on the streets, but when Matt Talbot Center opened he was one of the very first residents. He was a short Hispanic man, very soft spoken, with large, expressive brown eyes. He used to come into my office at Matt Talbot, and he formed an attachment to me.

Esteban was a periodic drinker, and he had to leave the hotel when he started drinking, because Matt Talbot was an alcohol- and drug-free hotel (though it wasn't too difficult for someone to get back in once they quit drinking).

I knew Esteban for more than seventeen years. He used to be a very hard worker, doing farm labor, mostly, out towards the Gresham and Sandy areas [these are towns east of and neighboring Portland]. He was a very, very good and gentle person. When he was drinking, he would be maybe a little more affectionate than some of the other men would be when they had had too much to drink; he wouldn't get angry or change personality much — at least not for the worse. His health took a toll from his drinking, and he was hospitalized for bleeding ulcers.

Esteban always knew where he could get in touch with me, even after I was at De Paul, and since his English was poor he would ask me for help if he couldn't understand something. He'd always bring his papers or forms when he had a problem with reading or filling in responses. Between his poor English and his speaking softly, and my hearing loss, I would have a double problem in trying to understand him.

When he was in the hospital, I hadn't realized that he had had massive surgery. He had had part of his stomach removed, which he told me after the fact. I remember when he brought me his hospital bill — some twenty-nine thousand dollars! At this time he was earning only one-hundred seventeen dollars a month (I believe it was) and paying ninety dollars for rent. That didn't leave much money for other needs such as food and clothing or anything else. So I called the hospital and said, "This man doesn't have anything." I explained what his income was and said, "It's impossible for him to pay this." The woman I spoke with was very understanding about it. Esteban kept getting the bills for a while, which the woman told him to disregard, and then finally they stopped coming.

It seemed that Esteban suffered some kind of a stroke later, and he began having severe pains on the left side of his neck, which would be aggravated by different things. He seemed to have permanently inflamed or damaged nerves, for which the doctors couldn't come up with any real solution. I began giving him Motrin, which seemed to help him.

Esteban would give me a big heart full of candy on Valentine's Day, and a card, and he would frequently bring me some kind of a present on other occasions. He gave me a clock with an anchor that swings, that I had in my office. Then there was a flowery music box he gave me, that, when plugged in, played Lara's Theme from Doctor Zhivago and had lights that changed colors. And sometimes he'd bring me flowers.

When he was approaching sixty-five, his health was not good, and I thought, "It's not fair that this man has to live on this little income." So we went through the process of applying for some assistance before he turned sixty-five — a supplement at least, that would help him out with that monthly income of a hundred and seventeen dollars; it was not approved, though, so he had to wait until he was sixty-five. In the meantime, he lived in the Estate Hotel, where he had been living ever since the Matt Talbot Center closed. He knew a lot of the people there.

I don't know what income he received when he turned sixty-five — probably what anybody received who was on assistance — but it was certainly more than he had before.

He was not a maintenance drinker at all; he could go months without drinking. He was a periodic drinker, and though he drank much less frequently at that time he would still go on a drunk periodically. He wouldn't do this very often because he couldn't take it physically; the drinking was particularly hard on his stomach.

Once in a while he would come up to my office at De Paul and ask if he could borrow maybe twenty dollars to see him through, which he would always pay back.

When he'd be out of medication, I'd give him some from the over-the-counter medications that had been donated or that we had at De Paul. It would help him with his neck problem, which seemed to be the thing that bothered him the most at this time.

Once in a while he would send one of his Spanish-speaking Hispanic friends to me, and it would be difficult for us because I don't speak Spanish (which I need and really want to learn).

Esteban was always very clean and very neat. He was a sweetheart. When he moved to the Foster Hotel, I visited him frequently when I would go there to check on Ivan Miles [see Ivan Miles's story]. But later, after Esteban left the Foster, I never heard about him again.

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## EUGENE

Dwight [see Dwight's story] had a cousin named Eugene, whom I got to know quite well when he was a client at Harmony House, out in Oregon City [located a few miles southeast of Portland], but I had probably met him earlier. He had had experience cooking, so he was given the job of assistant cook first, and then main cook; he cooked for about fifteen people in the house. I think that in other circumstances Eugene would have been a good counselor, because he really tried to help people; he was understanding, always pleasant, and sympathetic. But later, when he had been there for a while, he couldn't handle some of the newer people not being able to do things exactly the way he thought they should do them or the way they had been trained to do them — I mean when it came to jobs around the kitchen area or any other area that he was responsible for.

Eugene stayed until a manager came that he didn't overly like. When he left that program, he went into another one, where he was doing very well. But after about two years of being sober, he went on a drunk. I would see him on the streets after that, and we would talk for a while.

The last I knew, Eugene was working for the city, sweeping up the streets in the Skid Road area.

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## FLINT

Flint was a small, white-haired, blue-eyed man. I visited him one day and asked him what kind of problems he had been having, and he said that he couldn't get up. He's someone I would describe as having a lot of anger from the past, and also someone with a very low trust level. So I just talked with him that day and said that if there was anything I could do, I'd be glad to do it. He said, "Well, I don't need anything," so I said, "Well, fine. I'll see you again," to which he said gruffly, "Well, that's up to you if you want." I left at that point.

I came back on another occasion and noticed that he had a couple of Hershey bars on his table. I also had a look at his medications and talked with him about what the doctor had said to him. He still was having a lot of pain.

On about the third or fourth visit, I said, "Flint, is there anything I can do for you?" Now he was an extremely independent man who had always done everything for himself, and his room was extremely neat. He said, "Well, I hate to ask you this, but I..." He had a paper bag with some soiled clothes, and he continued, "I really can't get up to get to the laundry. Would you... could you...?" I said, "Sure." I didn't even let him finish asking; I just said, "Yes, I'll take care of it. I'll do it for you. And are there any groceries or anything that you need?" and he said, "No"; he had a pretty good supply of food in his refrigerator. He asked me to throw away some cottage cheese and other things because he said they were probably spoiled by then, which I did for him. After this he began to enjoy me and was always more or less willing to have me come in and do what I could. When he got better I stopped seeing as much of him.

One time, quite a while after he was better, I said, "Hi, Flint. How are you?" and it was like we were back at square one in our relationship. And I thought, "I'm not going to push it." I don't remember what his response was exactly, but he said something like, "Why should *you* care?" *That* didn't sit so well, so I didn't see him again for quite a while.

Then later when I'd see him I'd greet him, but we wouldn't stop and have a conversation. He would just go on his way. He'd go down the street to a tavern that was called Tacoma Bill's to do his drinking. He never would get so loaded that he couldn't get home or manage.

Some time later, when he was sixty-seven, he fell and was hospitalized. I guess he had fallen in the hallway or down some stairs. They took him to the hospital the next morning, when he couldn't get up; he had a broken hip. I don't know whether the fall broke his bones, or whether it was more a matter of having brittle bones at his age, which is possible also because he was a very slight man. They were going to put him temporarily into a nursing home, and, knowing Flint, he couldn't wait — he couldn't wait to get out of the hospital (and he would have been as irascible as they come with the nurses and the others!). The nursing home was far away — out in the Forest Grove area outside of Portland — so I didn't plan to go out to see him. But if he had come back, I would have checked in to see if there was anything I could do for him.

And that is the end of the story of Flint. He was interesting because he was such a feisty little fellow, and he also could be witty at times, in a cynical kind of way. It seems he might have been kind of a nice person if you could have gotten underneath that tough front of his. He was going to live his *own* life as *he* wanted to live it, until his time was up. I think he told me he had cancer, which we talked a little bit about; but he wasn't worried, because he figured he had lived his life and, when it was time, that would be *it*. It would have been interesting to see how things turned out for him in the nursing home, but I'm sure that he probably came back on Burnside and went down the street again for his beer.

## FROM THE TIMES

### *In the Male World*

*[Excerpts from "Nuns in Oregon seek priesthood," an article by Jann Mitchell, Journal Staff Writer, Oregon Journal, February 8, 1977. Photo by Bob Bach/Oregon Journal. ©1977 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission]*

[...] For some, that's not enough [saying that ordination to the priesthood is for men only].

Like Sister Kathleen St. Martin, a 55-year-old registered nurse and member of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

Seven years ago she began spending her day off from a local nursing home [Maryville Nursing Home] to bandage, console and counsel residents of Portland's Skid Road area. Then it became full time, and her "office" became the flophouses, halfway houses and alleyways most people assiduously avoid.

Since the Matt Talbot Center for alcoholics burned down, Sister Kate has set up shop in the gloomy lobby of the Estate Hotel, working out of a battered suitcase and a determined compassion for homeless men.<sup>5</sup>

She's one of a kind, baptizing her forlorn charges and often being the only one at their funerals<sup>6</sup>.

"I don't see any reason why qualified women with the call, desire and education can't administer as ordained priests," Sister Kate contends.

"There are different sisters in the community who are very much for it — it's their aim and goal, and I'd like to see it come in their lifetimes. I haven't heard much in favor of it from priests, though.

"There are a lot who are male chauvinists, who feel women are pretty much an inferior group of people," she said.

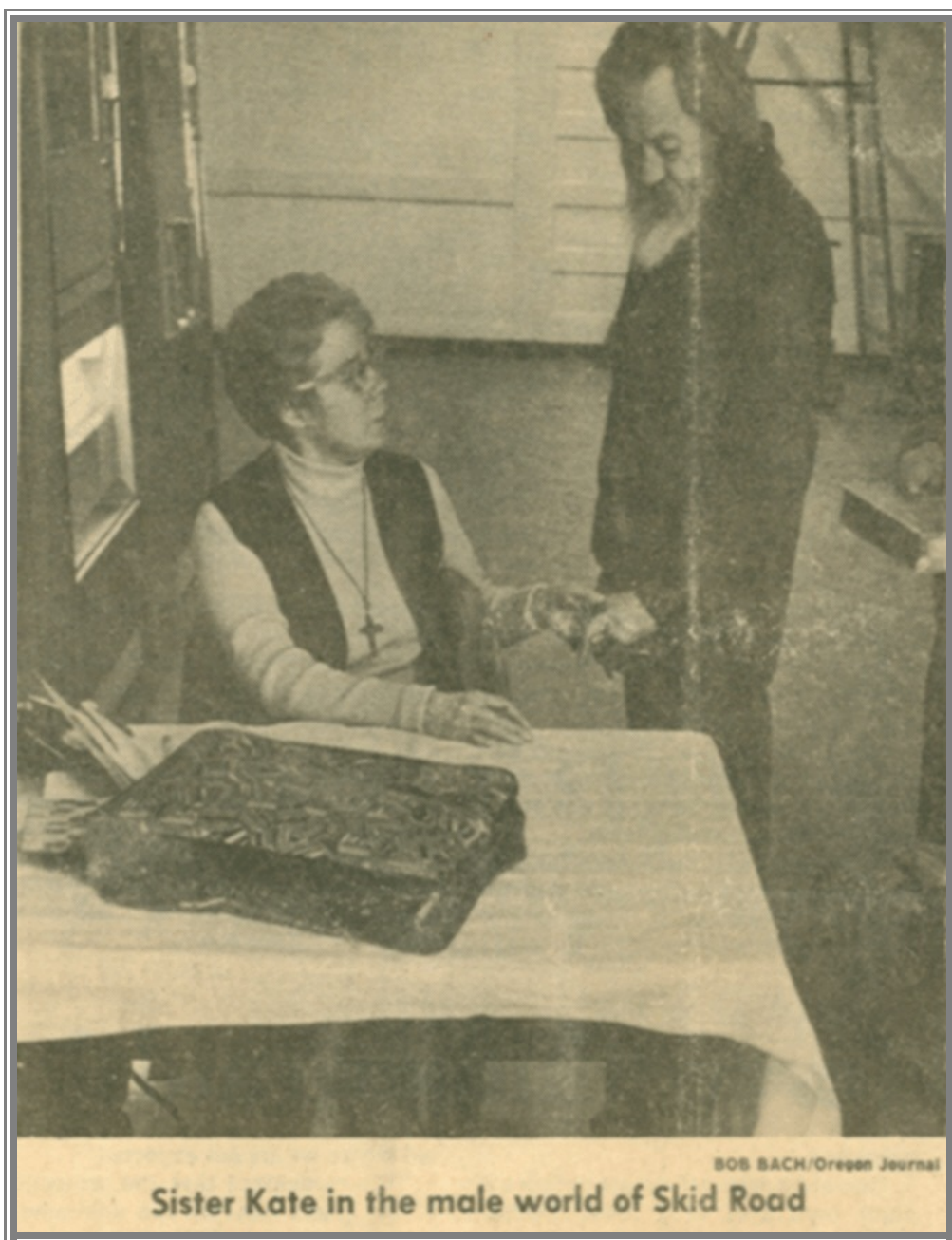
Content with her feminized Spencer Tracy role, Sister Kate eschews ordination for herself [...].

*[See next page for copy of photo from article.]*

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<sup>5</sup> The Matt Talbot Center, though seriously damaged during the fire of January 1977, was remodeled. When it reopened, Kate returned there to offer her volunteer services until it closed in 1981. The Estate Hotel, then and in 2006 at 225 Northwest Couch Street, was across the street from the Matt Talbot Center. In 2006, the hotel operates as transitional housing for people in early recovery from addictions.

<sup>6</sup> Kate baptized two men during her Burnside experience of twenty-plus years.



## *Opportunity*

*[Excerpts from "The view from under the bridge," an article by Bill Selleck, Northwest Magazine, March 14, 1971.]*

I went down "under the bridge" today. [...]

Tramps, hobos and alcoholics make their homes under the bridges or trestles that are spanning the railroad tracks of every large city. These structures afford them not only shelter from the weather but water, access to the railroads and a measure of concealment from the law. They "jungle" usually in twos or threes, preferring the company of one another to the terrible loneliness that forced them to live "under the bridge."

[...] [We] stepped from the warmth of our truck to a slick narrow path of mud which traversed the slopes under the bridge. The rivulets of rainwater cut little gullies of slipperiness across the slender ribbon of muck that my guide beckoned me to follow. [...]

We walked a few hundred feet until, under a cement reinforcement, we came upon an old blanket strung up between cement and soil. [...]

We entered a room, hollowed and dug by who knows how many worn and disillusioned men, that measured about five feet underneath the buzzing asphalt freeway and stretched perhaps fifteen feet of its length.

Pots, pans and cans of every shape and description were on the dirt floor in front of the corrugated tin and earth stove that had been built by some enterprising hobo. Two or three half gallon jugs, long empty of the cheap wine they once held dominated the room. Standing erect was impossible in the four feet of space between the earthen floor and asphalt ceiling [...].

This, then, was the bottom. This was indeed the end of the road; from this spot there was no place to go. Choice and direction ended at the earthen floor. [...]

[...] [M]y friend and I [then] drove to the Burnside area [...]. [...]

We parked [...] on a side street leading to Burnside. The small, tightly-knit groups of forlorn men followed us with their eyes. From darkened doorways came the odor of cheap wine. Empty wine bottles, still in their paper sacks and stacked in every doorway, were mute testimony to the horrors of alcoholism.

We entered a small hotel where, for sixty cents a night, a man could risk his wallet, his shoes or his life against a night's sleep out of the wind and the rain. [...] Cigarette butts and empty wine bottles littered the uncarpeted hallway and they matched the mood of despair that filled the hotel.

[...] [M]y friend led me down a darkened corridor to what had been his refuge before the bridge.

The unshaded 40-watt light bulb hung from the ceiling to illuminate the chicken wire walls and the single metal cot that made up the room. A stained mattress with its many cigarette holes and encrusted filth sagged with the stories of many desperate and lonely men. [...]

We left skid road then. [...] We left to find a better world. A house on S.E. Taylor Street. [This house, which has since been torn down, was located between 19th and 20th Streets. This is on the east side of town, across the Willamette River from the Burnside area and Skid Road.]

The Harmony House. A new concept, a new idea, toward rehabilitation of the alcoholic and-or drug addict. [Kate was involved with Harmony House from 1970-1982,

first as a volunteer and board member, then as a salaried employee.] [...]

From the minute a person enters the door of this two-story house, he or she is immediately at home and welcome. [...]

All of the residents of this modest, but comfortable, home are alcoholics and-or drug addicts. All are working toward a common goal: permanent and total sobriety of mind and body combined with the acceptance of a society they had once discarded.

The home is completely self-supporting and receives no aid [...] from public agencies. The residents themselves solicit aid from private sources, contribute their sparse funds from infrequent paychecks and maintain their home by means best available to each resident.

Harmony House, Inc. was organized and incorporated as a non-profit organization in December, 1970 [three months before this article in Northwest Magazine appeared]. [...]

Directing Harmony House [...] is a board of directors composed of the staff of the Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery Program, prominent churchmen, trained social workers and interested citizens of the Portland area. [...]

[...] the weekly meetings of the Alpha Group of Alcoholics Anonymous that is held every Tuesday night at the house. The meeting is an open meeting, which means that anyone, alcoholic or not, is welcomed at the door and invited to be at home with the group. Composed of an average regular attendance of more than twenty people, the meeting is a loose, free-wheeling exchange of ideas and experiences. Bound together by a simple bond of physical and spiritual sobriety, this group is making the Alcoholics Anonymous program and Harmony House work for it.

The fifteen house residents are required to attend the meetings, and are required to attend a group therapy meeting [...] each Wednesday night. This group therapy meeting, again a loose, informal exchange of ideas and experiences, is concerned mainly with drug and alcohol problems, although topics of discussion may include sex, racial problems, poverty and ghetto conditions. Each individual shares his or her thoughts [...] with the group as they may occur during the meeting.

Forming together, and the discussion of mutual problems, worries, sorrows and joys at these meetings, helps each [...] House resident to view his particular problem from new and different standpoints and, perhaps, wrestle his problems with more ease, knowing and feeling the togetherness of the group therapy classes. [...]



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FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Development of Public Detoxification Efforts in Portland Oregon:
A Personal Account*

Ron: When you first went down on Burnside in 1970, there was no public detoxification service in the city. Trace, if you would, from your personal point of view, the historical development of public detoxification efforts in the Skid Road area from 1970 to the present day.

Kate: When I first started working on Skid Road, if a man was inebriated in public, very frequently the police would pick him up and take him to jail where he would be kept for thirty days. When he sobered up enough, he would help with work that could be done in the jail, by cleaning, I suppose, and helping in the kitchen to prepare meals. That was my first experience of what would happen to the public inebriate. The police would also pick up a man if they found him having an alcohol seizure on the streets; they would bring him, too, to the jail, where he would receive medical attention, and he also would be kept for thirty days. Sometimes men in the hotel rooms would have a seizure or go into the d.t.'s; the police would be called in these cases, and this person, also, would be taken to jail.

The men, and maybe some of the people who worked in the area, would refer to the jail as the "drunk tank" when it would be used for these purposes.

Because alcoholism seemed to be a medical problem, and because of the dangers of *not* getting medical help with the alcohol seizures and the d.t.'s, Betty Stevens, who worked for the county in trying to control tuberculosis, began to put pressure on the city, county, and state to build a medical detox center. She did not see public inebriation as a crime, but rather as a disease.

It was in 1972, I believe, that the Hooper Detox Center opened. It was located downtown, on Southwest Pine Street between Second and Third, across from the then county jail [this was just a couple of blocks or so from where the stories in this project took place]. The center was on the second floor. There was no storefront lobby area at all; there was just a little space when you entered the door off the street, where someone might be lying drunk on the floor while waiting to get in.

The first year that I was hired at Hooper Detox I was still wearing the habit, and I worked as an outreach worker. I would make referrals frequently to detox, when I would find people from the streets and/or the hotels who were in need of sobering up and were willing to go. I was not physically present at Hooper when I worked in this capacity; I worked "in the field" you might say, and out of my office in the Matt Talbot Center. The second year, when I was hired as an evening charge nurse and worked from three in the afternoon to eleven at night, I was stationed physically at Hooper. I didn't have an office there, though, but there was a nursing station. These two jobs at Hooper lasted from 1972 to 1974.

Detox eventually moved from Pine Street to its present location across the river, on Northeast Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, between Couch and Burnside Streets.

The needs of patients at Hooper Detox Center changed very much over time from what they were in the beginning when people were admitted mostly for alcohol abuse. Later, there were many people who came in with either dual addiction or with a focus more on drugs — cocaine, heroin, or Speed, for example.

This changed situation changed the need for medications. At a certain point, the nurses would meet on a monthly basis with the medical director of Hooper, and they would have to consider a scale of how much Librium and other medications could be

given. Also, the patients needed a longer time to detox. What had been usually a five-day detox for alcohol use became a seven-day stay for people who were involved with heroin use, because it took longer for them to come off of the drug and to get enough stability to be able to make an effort to stay clean when they were released.

When I worked at Hooper the second time, from 1992 to 1998, Hooper also had begun to have social workers who would see each individual client at some point during their stay. The patients would talk about their history of chemical abuse, past treatment efforts, current housing, and what they were willing to do if they wanted to stay sober.

There were never enough beds at Hooper, but there were certain places that the residents, if they were willing, could be referred to in order to continue on their road to recovery.

Ron: And Hooper Detox is now part of Central City Concern, with all the different alcohol-free hotels they operate?

Kate: Yes, that's true. And Central City Concern began to get more involved in finding housing for people. They bought or leased hotels, such as the Beaver, the Estate, and the Sally McCracken (which was the former Athens Hotel), and they built the Hatfield.

In time they also took over what they called the "Jobs/Shoreline" program which used to be the drop-in center and did have some social services to offer to people who were staying there before Central City Concern took it over. [This program eventually grew into the One Stop Workforce Program.] When Central City Concern took it over, it became what I think of as a testing place: people could be there for six months, and, if they remained clean and sober and complied with some directives in attending AA meetings and getting some counseling, they could then be placed in one of the hotels. The project would get people to take responsibility for their behavior (drinking or drug use), to make changes, and it would give them the opportunity of having a place to live. In time, they could get some help preparing resumes and applying for jobs, and they could get some job training. One such training is currently [still in 2007] being offered through a thrift store called Second Chance. I think it's really a wonderful opportunity for people who have been in the program and are trying to get ahead in their lives.

They also referred people to Harmony House, which was a halfway house program we talked about often in the stories. One house still existed in the nineties, in Tigard, and one on Southeast Thirty-ninth Street near Division. The one in Tigard also had six detox beds, if Hooper Detox was filled.

Ron: At the original detox on Pine Street, were there any social services?

Kate: I don't know what they did there at that time. My guess is that this was a later development, when they moved to the present building that had room to provide a lot of different kinds of services in addition to just the sobering station.

Ron: I want to ask you a minor detail about the use of Librium that I thought of as you were talking about the current Hooper Center in the nineties. In the story about your first experience dealing with people on the street, when you were standing outside Blanchet House and that man asked you for Librium — was he asking so that he wouldn't go into the d.t.'s?

Kate: No. I think he just wanted it because it was a tranquilizer. He wasn't going into the d.t.'s — he wasn't even drunk. He may have had a drink or two that day, but he did not approach me as a drunk man. Maybe he had received Librium in jail when he first went in after a long, heavy period of drinking. This is very possible, because the jail would have had a nurse and nursing services for those who needed these.

In Hooper, it was used as a drug. We would give patients enough Librium to keep them from going into the d.t.'s; and then, about the second and third day, the dosage would be scaled down until it was down to nothing on the fourth day. At that point, the men would begin to get a little anxious; and when they left, if they still felt jittery, they might go back to drinking because the alcohol also calmed them.

Ron: Again, this history, Kate, is from your own point of view and your own observations, recall, and experiences. I don't mean for it to be an attempt at an official history of Hooper Detox or Central City Concern.

So, at what point after detox moved from the Southwest Pine Street location (downtown) to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (on the east side) did Central City Concern come into existence? Did that happen in the nineties?

Kate: No, I think it happened earlier, but I don't recall when. I do know that Duane Sherman, the head of Central City Concern, was interested in providing some kind of service on Burnside. I remember he asked me at a certain point if he could go around with me on my rounds (as you did one time). He went into hotels with me and saw the Matt Talbot office and things of that nature. I know that he started and became director of Central City Concern, but I don't know when that name began being used.

Duane has opened up so many doors and wonderful programs for so many people who are willing to take advantage of the opportunity to turn their lives around. I think Central City Concern offers a tremendous service

Ron: So Central City Concern is detox, it's housing, it's job training — it's a more comprehensive arrangement?

Kate: Yes, and it includes the CHIERS Wagon that goes out and picks up people on the street within certain boundaries of the city. Either people will call and say that someone needs to be picked up, or the wagon will drive around and see someone lying in a doorway or passed out on the sidewalk who needs to be picked up.

And the police, too, would bring people in. And later, because of the violent behavior of some of those who were brought in, who were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the police were asked to bring the violent ones in handcuffs. In addition, if they were excessively violent, they were put into a small room with a full glass door and a toilet in it, where they could be observed until they calmed down.

Ron: You're talking about Hooper *nowadays*?

Kate: Yes. I'm talking about the sobering station, when somebody really needs to be separated until they sober up enough not to be destructive.

The beds are usually full at Hooper, and there's a long waiting list. I'll never forget the time, shortly before I retired in 1998, when we turned away eighteen people because we didn't have enough beds; and some of these people were pretty sick.



FRANK

Frank was probably one of the dearest people I have ever known; we go way back. He was a tall, big man who had been a laborer. He and Henry [see Henry's story] both used to work in Tillamook [a town on the northern Oregon coast] and were lumberjacks.

When I first met Frank, he lived at Blanchet House. He used to accompany the Blanchet donations truck driver (the truck drivers always had a companion when they did their pick-ups). Blanchet would get calls for picking up clothes, vegetables and other food, and so on. Whatever they were offered, they would go and pick up, even if it was something they wouldn't use. That was a policy because Blanchet didn't want people to quit donating.

In those early years of my work on Burnside, Frank was somebody who knew me better than I knew him. He was not someone who stayed in my memory at first, as much as I did in his. Perhaps this was so for him because I was the only nun around. At any rate, I saw so many people in those early years that I would forget names if too much time went by between visits.

Frank had married Henry's mother, and, according to Henry, husband and wife used to drink together in a tavern. Frank and Henry are about three years apart in age, so Frank's wife was older, naturally. I think it was his only marriage. They were married for seventeen years, and Frank would have been good to her because Frank was good to everybody... *everybody*. He just didn't have an enemy in the world, I think.

One day, Frank came to my clinic at the Matt Talbot Center. He showed me his leg which was swollen and hot, taut and painful. I referred him to the Veterans Hospital. I said, "You really have to have a doctor see this." I called a cab for him and asked him to wait downstairs on the sidewalk. I remember he didn't want to do it. About a week later he came back to my office and sheepishly told me he hadn't waited for the cab and didn't go to the hospital. So I decided to drive him up to the hospital myself that day. Then I didn't see him again for about a year.

I guess it was during the summer of the following year, I saw Frank in a wheelchair on the street. He was missing a leg. I said, "Frank, where have you been? I haven't seen you for a long time. What happened to you?" And he said, "You took me up to the hospital and they took my leg off."

Well I didn't know it then but he had been in the hospital for a year. It seems they never amputate far enough. They had taken off part of the leg the first go-around, and then they had to take off more later; it was a pretty high amputation after that. He had a stump that was only about ten inches long. He had an artificial leg, which he tried once or twice, but just didn't use.

I asked him where he was staying, and he said at the Holm Hotel. I said, "The Holm? There's no elevator!"

So one time I went up there to see him. The Holm was the "Chicken Coop Flophouse." It had these dark little partitioned areas that served as rooms, with chicken wire over them as ceilings. There were a lot of stairs to go up, and I thought, "Frank, you don't have to be here!" Well, this is where his friends were, his buddies. I said to him, "Frank, I can get you into the Foster Hotel. There'll be an elevator. You'll have your own bathroom." "Oh, my buddies'll get anything I need here," he said. "They get food for me, my meals. I'm fine. They'll do anything for me."

When I had first known Frank at Blanchet, I never saw him drunk. The men had to leave Blanchet House if they started to drink, although they could return when they were sober. But Frank was drinking now; he had begun drinking again.

The next time I went to the hotel, I visited several different people. I was going up and down the hallways, stopping in and seeing various men. There were a lot of people for me to see there at that time. When Frank saw me, he started to cry, and he said, "I passed up the best opportunity I ever had."

"You mean you'd like to go to the Foster?"

"Yes."

"Well, Frank, I can't get you in today because the room that was being held for you has been taken. But I'll check it out, and as soon as we can get you in we will. Okay?"

He agreed. So I arranged the transfer from the Holm to the Foster Hotel as soon as a room was available. Then I arranged for him to receive Meals on Wheels. I also purchased a television for him with his funds and at his request.

I used to go to the Foster frequently to visit people in addition to Frank. I would play cribbage with Frank; he was my cribbage buddy. He was a very sweet, gentle person. He could not, however, say no to anyone. His street friends would go up to his room, for example, and he'd give them money; then they'd get wine and they'd start drinking. The Foster was not alcohol-free at that time.

At first, Frank did very well at managing for himself, but then he began getting physically very sick. He was still drinking. He'd lose bowel control, he'd have diarrhea, and his stomach would be painful — very painful. I said at one point, "Frank, you're killing yourself from the drinking!" "Oh, I'm all right, Sister. I'm all right, Sister Kathleen."

Then one day, he hemorrhaged. He was sent to the Veterans Hospital and had a colostomy. He was in the hospital a long time, and I used to go up to see him. The doctor talked to me and said, "We won't do a code on him if he appears to be dying." This meant they would not try to resuscitate him. "We feel he's got another blockage yet, besides the first one." Things just weren't working for him.

Well, Frank did recover, and he went back to the Foster Hotel and began drinking again.

Of course, when he would drink, his judgment would be poor. For example, he'd forget to brake the wheelchair before transferring from the wheelchair to the bed. As a result, the wheelchair would slip out from under him, and Frank would land on the floor. He never was able to get up from the floor by himself after a fall, I suppose due to a combination of being a big man, not having the strength and leverage, and, of course, being drunk.

During one of these falls, Frank injured the colostomy site. It began to swell, and he was unable to change the colostomy bag, so he landed back in the hospital again. They closed the colostomy during that stay, and, when he was well enough, he was transferred to a new rehabilitation and convalescent center that the Veterans had built in Vancouver [Washington], near the Veterans Hospital there.

He was in the facility I think almost two years and was doing fine there. I used to go and see him and play cribbage with him. At one point, they thought that maybe he could try returning to the hotel, which he did do. But as he started drinking again, he would lose bladder control, become increasingly unable to care for himself, and then need to return to the facility in Vancouver.

At one point he was well enough to return to the Foster again, and he really did quite well for almost a year. I'd take him to Beaverton for appointments with his doctor.

Then Frank began drinking again, and drinking more heavily than before. He'd do what he called "going downtown" — he'd go down the street in his wheelchair, and he'd sit there smiling and talking to his buddies, and they'd drink. He couldn't say no to them when they offered him a drink. He'd say, "They'll think I'm mad at them." Frank tried to get along with everyone and please them. Two or three men would huddle around and pass a wine bottle back and forth, sharing the wine they had bought from the change they had pooled together.

One day, I had stopped by the hotel to see someone. At one point, I heard, "Help, help, help." I tried to place the voice, but I couldn't. I knocked at one or two rooms but received no answer. Then I heard it again, so I went down to the lobby to get help. I got the manager because I knew that whatever the problem was I wouldn't be able to handle alone — and I couldn't get in a room, anyway, without a key.

Then all of a sudden I realized that the call for help was from Frank! So we

went into his room, and there was Frank — on the floor! He had been there four to five hours, unable to get up. He had called for help, but nobody had heard him. He had vomited and urinated. He was a mess! The manager and I put him back on the bed. He had fallen because he had not engaged the wheelchair brakes when he was going to transfer to the bed, which, as I said before, would happen when he had been drinking too much.

It wasn't too long after that incident that Frank was sick again. He went into the hospital, and that time he nearly died. They didn't do a colostomy, but they did have to do abdominal surgery, making a large incision, which took more than a *year* to close up. He was very distended for a long time. Finally they moved him to Vancouver again, back to the convalescent center.

When I went to see him at the convalescent center, he was still distended. On one side, he had a large, almost balloon-size, protrusion. He said, "They tell me I've got a hernia. You'd think they would have known this earlier." But I can see how he could have gotten a hernia: his abdominal wall was fragile from the colostomy surgery, then it was broken open after the fall, and then he had the second surgery in the same area. To make matters worse, he was a smoker and coughed a lot. Of course, it's easy to imagine what coughing would do if a person had an abdominal incision — it's painful, and it also stretches tissue. People have coughed themselves into a hernia.

Frank kept wanting to go home. One time when he said this, I said, "Home? Not the Foster?!"

"Well, why not? That's where my buddies are—"

"Taft Hotel. At least there's an elevator there and a visiting nurse. And they serve meals." He would have been happiest going back to the Foster, but I didn't know if I could see him go downhill again. It just would have taken too much out of me.

When I saw him after this, he was wearing an elastic abdominal band, which was giving him a lot more comfort, and they still didn't know if they were going to be doing another surgery on him. We played cribbage during that visit, and I beat both games!!

At a certain point, I began managing Frank's money. It started at his request, when he got his first SSI check. This was a retroactive check for several thousand dollars. He said, "Oh, please, put it in a bank for me. I don't want to just lose it." This was the wisest decision he ever made, because others would lose their check in a couple of weeks. This would happen probably in any number of ways: some might put down a week's rent in a hotel, or pay a debt, or start generously treating the whole tavern when they were drinking. Some even hid their money so that others wouldn't find it, and then they wouldn't be able to remember where they had put it because they had been in an alcoholic blackout. Still others might be "jack-rolled."

I put his money in a savings account. I would withdraw funds as needed to pay his rent, to shop for him, and to give him whatever he wanted in spending money. Then, at one point I transferred his money to a money market account, which paid more interest.

Frank was getting a veterans total disability, which amounted to seven-hundred and some dollars per month. After six months in the convalescent center, the facility received the bulk of the check and Frank was given sixty dollars a month for spending money. He was always a very generous man and would buy cigarettes and other items for his buddies in the facility if they had no money. I would buy his cigarettes in Oregon because they were cheaper here; they're pretty expensive over there in Washington, even in the Veteran's PX.

Frank eventually moved into Northwest Towers on Northwest Nineteenth and Everett Street, which was a low-income housing facility. He was not drinking at this time, and he was able to take care of himself quite well. I purchased a motorized wheelchair with his funds, and this enabled him to go to a nearby store for cigarettes or anything else that he wanted. He would fix his own breakfast and lunch out of items that I had bought, and his dinner also, which consisted of frozen dinners that he would bake

in the oven. He liked 3.8 percent milk because he believed it coated his partly damaged stomach — damage that had resulted from his heavy drinking in the past. I remember talking with the woman who acted as manager of the building about the possibility of Frank's going to the dining room for his evening meals, to supplement the nutritional value of what he was eating on his own.

On one of his outings he purchased some beer, and that evening in the dining room the manager noticed a difference in his behavior; he seemed less inhibited with some of the women. She was concerned and told me about this. I went to Frank's room and told him what she had mentioned. I said, "Frank, if you're going to go back to drinking, I'm going to have to find another money manager for you. I cannot watch you go downhill again as you did before. I love you too much to see you destroy yourself as a result of your drinking. I'm going to give you an hour to make a decision whether you will stop drinking at this time. I am not going to be an enabler — I will not continue visiting you and managing your money if you continue drinking. I will be back in an hour."

When I returned, Frank started to cry, and he said, "Please don't leave me, Sister. I won't drink." He kept his word, and we continued as before.

At some point after this, Frank was diagnosed with cancer of the lungs. I tried to encourage him to stop smoking, and his response was, "I stopped the drinking, and now you want me to stop smoking, too." I realized that I was asking a *lot* and that I didn't have the right to insist on this.

Sometime later, it became necessary for him to have an oxygen tank, and I realized that he did not have a lot of time left. I asked him about his family, and he gave me the names of his sister and brothers. I said, "Frank, I'd like to notify someone in your family that you're sick. I think they have a right to know." From what he said, he seemed to have had a pretty close relationship with his sister, but not with his brothers. I called one of the phone numbers that he gave me, and his sister-in-law answered the phone. It was evident from the ensuing conversation that she had no use for Frank because of his drinking and because of his lifestyle. She implied that he could have made something of himself, without drinking, as his brothers had. I ended the conversation, saying that he was very ill and that his family members should know. His sister and each of his brothers did end up visiting Frank at the Northwest Towers.

He eventually was admitted to the new Veterans Hospital in Portland. To the best of my recollection, he was in there a short time, then back in the hotel, then eventually he went back to the hospital.

I had gone to Seaside [a town on the northern Oregon coast] with a friend, and her husband who was alcoholic, for an event called "North Coast Roundup" — this was a convention for recovering alcoholics. I received a message there on Sunday morning from one of my friends notifying me that Frank had died that morning. After approximately twenty years of friendship, this news was very hard for me — knowing that he died without my being there and without my realizing before I left that he was so close to death.

I contacted his family, and we talked about arrangements for his burial at Willamette National Cemetery. The chaplain asked me if I wanted him to sing something; I remembered that Frank apparently had liked the hymn "How Great Thou Art," so I suggested that hymn to the chaplain. I remembered the name of the song because of some memorable incidents that sometimes would occur when Frank and I would play cribbage: In the course of our many cribbage games, if Frank had been drinking some, he now and then would lose two points when offered the cards to cut; and when he did, his opponent — me — got to take two points. And when *that* would happen, he sometimes would push his wheelchair back from the table and say, "Goddamn it, you got me again!" I would grin and say, "I never catch you when you're not drinking!" And a lot of times during the games — especially if he seemed to be winning — he would break into singing a few lines from "How Great Thou Art."

Since I had been Frank's money manager, I talked with his sister about how to

dispose of his possessions. She suggested giving his wheelchair to one of his brothers, who had a heart condition. I told her that there were several hundred dollars in the bank, and she said, "One of our brothers could really use the money, while the rest of us have what we need." So I paid off outstanding bills and then gave her a check for the remainder of the balance.

Frank was a very gentle person who was very loyal and generous. I don't think he ever met a person he didn't like. I learned to love and care about him very much, and I will always be grateful for the gift of him in my life.

money management services provided by Kate to Burnside individuals

Over the course of a few years, I managed the money of several men — in some cases at their request, in other cases at the request of social services. I gradually stopped doing this for all but Frank. Managing their money enabled them to have access to it as they needed it for rent and food and other purposes, and also helped assure they didn't go around with a lot of money in their pocket. At *that* time, many of the men who received checks because of their age or some disability were often "jack-rolled" by others who didn't have any income; they were vulnerable and were taken advantage of. They were often taken advantage of in a tavern when they would be treating some of their friends to drinks. The fact that they were drinking meant that their behavior and judgment were impaired and they were an easy prey to someone who was stronger or had not been drinking.

At one time, I remember that Stanley [see Stanley's story], who received a pension from the Veterans, asked me if I would assume legal responsibility for managing his money. I accepted his request but later regretted this responsibility. I ended up having to quit sending him money because he'd either lose it from being "jack-rolled" or spend it as fast as I'd send it.

A long time ago, when I received a couple of awards — the J. Arthur Young Award and a grant from the Jesuits — I put the money in a bank where it served as my ministry funds. At first, I used to have it in a savings account, but later I switched to a money market account. I put the money I managed for several of the Burnside people in the same bank account, always keeping track of the amount each individual had and spent. The account paid some interest quarterly, and I put the interest in my ministry fund. I let the people whose money I had in the bank know what I was doing. I would tell them, "The interest that's earned on your money I'm just going to put in my general ministry fund because there's no other practical way to deal with it." None of them had any problem with that at all; they were just glad that they always had money for their rents and other things that they needed.

As I said earlier, at a certain point I provided money management services only to Frank. Others either died or moved to care facilities, which meant that I no longer needed to be responsible for them.

FRED

Fred was a very tall, big, gray-haired man who appeared distinguished, and he was good-looking. He had an income, I think a Veterans income. He drank most of the time. He was around Burnside on and off during my earlier years there, in the first half of the seventies.

He came up to Matt Talbot Center one time with a very abscessed knee, but he refused to go to the hospital. These people spent so much time in the hospital that I can understand why they wouldn't want to go again. Of course, too, they drank themselves so much into oblivion that they didn't feel the pain — and they used to say this. At first, though, I couldn't figure out how they could stand the pain they would have; I'd think, "Lord, I wouldn't want to be running around with this kind of a problem or pain!"

(Part of what follows you probably aren't going to want to put in the story, but I'm just going to tell you anyway.) Fred's clothes and his leg during that visit were so full of his own... if you'll pardon the expression... shit that I remember getting paper towels and just scooping and scooping and tossing it in a paper bag until I could get the area clear enough to work on it. Then I tried to use sterile techniques and antiseptic to clean it, and I applied medication and a sterile dressing. This whole process took quite a while because I had to go through all the "crud" first. And, of course, Fred was too drunk to notice or know what was going on; otherwise he would have been apologizing over and over again for my having to do this. But he didn't say a thing! And then when I was finished [Kate laughs], he went across the street and sat on the sidewalk with his back against the Estate Hotel, and pretty soon I saw this huge stream running down the sidewalk [Kate laughs again] — he had wet his pants, and all the sterile dressing was soaked, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh!" This was Fred!

At some point later, I heard he was in a nursing home, and sometime after that I heard that he had died. Fred was a man with a lot of potential, and also one who showed how alcohol can destroy a life.

GARY

One of the first people I met on Burnside was Gary. This was in 1970, during the first year of my Burnside experience. I was still wearing the habit, and Gary would always say, "When are you going to take off the veil and marry me?" My response would be, "When are you going to stop drinking?" That would end *that* part of the conversation! When we would encounter each other on the street — he was usually drinking, always smoking.

Gary had respiratory problems. Sometimes I would see him lying on the sidewalk, and I would bend down to see if he was conscious. I remember one time in particular. He was on Second Street, between Couch and Davis. He said, "Can you get help? I can't breathe." So I called the city's police emergency number. They sent an ambulance, and, of course, he was put on oxygen right away. I usually called the number the police had given me, and if an ambulance was needed the individual would not be charged. At first when I would call the police for someone, they would want to come and examine the person and determine for themselves what was needed, a cab or an ambulance. But after some time passed, they began to know who I was; they knew I was a nurse, and they would trust my judgment if I requested an ambulance. I might add here that during my first couple of years on Burnside, there was not yet a public detoxification center. If a person needed detoxification, he was taken to the city jail — usually referred to as "the drunk tank" by the men — where he would be kept for thirty days.

During a different episode, I remember he asked me to hold money for him, which I did, and then I brought it to him later at the hospital.

In another incident, he experienced insufficient air long enough to do some brain damage; after a stay in a hospital, he was discharged to a nursing home.

After this, I saw Gary on the street once, and I said, "Aren't you Gary?" He looked at me and said, "Yes..." But he didn't know who I was, so I could tell then that there was memory loss. I asked, "Where have you been staying?" and he was able to tell me. Then I asked, "Have you been discharged?" and he said, "No." "Did you just walk away?" and he said, "Yes." So I got in touch with either a social service agency or with the police, and they picked him up, and I believe he was returned to the nursing home at that time.

That was my last contact with Gary.

[Update: When I asked Kate in 2012 how she would make various emergency phone calls if she found a man on the street or in one of the hotels who needed help, she replied that she would need to go in search of a phone, e.g. walk to a nearby shop merchant or to the manager of the hotel she was in (which could have involved going to a different floor). At no time during or after Kate's ministry did she have a cell phone to use. -Ron]

GENE

Gene is someone I met early in my years on Burnside when I had a little clinic office in the Matt Talbot Center. He was tall and lanky, and a Scotsman. He wore a cap with a beak and always had a sweet smile. We didn't talk much that I recall; he never had too much to say. He seemed to be a rather shy individual and always had a kind of shy smile. I never saw Gene drunk but I know that he drank. My first memories of him were of his coming to the Matt Talbot for the antacid Malox; apparently he'd come for the Maalox after drunks because his stomach would be in bad shape.

I remember he said one time that he carried his "crazy papers" with him, that he had been declared mentally ill. Apparently he was on SSI because of his seizures and took Dilantin for them. He would tell me that his mind would "seizure." He did not apparently go into convulsive seizures, and to my knowledge he didn't go into the petit mal type either, but he did seem to go into a kind of mental blackout, which very probably was a result of his heavier drinking in the past. Whatever he based his craziness on, he certainly seemed to be able to function.

Gene and I began to have more frequent contact when he moved into the Foster Hotel. Frank was living there at the time [see Frank's story], and Gene used to clean his room and do his laundry; I would pay him forty dollars for doing this, because I was Frank's money manager and Frank would ask me to do it. And Gene would buy wine for Frank. I got very upset about these "wine runs" because Frank had had so much surgery that he just couldn't handle alcohol at all; he would get out of control, then he'd fall from his wheelchair and have a lot of problems. I remember saying, "Gene, I wish you wouldn't do this. I wish you wouldn't buy him the wine. If he's going to drink, let him go get his own wine. He has a wheelchair. He can get down to the store. You're only making it easier for him to die. It's going to kill him." Gene got very upset that I took this stand, and he didn't want anything to do with me. He wouldn't come to see me or talk to me — he just ignored me. I felt his upset, and I really felt badly about it, but that was the way it was. This went on for quite a long time.

Then one day Gene opened a conversation. He came to me and said, "You know, I wish you would look in on me once in a while," and I said, "I will, Gene, I will." Those were the first words he had spoken to me since the incident that had upset him, and it was an opening in our relationship. So a day or two later I knocked at his door and said, "Hi, Gene. How are you doing?" and he said, "Come on in." I sat down, and we talked for a few minutes. I said, "Is there anything I can do for you?" and he said there wasn't, that he was all right. But he was satisfied with my visit; I think it reassured him at that point that someone was available to help him if he needed it. Some of the men, I think, were afraid of dying alone or of having nobody know they were ill or had died. So I began to stop by a couple of times a week to see Gene.

He told me during this period that he had been going to the hospital. He didn't believe the doctors, who told him he had cancer; he denied that he had it. He said, "I know I don't have cancer. What do they know about it?" He would *always* go through this "what do they know about it?" He would also say, "They don't know anything. They admit they don't know. They can't cure it. They don't know what caused it. One doctor says, 'You shouldn't smoke,' and the other doctor says, 'Go ahead and smoke.'" And I thought, "That's a good sign that the cancer is pretty far advanced." When he asked me, "What should I do?" I said, "Well, I think *you* have to decide.

Gene had some very, very different thought processes, to put it mildly. Sometimes he would go on and on with certain quotations he would recite. I don't remember what they all were, but I know he often said, "Lust not," and I would wonder why he had said this.

I brought ice cream for him a couple of times, and I would do a little shopping for him and other things that he would ask for. I could see he was getting weaker; he was losing weight and was extremely thin, and he didn't have the energy to do things.

He really was very religious, and he used to ask me questions about religion. He

was a fundamentalist in his biblical readings and interpretations. He would expound, and I always would just listen and let him say what he was going to say; I never would get into any kind of argument or controversy with him. He used to write pages of really disconnected thinking about God and the Bible, and some about sex, and he would give them to me. One day he asked if I would pray for him, which I did. I know he trusted me.

He gave me two letters one day and said, "You can read them, and then would you answer them for me?" I read them. They were from two of his daughters, who wanted to know why he didn't write to them. You could tell that they thought a lot of him. The eldest of them asked, "What are you like? What do you look like? They tell me that my son looks like you. I'd love to see you." When he gave the letters to me, he said, "Don't tell them I'm sick," and I said, "Gene, if I answer these letters, I will have to tell them that you're sick. It wouldn't be fair to them not to. Is that all right?" and he said, "Whatever you think." He used to always say "whatever you think" or "whatever you say" if I made a suggestion about something. So when I wrote to the girls I left a phone number and said, "Your dad is pretty sick. He has cancer of the lungs. I've talked to the doctors, and he isn't going to have a lot of time left."

Around that time, when he would cash his check, he would turn the money over to me. He had a bank account, but he said, "I want to put all this in *your* account. I don't want it in mine." He was against the hospitals or the state getting what, really, they had coming to them for his care. I put the money into my trust fund, under his name, and I did the different things with it that he wanted me to do.

I remember coming to his hotel room one morning (I think I had a key to it at that point), and he was all stretched out on his bed. I thought he was dead. He was lying flat on his bed, and he looked like death. I said, "Gene, would you like me to say some prayers?" He nodded, and I said the Our Father with him. When we were finished, he nodded a "thank you" and I think he said, "Amen." I called for an ambulance, and I think they took him to the hospital.

He went to a nursing home at some point, by his own request. He really wanted to go to a nursing home because he began to understand that he needed more care. They were very good to him there, and he seemed satisfied, although at times he would say that he thought he would go back to the Foster. Then I would say something like, "Oh, Gene! That was pretty rough for you when you were at the Foster, when you were getting weaker and it was harder for you to do things," and he would say, "Yes, I guess you're right." His cancer progressed to the stage where he couldn't talk. This came on suddenly; one day he could talk and the next day he couldn't. So he would just speak in a husky whisper.

Not long after this, I received a letter from Vicky, his ex-wife. She was an energetic little woman and a born-again Christian. She wanted to come and take care of him and cure him. She said, "I'm going to come. Tell him I'm going to come." I think we talked on the phone, and I said, "I can meet you and take you to him." His nursing home was on the east side of town, not too far from the veteran's cemetery (Willamette National Cemetery). I told Gene that Vicky was going to come and see him. Then, when I brought her to the nursing home, I told the nurse, "I think I better tell him that she's here." Vicky told me that she wanted to see him alone, and I said, "Well, there's going to be someone else possibly in the room, because he shares a room." She said, "Well, I'm just going to ask the nurse to have that person go out, because I want to talk to him alone." So I talked to the nurse, and *she* talked to the nurse. I finally went to Gene's room but he wasn't there. He had gone to the smoking corner, which they called "the chimney." It was a little fenced-in area where people could smoke. It had a couple of tables, and the residents could also have a soda or snack. It was a little social place. When I found Gene, I said, "Gene, Vicky is here. Do you want me to bring her down?" and he said, "All right." So that's where she had to meet him — in front of everybody else!

This visit was really very hard on Gene. I left them, telling Vicky that I would

come back to pick her up that evening at about seven. She stayed at Rita's Place, which is a housing for women in northeast Portland, which I was able to get her into.

Apparently it was a very hard day for both of them, because of a lot of bitter memories. Vicky wanted to know why he had walked out, why he hadn't sent money for the children, and things like that. Well, he *used* to send money at one time, but since one of the girls had said, "Dad, you don't have to send us money. We don't need it. You need it more than we do," he figured he'd quit sending it.

The next day, Vicky came to see him and they had a little better visit, I think. Some reconciling took place, and healing. I tried to show her a good time while she was here, and I took her to dinner. She told me she wanted to take Gene back to Ohio with her. She said, "I know I can cure him. I've done acupressure, and then he could see the children, too." I think that Gene even half thought about it, but when she said something to *me* about it I said, "Well, you'll have to talk to the doctor, because you can't take him out without a medical discharge." I mentioned this to the doctor, who said, "No way!" He wasn't going to say yes and then have the man die. He said, "With *his* lungs and in *his* condition... and then flying in a plane to Ohio... no way, I can't do that." He could have been held responsible and liable if Gene would have died there. And Gene, after all, didn't really want to go. He asked me what I thought, and I said, "Gene, this is a decision that I think *you* need to make." I did not want to be the one to say don't go, even though I thought strongly that going would be a mistake.

Then he told me a little bit about a problem that had happened in the past. He and Vicky had had a disagreement about something. He had left the home and gone about twenty miles away to a little town, where he worked for a while. It was supposed to be just a temporary separation, but when he came back she was shackled up with somebody else. And that *did* it for him; he took off, then. The way Gene put it was, "That's when I went on a tramp," which meant that he just tramped around the country. Then he ended up in Portland. Many of the men on Burnside in those days often referred to themselves as tramps. They tramped around; I mean they worked for a while, they drank, they worked some more, then they moved to another city. This was their life.

Vicky admitted she had made a mistake in the marriage; she told me that. She said, "I drove him away and I drove him to drink." She was taking on a lot of guilt, a lot of responsibility over this. As I talked with her, I tried to let her know that it's a two-way street, really.

Now one of Gene's girls, the third daughter, didn't want anything to do with him — but also I don't think that even Vicky knew if she was his child or that of the next husband that she married or man she took up with. The other two daughters loved him, however; although, as I mentioned earlier, they had wondered why he didn't seem to care enough to go and visit them.

At any rate, when Vicky was about to go back home, she was kind of unhappy and upset, and she let me know that she thought I should have encouraged Gene to go back with her. I remember telling her, "Vicky, I can't do that. I have to take the medical standpoint and side with the doctor, who said that he's in no condition to travel. And besides, he really doesn't want to go, and I'm not going to persuade anybody to do something against their will, especially against medical advice."

We parted friends, but she wrote me a letter later that expressed once again her disappointment with what I had said to her before she left. Later, she wrote me another letter apologizing for the first. Then she called me and said, "I'm going to have the girls come out." She told me that one of them was probably alcoholic; I told her that Gene hadn't had a drink for about five or six years of his life.

Well, the girls came, and they were darling. I couldn't get them into Rita's Place, so I asked if the YWCA would be okay for them and they said yes, because they didn't have much money. So I arranged that. I took them out to see their dad briefly, and brought them back after. Then I took them out for dinner.

The next day, they went to see their dad, and they seemed to have had a delightful time with him. When I went to pick them up that evening, they said he had

laughed and joked with them. The oldest daughter was a playful person, and they all really related very well with each other. They took a picture of him with his hat on — the cap with the beak.

That was Thursday. The next morning, they told me they could go out to see him on the bus, on their own. I had to leave for the weekend and wasn't going to see them anymore until Monday. When I arrived home on Monday, I found a note from my housemate that said, "Gene died Saturday. They tried to reach you." The hospital had had no way of letting the girls know, and when they went to see him around ten that morning they were told that their father had died about an hour earlier.

They went through his things and took what they thought they wanted. Then they called their mother, packed up, and went back to Ohio.

Gene and I had already talked about his funeral arrangements, which I then made. Vicky agreed to a cremation and said, "I would like his ashes." I said, "I'll see that you get them." So when I got the ashes, I also boxed up a few things that I thought the grandson might like, and his glasses, which one of his daughters wanted. I've never heard from them since I sent everything back.

Gene was somebody I never felt very close to in the beginning, because he was a very different kind of person. As I said earlier, I know that he trusted me. And I suppose that maybe part of the time after we had that episode of problems regarding Frank I more or less handled him with kid gloves, or walked carefully, so I wouldn't mess up. Later this tension disappeared and we became closer friends.

To me, the way Gene's life ended was one of the kinds of miracles that takes place in the lives of some of these people; I mean the *timing* that I think God uses. In the case of Gene: my seeing him after our split; then his handing me the letters from his family to read; my getting the letters off to his family, saying there wasn't much time left; Vicky coming to visit; the girls coming — each of these individuals had had a chance to reconcile and spend time with Gene, and he with them, and then he was ready to pass on. There had been closure.

I feel that Gene had a deep feeling for people who were alcoholic and needed a drink, and he would give them money as he met them. He was a very generous man.

I always used to say that if I had trouble getting into heaven I'd have all these men on Skid Road pulling me up — and Gene would be one of them.

FROM THE TIMES

Home

[Excerpts from "Lonely funeral: Carl Cornehl comes home at last," an article by Steve Erickson, of The Oregonian staff, May 13, 1980 (fire was on May 6, 1980). ©1980 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Excerpts and photo from a related article in a different newspaper follow.]

Lonely funeral *Carl Cornehl comes home at last*



Photographer Michael Lloyd/The Oregonian

Life ended for Carl Workman Cornehl on May 6 in a downtown Portland hotel, the Holm [see Victor Haddock's story]. Not home, exactly, but the flophouse was as close as this solitary man had come in years.

Only a minister he had never met showed up Monday for the 62-year-old Skid Road resident's funeral [...].

The mortuary owner, Lew Carroll, said: "There is a wife somewhere, and six children. [...]"

A sister [...] was located [...]. She sent a telegram to Carroll saying, "Please use existing funds to bury my brother [...]."

That released \$300 from the U.S. Veterans Administration and \$225 from the

Social Security Administration, Carroll said.

"This is the absolute minimum," he added. "We lose money on these (indigent burials) because of the overhead."

At the end, Carl Cornehl was a liability.

He was burned to death in a fire that started on the second floor of the hotel where he spent his last days. The Portland Fire Bureau blamed smoker's carelessness.

Not much was known about Cornehl. [...]

"I don't know anything about this man," said the Rev. Vern Kirstein, pastor of First Baptist Church in Gresham [a suburb of Portland], "nothing at all." [...]

Carroll wound up responsible for Cornehl's disposition, he said, because, "Each of our morticians in this area takes turns helping with unclaimed bodies, because we all know they have been somebody, and are somebody, and deserve a decent burial." [...]

"Stop and think where these Skid Road people come from," Carroll said. "They weren't bums to begin with."

"Bad luck, bad health, sometimes entanglements with the law, family troubles — all these are part of what makes people bums," he said. "You can just let your imagination go when you start to think what makes people what they are, who they are, but they're still people."

[...] Then the casket was wheeled outside and placed in a hearse with the flag folded on top, ready for the ride to Willamette National Cemetery.

Part of the trip was through lush countryside, where flowers remained uncut for this funeral. [...]

At the cemetery, a large backhoe hovered into a half-dug grave. Far below could be seen the expansive downtown Portland core, irrelevant now. [...]

Six men in hard hats lifted the coffin from the hearse and eased it into a concrete grave liner. Field pallbearers. One man quietly doffed his hat.

Later in the day an on-truck hoist would lift the liner, casket and body onto a flatbed, and all of it would be moved a short distance off for burial.

By Tuesday, one week after his death, Carl Cornehl would at last have transcended the Holm and come home.

[Excerpts below from "Hotel fire kills 1, injures 6," an article by Nelson Pickett and Watford Reed, Journal Staff Writers, in the Oregon Journal, May 6, 1980. ©1980 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.]

At least one resident was killed in a two-alarm fire Tuesday which gutted a major portion of the Holm Hotel, 9 SW 2nd Ave., and injured at least six other residents of the transient hotel.

Assistant Fire Chief Bill McRoberts confirmed that one man was dead but his identity was not immediately known. [...]

Fire rescue units and ambulance crews administered first aid to the rescued residents on the sidewalk at SW 2nd Avenue. Many were barefoot, some covered with soot and many treated for cuts.

Many were incoherent when questioned by reporters. [...]

"I was drinking. I don't know what happened," said Irving Blackman, who said he spends \$57 a month for his room. [...]

Another survivor, [...], barefoot and with only a blanket over the lower part of his body, recounted, "I ran down those stairs with a half gallon of wine in one hand and my boots in the other."

Another resident, Joe Payne, said he found the fire.

The desk clerk was looking all over the building for the source of the smoke, Payne said. "I went to an old man's room where something on his electric hotplate had

caught fire two or three months ago and I could see flames reflected on the ceiling. There's chicken wire above the door and I could see the light through it.

"I broke in and woke the man up and he said he [sic] it was a cigarette.

"I ran for the fire extinguisher but by the time I got back the fire was too bad. I ran up to my own room and got my things and told a few people the building was on fire and I got out. The deskman called the fire department."

Battalion Chief Ken Ownes said the fire began in one room on the second floor of the building. [...]

The displaced residents of the Holm Hotel were transported to the Multnomah County Detoxification Center.

[Below is photo of fire that accompanied above article.]



Photographer Roger Jensen/The Oregonian

Loaves & Fishes

[Excerpts from "Burnside Loaves & Fishes," an article by Sally Woolley, and "Meals on Heels," an article by Rey Franco, both in Hobo News Quarterly, Autumn 1984.]

Burnside Loaves & Fishes

Loaves & Fishes, a non-profit program that serves the elderly hot, nutritious, professionally prepared meals at neighborhood centers and delivers to the homebound (Meals-On-Wheels) came to... [Portland] in 1969. The Burnside center opened in 1974 and is located on the second floor of the St. Vincent de Paul Downtown Chapel on Sixth Avenue and West Burnside [a Roman Catholic parish on Skid Road which is more commonly referred to elsewhere in this project simply as the Downtown Chapel]. Burnside residents begin gathering outside the Chapel at about 8:30 a.m. each weekday morning, anxious to come in so they can watch television and visit with friends.

Ten years ago, Loaves & Fishes recognized a need among permanent downtown residents; the Salvation Army, Union Gospel Mission, Blanchet House served the transient population, but many permanent residents did not use those services. Burnside Projects, Northwest Pilot Project, the Multnomah County Health Department and other agencies all worked with Loaves & Fishes in a real teamwork effort to develop the Burnside center. St. Vincent de Paul donated the space, as well as all utilities and some janitorial services.

In the basement, transients use the clean-up center to shower, shave and get clean clothes. On the first floor, masses are held. On the second floor, people are being fed. All of this goes on simultaneously.

The seniors who eat at the center are primarily men who live in Burnside hotels. They tend to form an identity with their hotel and its other residents to such an extent that often they are reluctant to move, even if better and cheaper housing can be found. Hugh Gallagher, former Steering Committee Chairman, says, "These people's relatives have written them off, similar to when people go to a nursing home. It's the sociological equivalent."

Caterperson Myrna Smith, who, until recently was a resident of a Burnside hotel, says of the neighborhood, "It's one of the few real communities left in town. These are old men with a lot in common. You can walk down the street and people you know will say "Hi" to you. Everyone thinks of drunks and alcoholism when they think of Burnside, but it's not necessarily true. Many people appear that way because of medical problems."

Volunteers at the center trade work — serving food, washing dishes, cleaning up, delivering meals to the homebound — for a meal. [...]

[...] At the beginning of the month when people receive their Social Security checks, meal counts are much lower. But toward the end of the month and on chilly, rainy days, the total count can be as high as 175, with others waiting to come in who must be turned away.

Meals on Heels

Burnside is a place that requires more ingenious improvisation than other communities do. A unique innovation to the regular Meals On Wheels program is in the method of delivery. Hot lunches are taken daily to hotel shut-ins by volunteers (mostly street people) on foot, not by car. Thus the Burnside program is known as Meals on Heels.

[According to Helen Estrada, the manager of the center,] "Our Meals on Heels clients are confined to a bed or a wheelchair. I try to get out to see them personally as often as I can. Most of our volunteers are street boys for whom Baloney Joe's is home. At least temporarily. Some of them camp under a bridge, some have a hotel room, also temporarily. Most of them are from out of state. And they don't just deliver meals; they're required to report back on a person's condition. If a client is ill and unable to cope with his situation, I, or someone here, will do a home visit to assess the situation."

FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Presence and Role of the Spirit in Kate's Ministry

Ron: You have referred often to moments, or turns, in your ministry that you believe seemed to be an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit stirring within you. Elaborate, if you would, on the presence and the role of the Spirit in your ministry, particularly as you see it now, looking back, after thirty years of working with disadvantaged populations.

Kate: As I look at the different changes that I made in my life, starting with entering religious life the first time, then entering the second time, changing from education to nursing, and eventually transferring to another religious community, I have felt and firmly still believe that all of this was the work of the Holy Spirit.

I think that our thoughts, our inspirations, our desires to do something that may seem a direction that we're taking *do* come from the gentle movement of the Spirit. I think the Spirit is behind the different moves that I make. For instance, like today (this is just a small example), I had a bag of recyclable pop cans and bottles which I was taking to Fred Meyer's [a shopping center]. I saw this man and a cart, and he was going in the opposite direction. I stopped and I tooted and motioned for him to come around to my side of the car. I let the window down and said, "Would you like some extra bottles?" and he said, "Yes." I said, "In the back there's a bag of them," and then he had a real sweet smile and said, "Thank you. Thank you very much." To me, the Spirit is behind this type of thing. I like to feel that my whole life has been directed by the Spirit — but I'd hate to blame the Spirit for some of the decisions that I make or things I have done! I think the Spirit has led me to certain individuals and has been behind my contacts with all the people who have been special in my life. The Spirit is a wisdom that prompts us. The Spirit is God — God, I think, working in people.

Ron: Yes. One of the things that supports this for me personally is something you've said more than once, which is that when you went down on Burnside initially, you didn't have a mission. You didn't have a plan. You sort of just *went*. And *that* to me feels like the Spirit moving you.

Kate: Yes. I think that's right.

[I am not sure what caused Kate to initiate the following verbal exchange that was part of this interview. It could be that she was reacting to one of my occasional attempts to help her see the value that I see in the Skid Road project. Whatever prompted her remarks, I have left our verbal exchange in place, both for the record and because it provides an insight into Kate (if not, as well, into many of us). —Ron]

Kate: You've known me now for sixteen years. That's a long time. What *you* perceive may not be what *I* perceive. I'm never going to perceive myself as others may perceive me. You say I have a tendency to put myself down or not recognize something as *you* see it, and I guess that's true.

Do *you* see yourself as other people see you, or think of yourself as they think of you?

Ron: No. No. But we're talking about the project right now. Is that what you're referring to — that the importance that *I* see in the project is more difficult for *you* to see?

Kate: Yes. You see me in a different light, and I know other people do, too, because I've heard other people say something similar to what you say, when I kind of downplay the importance of something I'm doing.



A very long time ago, in the early days of my street ministry, I met Gib. Gib lived in the Home Hotel, which was on Third Street. He looked like a guru in a way. He had a lot of unkempt-looking brown hair and a long and very full-faced beard. I would see him sitting in someone's room, with a little group of men. The others would be on a chair or sitting on a bed, and Gib would be at their feet, sitting on the floor with his legs crossed guru-style.

He was always pleasant and usually drunk. When I'd stop in at that hotel, I'd stand and talk to the men in the lobby for a few minutes and then go see some of the others in their rooms. One time, one of the men told me that Gib was sick. He said, "You know, he needs to go to the hospital, but he won't listen to me. Maybe he'll listen to you." He told me Gib was very lousy, wasn't eating, and was wasting away.

So I went into his room, which was darkened. Some of the rooms in that hotel had double beds, and Gib was on his double bed, all curled up in a fetal position. I talked to him, but he just turned away, turned his back to me, and wasn't going to listen to me at all. I could see that he really was in bad shape. He wasn't even drinking at this time, and he couldn't hold anything down. He was just giving up, which he said was his right to do. I guess he was depressed, also. I told the manager, "I'm going to call the paramedics and just say that he's not in any condition to make this choice." I stayed there until they arrived. They said, "You want to go to the hospital?" He said, "No," and I said, "He has been this way for quite a while." They listened to me and took him to the hospital.

Gib was in the hospital for a long time. When he got out, he went back to the hotel and didn't drink anymore. He always said that one of the best things that we had done for him was to get him to the hospital, because he hadn't realized how sick he was. It really was very interesting to see that kind of change in him. He could still enjoy his friends in the hotel, who weren't *always* drinking all the time — not *all* of them, anyway.

Eventually, Gib died.

He had been a friendly little guy who liked to be with the other men in the hotel.

GILBERT MEYERS

Gilbert Meyers had been a U.S. Immigration officer at one point in his life. His marriage fell apart and he began to drink excessively. He came into Harmony House's recovery program as a resident. He was an intelligent, educated man, and he was very pleasant. He followed the program at Harmony House, and later became one of the board members.

I was also one of the board members, and one night after a board meeting, one of the board members asked if anyone would like to go for a sailboat ride. This was in July. Two of us responded — Gilbert and I. I left my car at Harmony House, and this board member drove Gilbert and me to the Columbia River where the sailboat was moored. Using nautical terms, he gave us a brief explanation of how to help with the sails. We sailed east on the Columbia. The sun had not yet set, and the day was beautiful and clear. By the time we had turned around and got back towards Portland, we were sailing in the moonlight.

The next day, one of the men in the House told me that Gilbert had told him that he had always dreamed of going for a moonlight sail with a beautiful woman. Gilbert said, "I went for a moonlight sail and lucked out with a Catholic nun!" Everybody laughed — including me, when I heard about it.

Gilbert was a veteran and worked for the veterans in the office at Willamette National Cemetery. He would drive or lead people to and from grave sites. He liked his job, but he also would like to have advanced.

Gilbert did well. He was one of the success stories of this recovery program. I don't think he was an AA member, but he remained sober.

GORDON

Gordon was a man I met initially when I was still wearing a habit and a veil and working at the County Hospital, the year after I graduated from nursing. In fact, there were three patients there at that time — Gordon, Ted, and Paul — who were all men I got to know better on the streets, later [see stories of Ted and Paul].

Gordon was a tall, rather good-looking man who had been a strong logger in his day. He told me that at one time he had had a reasonably happy marriage, but lost it because of his drinking, and that this resulted eventually in his living on Skid Road.

When I saw him in the hospital, he had been living in what was known as the "flophouse" or the "Chicken Coop Hotel": this was the Holm Hotel on Second Street. He had been lousy, and his body was covered with lice bites; they had become infected, and he had become a patient because of this infection.

Gordon was my patient on the infected surgery floor. The orders read, "Treat all sores with the medication, and apply dressings." Well, this was impossible to accomplish because his body was one big *mass* of sores; I remember spending a long time on them. So I finally went to the charge nurse and said, "This is ridiculous. There has to be something else." "There *will* be," she said. She went to the doctor and talked him into saying that it was okay to have Gordon apply the medication by himself. We would just give him the brush and the Betadine solution, have him go into the shower and use the solution to wash his entire chest and back, and then put a clean gown on him.

Gordon always wanted to kiss me, both during this stay in the hospital and later, when I would see him on the street. I think I may have kissed him on the forehead once in the hospital — I was new in this business at that time and I didn't realize that this man was a womanizer. He thought of himself as God's gift to women, and when he was drinking he would always look at himself that way. I remember he often would say, "If I were just a little bit younger, I'd just catch you, you cute little thing, you!"

After the encounter in the hospital, I saw him many, many times on the streets. He'd fall sometimes or be on crutches, and he would be in and out of the hospital.

I later heard that Gordon had died, and I never knew the details about his death; I don't know if he died in a hospital... but he probably did.

GRANT ROSENTHAL

Grant Rosenthal was a man whose shop was across the street from the Matt Talbot Center. [The shop was on Northwest Couch between Second and Third, sandwiched between the Rich and Estate Hotels.] He was a little Jewish man who had a small shoe repair shop. He had I don't know *how* many shoes that were never picked up after he had fixed them. After a certain time he would sell these unclaimed shoes at a reduced price to people who would come in and want a pair of secondhand shoes.

I remember one time a man came to me and needed shoes because his were very worn, so I sent him over to Grant, whom I hadn't really met yet. I didn't want to give money at that point to the man who needed shoes, so I sent him over with a note saying, "If you'll give him shoes and let him know what the cost is, I'll pay for it." The man came back saying that Grant wouldn't do it that way. I was a little upset, because I hadn't met that kind of opposition, of not trusting. I think he gave me the price it would cost roughly, so I gave the man the money and he did go across the street and get shoes. Later I went out and introduced myself to Grant and talked about the work I was doing. He was always very nice after that, and we became friends.

He always felt that these people could help themselves. He said, "I see them going by. They go up and give you a sob story about what they need, but they can get out and work." He felt that I was probably too easy or a pushover. And in terms of the way that I would look at it *now*, I'm sure I often *was*.

After that initial contact I was able to go over and buy shoes from him for different people. Sometimes I'd send somebody over to him with a note, and by then he *would* give them the shoes because he knew that I would pay for them. And they were never all that expensive.

Grant developed cancer, but he still kept coming to the shop. He made the comment once to somebody that he liked to come and just get away from his home and his wife for a while. He hung on to the work because it was his own little way of doing something. He didn't need to do it for his financial support but for his own feeling of worth at that point, I guess, or just because it was something that he wanted to keep doing.

Grant died eventually, and I missed seeing him busy repairing shoes or standing in the doorway of his shop.

GREGORY MARSH

I met Gregory years ago, in the days of the Matt Talbot Center [in the 1970s], and I saw him off and on until shortly before his death in 2000. He was probably about six years or so younger than I was. He wasn't a bad-looking man, and he was very clean and personable. He had had a serious back injury at one time, and he stood tall and very erect — almost tilting backwards — as a result of the injury.

He was walking with me once down Second Street, towards where I used to park, and he was kind of coming on to me, propositioning me almost.

"Heh, Gregory, come off it!" I said. "I'm quite a bit older than you."

"Oh, I like older women. I get along very well with older women."

"Well, you won't be with *this* older woman!"

What I always tried to do when I came across a situation like that was to just kind of kid the person out of it.

I remember one time when I went into the Holm Hotel, Gregory was sitting in a little room that some of the men used to sit in, which was next to the manager's office. He looked very sick, and I went over and talked to him. He had quite a beard growth on his face (when the men would go on a drunk, they wouldn't shave), and he was dirty and shaky. I said, "Gregory, is there anything I can do for you? Would you be willing to go to detox, and from there maybe to the hospital?" He said yes, that he would, but I don't remember the reason he couldn't go that evening. He couldn't eat and hadn't been eating for quite a while, so I said, "Is there anything I can get for you?"

"What I need is something to drink through the night, to just get through the night without going into the d.t.'s."

"I'll get something for you. I'll get wine."

So I got a bottle of wine and brought it up to the hotel and gave it to him. The next day he did go into detox, and then from there we got him up to the Veterans Hospital. He was in there for a month, and I remember he was in there for Christmas. He had been very sick as a result of his drinking, and his health was in bad shape.

One time he asked me to come see his apartment, which was on the East Side. This must have been one of the first times he had gotten out of Skid Road. I'd have coffee with him there now and then, and we'd talk a little bit. He gave me a key to the place, which I never used; in fact, I gave it back to him later and said, "I don't have any reason to keep this key, Gregory. I mean I'm not going to go in if you're not there."

He had a car, and about once a year he would go and visit his family in Georgia (his parents were in their nineties at the time). I began to notice that every time he came back from a trip he would go on a drunk. He was a periodic drinker, and his drunks were long and hard.

Gregory moved back to Skid Road, into the Foster Hotel.

Evidently women were important in his life. There was an Indian woman [Native American], for one, who used to come up to his room, and they'd drink. I remember going to his room once, just to stop and see him, and she was there. He asked me if I wanted to come in. I said no, that I didn't want to bother him, and then I left. The manager told me that he often brought an Indian woman in. I think he was pretty loyal to this one woman, because he told me a little about her once.

Sometimes I would see him sitting downstairs in the hotel lobby, but finally his health was getting so bad that he had to return to the hospital, where he remained for a long time. His liver was bad as a result of his drinking.

Gregory eventually moved out of the Foster into an apartment in Milwaukie. At this stage of his life, he and Bruce [see Bruce's story] often would take off for a few days and go on a trip or go out to Sauvie Island and fish. He was a great fisherman and kind of an outdoors person, and he and Bruce were very good friends.

One day Bruce told me that Gregory had been in the hospital and that he had abdominal cancer. He had been sent home and told to change the dressings every day. Bruce asked if I would see Gregory and offered to take me to him. I was appalled to see

the wound and the small amount of supplies he had been given to care for it, so I began to visit him and dress the wound using sterile techniques and supplies that I had. As the wound began to heal, I showed him how to care for it in a way that would help avoid infection, and the wound did eventually heal completely.

About a couple of years later, Ivan Miles told me that Gregory was dying of cancer [see Ivan Miles's story]. Even with this, Gregory would drive his car to the Foster and visit with a couple of his friends who were around there. At one point I was at the hotel again and noticed Gregory sitting in his car, which was parked, so I went over to him. He was too weak to get out, but we talked for a few minutes. Not too long after that, Ivan told me that Gregory had died.

[Update: When I asked Kate in 2012 how she used to deal with parking her car daily in the congested Skid Road area, she said that the Oregon Leather Co. provided her with free parking in their parking lot, and that from there she would walk to her various destinations in the area. This company was and still is located a block away from the then Matt Talbot Center. -Ron]

the ravages of alcoholism

[At this point Ron asks Kate to talk about some of the destructive aspects of alcoholism from her perspective.]

The ravages of alcoholism take on many forms. Different parts of the body react differently. One of the areas of the body affected is the gastrointestinal tract, particularly the stomach. Ulcers develop. There's an inability to handle or digest foods. Then the alcoholic can't get his strength back. He might go into seizures. Many people *die* from their alcoholism; I used to tell some of them, "You don't have many drunks left in you."

The liver gets severely damaged. Sometimes the liver is badly swollen and extremely painful. The swelling is reversible, but once the fatty tissue becomes scar tissue, that's *irreversible*. The part of the liver that becomes scar tissue will never function again. The rest of it *can* function, but if the person continues to drink more and more, they are told in no uncertain terms that another drunk could kill them, and this has happened to many of them. Some people are functioning on a very small portion of their liver. Of course, with liver damage the symptoms are very visible; jaundice is evident, with the yellowing of the whites of their eyes and of their skin.

During long bouts of drinking and not eating much, drinkers suffer from malnutrition, but the sugar in the wine seems to keep many of them going. Also, if you can *imagine* somebody drinking for a couple of months, or even for a month, without really eating, they get so sick that they can't eat; the food just won't stay down. They'll eat raw eggs or they'll drink a quart of buttermilk because sometimes these are sort of soothing. But if they can't eat and they're still drinking, pretty soon the wine won't stay down — yet their system *needs* the wine because their condition is such that without the alcohol they may have an alcoholic seizure or go into the d.t.'s. Some men have told me that when they swallow wine it comes right back up again, and that sometimes they have to keep swallowing it until they get enough alcohol in them to steady themselves, to prevent a seizure or the d.t.'s.

The whole nervous system is fragile at this point because the alcohol destroys the sheath protecting the nerves in many instances, leaving the nerves exposed. This causes a great deal of stress.

Almost every part of the body is affected in some way by long-term alcoholism.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Social Justice Involvement of the Catholic Church  
on Skid Road*

**Ron:** Please share your thoughts, Kate, from your own perspective, about the social justice involvement of the Catholic Church in Burnside's Skid Road area as you found it operating when you first started serving there in 1970, and then subsequently. It might be good to hear something about how such a rich and powerful church does take seriously the call to serve the poor and the disenfranchised. Obviously you yourself are one example of the Church's response to that call.

The Church gets criticized sometimes for being a rich and powerful entity that is distant from the real problems of real people in the real world, when, in fact, in the case of Portland's Skid Road, the Church has been down there for years with its shirt sleeves very much rolled up.

**Kate:** When I first thought about going down to Burnside, I had initially, as I have mentioned elsewhere, read an article in the newspaper "Priest Runs Skid Road Hotel" and another article about some Sisters of the Holy Names having a sing-along at Blanchet House on Friday evenings.

### **Burnside Hotel, Cardinal Café, and Father Jim Lambert**

I followed up on calling Father Jim Lambert at that time (he was the priest that the first article was about), and I asked him if there was anything that a nurse/nun could do. He said yes, and I was invited to come and meet him. And at that time he was a diocesan priest stationed at the Downtown Chapel. [The Downtown Chapel is located within what was at the time of these stories the heart of the Skid Road area.] Fr. Jim was managing the Burnside Hotel, which opened in 1969 [through the efforts of Fr. Jim] and housed homeless alcoholics who were ready to remain sober.

Later, in late 1970 or in the spring of 1971, he opened the Cardinal Café, which was on Burnside, [...] [somewhere between Third and Sixth Avenues, on the north side of the street], and evidently a rented space. He staffed it with residents who were living in the Burnside Hotel, in order to give them experience in the restaurant business and also to earn a small salary. I don't recall how long this project continued, but I don't think it was more than a year, if it was that; I think it probably didn't make enough money.

Jim was very helpful in giving me an initial start when I began volunteering in the Burnside area.

### **Blanchet House**

Blanchet House had been founded by four students from the University of Portland [a Catholic university] — very good and outstanding Catholic men. So that also was part of the service of Catholics on Burnside. These men had evidently been presented with the needs of people in the Burnside area — the homeless — and wanted to be able to feed them. They began a simple soup line that, as time evolved, developed into an organization that fed hundreds and hundreds of people daily and has continued to this day [which is now 2008].

### **Sisters as volunteers**

The Northwest Pilot Project, which was not begun under the auspices of the Catholic Church, also had some Catholic Sisters working there. I don't know if they

were volunteers or were paid.

### **Seminarians, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and Holy Cross Associates**

Also, during my time at Blanchet House, Matt Talbot Center, and De Paul Center, there were three groups of Catholic volunteers. One group was of seminarians who would come for some experience working with the poor and the oppressed; the other groups were the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and the Holy Cross Associates [which were sponsored by the Jesuit and the Holy Cross religious orders respectively].

**Ron:** But these groups weren't on Burnside in 1970 when you first were down there, were they?

**Kate:** No. This happened through the years.

### **Downtown Chapel & Father Harold Webster**

Father Harold Webster was pastor at the Downtown Chapel when I first started, and he was very, very good to the homeless. He allowed the basement to be used for a clean-up center where the men could come in and shower and have an exchange of clean clothes for their soiled ones, selecting from the clothes that were on hand.

Also he was a big help to *me*. In the beginning, I mostly saw men, but when a woman would come for help, or a woman with a small family, or a couple, I had no options for this kind of arrangement because I was referring men to hotels that didn't take women. But the Broadway Hotel took women, and Father Webster told me at one point that when I did meet that situation to just tell the manager or the clerk at that hotel that I was sending someone and that Father would pay the bill.

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So those were some who were a Catholic presence on Burnside and who were an inspiration to me in what they did. Also, what *they* were doing affirmed what *I* was trying to do — in meeting the needs of individuals who were down and out and didn't have much going for themselves.

**Ron:** Did Blanchet House have the support of the Church? Did any money from Catholic Charities, for example, go there?

**Kate:** At that time I wasn't aware of Catholic Charities. The men who founded Blanchet were well-known Catholics who met at the Downtown Chapel on a weekly basis, on a Saturday, for Mass and a meeting. Much of their support came from companies [bakeries and restaurants, for example] that called for Blanchet to pick up day-old or perishable food. There was quite a mailing list that Blanchet used for sending out flyers telling of their progress and needs.

**Ron:** What about Father Jim Lambert who ran the Burnside Hotel — where did he get his support?

**Kate:** He was an Associate Pastor at the Downtown Chapel, or was in residence there and helping out.

**Ron:** Where did the money come from to run the hotel?

**Kate:** Support came partly from donations and partly from the Downtown Chapel.

### **Drop-in Center and Last Chance Café**

Jim Lambert opened a small drop-in center and, later, another little café called

the Last Chance Café.

**Ron:** And he would go over to the Burnside Hotel to work as well?

**Kate:** Yes; as I said previously, he founded the Burnside Hotel.

**Ron:** Father Jim, then, worked out of the Downtown Chapel parish and lived in the rectory with Father Webster?

**Kate:** I think so. So there was a Catholic presence already down on Burnside when I began.

#### **Macdonald Center & Macdonald Residence**

**Ron:** At the Downtown Chapel today [2001], isn't there some kind of service provided on its Sixth Street side?

**Kate:** There's a meal served through Loaves and Fishes on the second floor. And in the basement, there used to be the Macdonald Center, which served a lot of the needs of the street people, but it has since moved into a new building located down the street, on Sixth and Couch. This consists of studio apartments and facilities to meet the medical and physical needs of the mentally ill who meet the qualifications for admission.

**Ron:** But the Macdonald Center today is not a Catholic venture, is it?

**Kate:** Well, Father Dick Berg is the director of it and he is also pastor at the Downtown Chapel.

**Ron:** So it may be a Catholic venture.

**Kate:** It *is*, I think [this is correct]. Initially it was in the basement of the Butte Hotel. You would go into the basement from the street, on the north side of the building. They had comfortable chairs and a radio, television, and coffee, and mostly men would come in. It was a place to get off the streets — a drop-in center — and it was called the Macdonald Center at that time, after Maybelle [Maybelle Clark Macdonald]. I don't know when it transferred to the downstairs of the Downtown Chapel. And then, a little over a year ago, they built the new building on Sixth and Couch. They do a tremendous service to the people with mental illness or chronic disabilities, and they still continue to give clothing and food stuffs (when available) to others who come in.

**Ron:** Is it fair to say that the Catholic presence on Burnside was perhaps stronger in the days before there were formal services offered by various county or city or state entities; in other words, that when you were first down there in 1970 there were basically no publically funded services, while today there is a variety of services for the people?

**Kate:** Yes, I think that's true. But still, a lot of the services that were available early on were not meeting many of the needs of the elderly and mentally sick as far as *housing* was concerned. And, of course, Duane Sherman has done a tremendous amount in *that* regard, as head of Central City Concern, which spun off from the detox center. He renovates many of these old hotels, turning them into single-room occupancies, some with their own bathroom and kitchenette. They're well kept, they have an overall manager, and, in most of them, people are supposed to remain clean and sober; a resident suspected of using [drugs] has to take a UA [urinalysis test for illicit drug use], which might result in eviction. Some of these hotels, such as the Foster and Estate, do

allow drinking. In the Estate there are at least one or two floors that are used for recovery, but this is still a bad situation because people's drinking or using drugs in this building makes it harder for those in treatment there to remain clean and sober.

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*["... the Church has always been in the front line in providing charitable help: so many of her sons and daughters, especially men and women religious, in traditional and ever new forms, have consecrated and continue to consecrate their lives to God, freely giving of themselves out of love for their neighbor, especially for the weak and needy. These deeds strengthen the bases of the 'civilization of love and life,' without which the life of individuals and of society itself loses its most genuinely human quality." From "The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)," Pope John Paul II, 1995.]*



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Thank You*

*[Excerpts from a thank-you letter written to Kate by a man after apparently he had gone through the Harmony House alcoholism rehabilitation program that Kate was involved with from 1974 - 1982.]*

Sister Kay St. Martin, Harmony House.

Dear Sister: I would like to thank you and your associates in your humanitarian endeavorment [sic] to help those of us who have fallen by the wayside. For myself as I'm sure as for many others your help came at a time of urgent need. You gave me the time to think and to put things together and gather myself....

I feel that I can put things in their rite [sic] prospective [sic].

I have not only come to want to live, but to love it and life itself. I've come to love this world and the people and the beauty in it. I believe that I realize a better feeling towards my fellow man.... I not only want to but feel that I can again take my place and my responsibility in society. I hope that in some way I also can be of some help to my fellow man....

Sister please keep up the good work. It is so wonderful.... I know that a word of appreciation isn't much and that it comes all too seldom.... I am sorry that this is all that I have to offer at this time, but please accept it with the feeling that goes with it.

## *In the Beginning*

*[Excerpts from a text written by Kate, circa June 1972, titled "From 'Wine, Women and Song' to 'Wine, Want and Sickness.'" Kate's recollection in 2006 was that this was a talk she gave in some religious context while still a Sister of St. Mary of Oregon.*

*These excerpts represent an account of the times told during those times. For an account of the same period (and more) but told retrospectively and much later in time, see story "Beginnings."]*

[...] Twenty-two months ago<sup>7</sup> I found myself in the role of a volunteer nurse, walking uneasily down the street wondering how to respond to the greetings and requests from the drunk and sober alike. Soon the unshaved, unkempt men began to emerge as John, Bernie, Ralph, or Paul who called out welcoming greetings of: "Hello, Sister Kathleen," "Sister Kathy," or simply "Sis." The greeting is often accompanied by a request for something to eat, a cup of coffee, medication, a place to sleep, an appointment to be made, a bus ticket, or even the request, "I have a nickel, can you give me twenty cents for a drink, please?" This last may come from a man shaking so badly he really has to have another drink to stave off the possibility of going into d.t.'s.

On Monday, Tuesday and Friday<sup>8</sup>, my day on Skid Road usually begins with loading a car with boxes of donated used clothing, samples of medications, tooth paste, razor blades, or food contributions. The first stop is at the Clean-up Center in the basement of the Downtown Chapel to unload the clothes<sup>9</sup>. This service provides the men with an opportunity to shower, shave, get deloused if necessary, and exchange their clothes for clean ones. The soiled clothes, if salvageable, are washed, disinfected and redistributed.

For the man who is currently sober and requests a place to sleep, a referral may be made to the Burnside Hotel which serves as a halfway house.<sup>10</sup> A man may be admitted here with no money if he is sincerely trying to dry out. He participates in the upkeep and maintenance of the hotel and pays a certain percent of his income if any is received. If he has no other job he may work at the Cardinal Café, which is operated and staffed from the Burnside Hotel<sup>11</sup>. This small café with a class "A" rating serves good food at reasonable prices for men in the area. About half a block from the Burnside Hotel is the Blanchet Annex, a hotel that was opened to provide the men with a cheap, but clean and safe place to live<sup>12</sup>. Almost every day I send a man to the Annex who is allowed to "stay now and pay later." Many of the men pay for their room by selling their blood plasma for five dollars a pint. This they may do twice a week.

Frequently a man requests vitamins plus iron since his blood plasma

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7 In 1970, at age forty-nine.

8 At this time, Kate is working four days a week as a nurse at Maryville Nursing Home and volunteering her fifth work day plus her two days off on Skid Road.

9 The Downtown Chapel is a Roman Catholic parish located at 601 W. Burnside Street, Portland, in what was at the time part of the heart of the Portland's Skid Road area.

10 The Burnside Hotel was located at 208 N.W. Couch Street, second floor. The building remains in 2008, but the hotel closed in February, 1973.

11 The Cardinal Café was located on the north side of W. Burnside Street, likely between Third and Fourth Avenues. It closed in the very early 1970s after being open for about a year.

12 The Blanchet Annex, likely begun through the efforts of the Blanchet House of Hospitality, was located at 222 N.W. Couch Street. It later became the Matt Talbot Center, which was directed by Brother Fred Mercy, a Jesuit. Matt Talbot Center is mentioned frequently in the project.



has been refused because of iron deficiency. If a man starts to drink he is asked to leave the hotel. An effort is made to help a man in a rehabilitation program with an opportunity to attend an A.A. [Alcoholics Anonymous] meeting or other community activities.

Between the two [second story] hotels [Burnside Hotel and Blanchet Annex] is the Drop-in Center [at street level], which is probably the only shelter that does not turn away the very drunk man day or night. A choice to sleep here may be preferred to spending the night in an empty box car or under the bridge. On a cold or rainy day this room is filled with men, many of them drunk, sleeping on the benches or on the floor in a corner and even under the benches. This center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and again from 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. The facilities are few but free. One toilet is better than none! Hot coffee or milk is free, though the men are asked to pay a nickel for the insulated cups (if they have it) and these pass from one man to another as freely as the wine bottles do. A man from the Burnside Hotel or Service Center<sup>13</sup> is always on duty. The coffee pot is filled and tobacco supplied when it is available. The one hundred-dollar rent for this room is absorbed by the Burnside Projects<sup>14</sup>. When I first started coming to the Drop-in Center I would walk quickly to the table and leave three packages of tobacco. The ten-cent package has since been increased to fifteen cents. Then I would leave with scarcely a glance at the dejected group huddled or sprawled over the narrow, dark little room. I realize now that I was really scared.

Medical needs were at first met [by Kate] from the back office [actually the manager's office] in the Blanchet House<sup>15</sup>, but because of crowded conditions during meal time, the supplies [which at that point consisted basically only of what was kept in Kate's satchel] were moved to the back of the Last Chance Café where the men were able to get a good bowl of Chili for a quarter, or an open peanut butter sandwich for five cents<sup>16</sup>. This dark and cluttered storage space later was replaced by a well-lighted little "clinic" currently staffed by a young doctor, myself as a volunteer nurse, and five dedicated young men and women.<sup>17</sup> Here the men may come for free service, whether this consists of getting a supply of medications for colds, pain, or referrals to outpatient

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13 The Service Center (here called also Drop-in Center) first opened on N.W. Everett Street but at this time was located at 216 N.W. Couch Street. It soon moved around the corner to 25 N.W. Third Avenue, and in September, 1972, moved yet again, this time to 523 N.W. Everett Street. The center was also called Everett Street Service Center and, perhaps earlier on, was referred to simply as the Drop-in Center. As Kate uses their names here, the *Drop-in Center* and *Service Center* are virtually the same entity and are located at the same site.

14 Burnside Projects at this time was a service coalition begun by Father Jim Lambert in 1969. It included the Burnside Hotel, the Drop-In Center/Everett Street Service Center, the Clean-Up Center in the basement of the Downtown Chapel, the Cardinal Café, and the Last Chance Café. Fr. Lambert was the Catholic priest whose work first attracted Kate to Skid Road. In 1991 Burnside Projects Inc. changed its name to Transition Projects Inc.; the agency remains very active still in 2008.

15 Blanchet House of Hospitality, 340 N.W. Glisan Street, is still in operation in 2008 and in its original location.

16 Kate's recollection in 2008 was that the café was located at street level on N.W. Couch Street between the Burnside Hotel and the Blanchet Annex, and that it was probably in operation for a year or less. She would be in and out of it a lot. She would sit working at a table in the back part of the café, behind a curtain, while men would be eating in the front part. She believes that when the Drop-In Center (mentioned in the previous paragraph) moved to another location (to 25 N.W. Third Avenue) the space it had occupied was then used for the Last Chance Café, or that the Drop-in Center and the café existed simultaneously, more or less next door to each other, at least for a brief period.

17 The doctor was the one who started the so-called clinic — which was more a clinic in name than in function, its services being very modest — and he did this while he was serving as a conscientious objector (with regard to the Vietnam War). He was the same CO who regularly would bring Kate to Skid Road from her convent in Beaverton during the very early stages of her work there. Kate is reasonably certain this clinic was located on Second Avenue, on the west side of the street, at some point between S.W. Ankney and N.W. Couch Streets, a distance of only two blocks. The clinic lasted perhaps six months to a year, until the doctor's service period ended, at which time Kate began working as a volunteer nurse at the newly renovated Matt Talbot Center (formerly the Blanchet Annex).

clinics or hospitals. Transportation is supplied when needed. Infected sores are cleansed and dressed, and cuts are sutured or stitches removed.

Another service to the men of Skid Road is that of Blanchet House of Hospitality. There is an average of three-hundred men standing in the soup line in rain, cold, or heat, waiting for a filling but not well-balanced meal. Blanchet House has a crew of about thirty-five men who may live there if they are not drinking and are willing to staff the house — cook and serve the men who come for breakfast and their noon meal. Each day I check with the manager here to see if any of the crew have requested medication for colds, flu or other ailments. At times I have had vitamins in sufficient quantity to give to the men standing in the soup line. I guess I feel that a few vitamins a week are a better supplement to their diet than none. Recently the president of a Portland drug manufacturing company [...] donated hundreds of thousands of Vitamin B-Complex in bulk form.

Still another service is the Burnside Community Center where a man receives assistance in applying for Welfare or Social Security, filling out forms and sending for discharge papers<sup>18</sup>. Phone calls may be made and letters will be written when someone is trying to get in touch with a member of his family. Some of the men often come and wish to talk, perhaps about their failure in trying to keep sober, or frequently about their desire to get into a recovery program. This facility offers an area where I can do some counseling when a need for this is indicated.

Probably the most gratifying part of my work in the Burnside area has been my association with the Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery program, as a board member, and as a friend of the counselors and residents alike of the two "Harmony Houses" on the East side<sup>19</sup>. The men who enter this program must have a sincere desire to try to stay sober or clean. They must attend one A.A. meeting a week and a joint group therapy meeting. These men are given the opportunity to further their education as part of their rehabilitation. They, too, share in medicines I am able to supply, as well as clothing and food and recently, the services and contributions of people from the Hillsboro area [a suburb of Portland]. None of the men of the Harmony Houses have years of sobriety behind them yet, since the program has been in operation just about eighteen months, but some have been sober anywhere from two days to more than a year.

A follow-up program has included visits to men in local hospitals as well as Dammasch State Hospital<sup>20</sup> and visits to the City Jail and Rocky Butte [Jail]<sup>21</sup>. [...]

Much more could be written. Each area mentioned has its own needs peculiar to the service offered. Who are the men benefitting from the various services offered? It could be your brother, son, father, uncle, friend or one-time neighbor. I have met the father of a young priest and the brother of one of our Sisters. One man attended St.

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18 The Burnside Community Center was never discussed by this name in the project. When asked in 2006 about the location of the center on Skid Road in 1972, Kate did not recall.

19 The Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery (A.C.R.) program appears to have been the actual rehabilitation program or steps worked by the Harmony House residents in order to achieve and maintain sobriety and reintegration into the community.

The first Harmony House was located on North Kerby Avenue; it was made available to the group by the nearby Legacy Emmanuel Hospital and closed when the hospital expanded. The second and third houses were in southeast Portland: one on Southeast Thirty-ninth Avenue two blocks north of Division, and one on Southeast Taylor Street between Nineteenth and Twentieth; these two houses are frequently mentioned in the project, and Kate was the most familiar with them. Later, another house opened in Oregon City, and possibly one opened also in Hillsboro — both suburbs of Portland.

20 Dammasch State Hospital was a psychiatric hospital located in Wilsonville, seventeen miles Southwest of Portland. It opened in 1961 and closed in 1995.

21 This county jail was located at the top of Rocky Butte, in northeast Portland, and was closed in 1983 when, in order to make room for the Interstate 205 freeway, it moved to the Justice Center in Downtown Portland.

Mary's Home for Boys in Aloha forty years ago. Many others have told me that they had come from Beaverton or the surrounding area. Perhaps I can conclude with the following thought: The alcoholics you personally may know have not yet lost their business, home, or family. The alcoholics I know have lost everything but their great physical and psychological need for that next drink.

## HAL

Hal was somebody I got to know through Frank; he was a buddy of Frank's [see Frank's story]. Hal didn't work for all the years that I knew him. He was a pretty heavy drinker and a street person for a long time, and somebody who had not really done anything about trying to stop his drinking. He was always sweet, though, and I loved him; there was something very nice and pleasant about him. He was one of these people who, like so many of the people down on Burnside, never hurt anyone but himself.

Hal used to come into Frank's room and drink; that's about all he really did. And he would get Frank drinking. If he was sober enough he would play some cribbage with Frank. Frank had come out of the hospital after serious surgery and was in a Housing Authority apartment. Hal had no place to sleep or live, so Frank would feel sorry for him and let him stay with him as long as he wanted, regardless of the fact that Hal would be so drunk usually, and very often lousy. I used to read Hal the riot act. This was before I began going to Al-Anon. I'd tell him, "You're just killing Frank and killing yourself."

He used to be clean-shaven when he wasn't on a drunk, but any time he went on a drunk you could see the whiskers growing, as though he were growing a beard. When these men were drunk they usually didn't eat or shave or shower or sleep, except in a drunken stupor.

I would be in Henry's room a lot, on Third Street [see Henry's story], and I would sometimes see Hal in the outside doorway across the street. He'd be curled up with sleeping bags and a lot of other things around him. By this time, he had become a shopping-cart guy. He had his redeemable bottles and his cardboard and his junk, and whether he sold any of it or whether he didn't depended on his need for a drink. I don't know that he was ever in too much of a condition to go and redeem the bottles, and I didn't see him walking around with the cart that much, but I guess he would manage somehow to sell enough to get a jug, and then he'd get drunk and curl up and be in a doorway. On other occasions, he would just go around pushing his cart until he needed to sell something again for a drink.

One of the things I remember about Hal was seeing the change in his physical appearance over the years. He began to look like an old, old man — about ten years older than I think he actually was — which, of course, was not that unusual for people who drank very heavily. He was unkempt-looking, grew a beard, and wore a lot of extra clothes to keep warm. He began to look like the typical kind of ragamuffin-looking person that you see on the streets a lot of the time. Many times I didn't recognize him at first because his face would be red and swollen from the heavy drinking, and once I didn't recognize him because he had a full beard. You could see him going downhill from the ravages of his disease. I imagine that he had liver damage as a result of his drinking, and possibly other medical problems.

When I would see him on the street, I would go up to him, bend down, and say, "Hey, Hal, how are you doing? Are you okay? Is there anything I can do for you or get for you?" His response would be, "I'm all right, Sister Kathleen. I'm all right." Sometimes he would say he wanted cigarettes, and Frank would give me a package of them for him, which I would take down to him. I'd say, "Hal, I'm putting some cigarettes under your blanket (sometimes it would be a sleeping bag or a jacket). *Whatever* possessions he had, all of them would be in this doorway.

The poor guy... younger people would kick him as he would be lying there not hurting anyone. Frank told me he had seen this. That really bothered me and was why I sometimes didn't have very much understanding and tolerance for some of the younger people. I began to see if there wasn't some place that I could get Hal into for housing or shelter so he wouldn't be beaten and kicked; he didn't ask for much out of life. I got him into the Estate Hotel for a while, but that didn't last too long; I think he was asked to leave, but I don't know why. Some of these people couldn't manage to stay very long in a regular housing situation because their lifestyle had been so different that it just didn't

seem to work out. I always felt this was too bad and kind of sad.

Later, when Frank was in the hospital and then in a nursing home for probably almost two years, Hal used to ask me how he was. He'd say, "I should go see him sometime," and I would say, "Well, I could always take you." But we never connected when he was sober enough to go. He did go up to see Frank one time, but the nurses wouldn't let him in because he was too drunk; he didn't go back again.

The next place Hal stayed was at Baloney Joe's — or at least he would go there. Baloney Joe's was a night shelter begun by Roger Peters. It was located at the east end and north side of the Burnside Bridge. At first it was just for sleeping, but later it had a small dental office with a volunteer dentist coming occasionally. Still later, a group of churches took turns bringing hot soup and bread in the evenings. It closed, sometime in the early nineties I believe.

Hal had a bicycle at a certain point, and later I saw in the newspaper that he had been hit by a car and killed while riding the wrong way downtown. I'm pretty sure he was drunk at the time. I'm very surprised, actually, that he was ever able to afford a bicycle.

Hal had always been very courteous. I remember he would kind of nod his head and say, "Good afternoon, Sister Kathleen, how are you today?" He was an intelligent man, he spoke well, and I would say he probably had been an educated man. He was sweet, as I've said before, and he was someone who probably would have had quite a different life if alcohol hadn't taken its toll and he hadn't come to this very sudden and untimely death.

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## HANK

Hank was of mixed race. He always used to wear a red bandana band on his head, and he was almost always with his Indian friends on the streets. He drank a lot.

Two times in particular I remember Hank coming to me. One time, he had been dragged through a park. He was one mass of burns as a result, and he was really sore and hurting. The only way I could treat a lot of the burns was to cleanse them with peroxide and apply anti-bacterial medication to help control infection.

The second time he came, the lower part of his ear had been bitten off by somebody in a fight and was pretty badly infected. He had no recollection of this later, but I have a picture someplace of me while I was cleansing his ear.

There were some years when I didn't see Hank. Then I went to an AA meeting with some friends, and Hank came up to me. He had been sober for several years, and he was married and very happy.

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## HENRY

Evidently Henry knew me long before I knew him. He would go through the soup line when I used to pass out vitamins at Blanchet House, but I did not know all the people at that time and Henry was apparently one of these. Henry turned out to be very special.

He lived in the Foster Hotel. This was one of the first hotels renovated in the area in the late seventies or early eighties. What they did was to take two of the original sleeping quarter rooms and make them into one little apartment. Each apartment had a shower, toilet, and wash basin. There was a small closet for clothes and a little recessed area with a couple of drawers and a place where they could also hang some clothes. There was a two-burner stove without an oven, and a little cupboard above it for canned goods. Under the sink and stove was a small refrigerator. They had a table, two chairs, and a bed. These were basic furnishings and the apartment was very sparse, but it seemed like heaven to the tenants. Most of them had come from Blanchet House, or they were individuals who had had no home, who had been sleeping under the bridge, or who, for so long, had been living in the Chicken Coop Hotel until there was a fire in it and it was closed. They were now beginning to receive a fixed income or SSI; this was the first time they received an income because of age or disability, and they really were so pleased about it.

Sister Eileen Bradshaw introduced Henry to me. She was one of our Holy Names Sisters who had befriended Henry. She used to come and visit him, and maybe bring cookies at Christmas or on his birthday. She was working at that time for the Northwest Pilot Project, and she was going to be leaving that organization and move to The Dalles [a town in northeastern Oregon]. Since she wasn't going to be able to continue seeing to Henry's needs, she asked me if I'd look in on him off and on, and I said yes.

Henry had fallen before I knew him and broken a hip, and he was in a wheelchair when I met him. He had an outside room facing Third Street. His room was always pretty messy, but he had a lot of interesting things around (he accumulated different things). He had a telephone, and I used to call him. He'd always say, "Call me"; those would be his final words — "call me, call me." Eileen said he used to live to hear that phone ring, because nobody else called him.

He had a little TV that didn't work too well, and a radio. And he had *stocks* of canned and boxed foods in his cupboard. Some of it must have been there many years, by the looks of the labels and the condition it was in. When he wasn't drinking he really had a very good appetite; he'd give me a grocery list of things, most of which took little preparation, and he would *eat*!

Henry wasn't very appealing. He was hard to understand because he didn't have any teeth. His thin hair was shaggy and always messed up, and he had a straggly beard, little eyes, and glasses. He always had a little hat with a beak on it that he wore most of the time. He smoked a lot and drank cheap wine. And he shook with facial and hand tremors. He didn't take medication for the tremors, but the shaking bothered him. The only time he didn't shake was when he was drinking. But he had a cute personality and was witty!

Henry was usually drunk when I'd stop to visit him. Sometimes he'd have been drinking for a few days. He'd get sober for about a week and a half toward the end of the month, when his money would run out, and he'd start getting well enough to eat again — until his *check* came; then he'd begin drinking again. But later, he would drink until he couldn't drink anymore. Then he would get so sick, and he would need a drink, but the alcohol wouldn't stay down. He could usually manage to get through this, but he would never, never consent to go to detox. Never — even though he used to get disgusted with his drinking so much of the time.

He really would get *so* sick sometimes and would be very emaciated and very pale. Towards the end of a long, heavy drunk, his eyes would be sunken and he wouldn't

be able to eat. He would try to eat a little bit and slow down on the wine, but when he would get this sick the wine *itself* would make him sick, yet he needed it to keep from going into the d.t.'s or alcohol seizures. It's a terrible state when the alcoholic gets so sick that the wine is needed in order to keep going, but it won't stay down, and the person has to keep drinking quite a bit before enough alcohol gets into their system to settle them down inside.

The part that was very hard for me with Henry was when he would be on a drunk. He usually couldn't leave his bed at those times, so his bed would be wet and soiled. He would try to get to the bathroom, I think, at times, but would not make it. And the floor would be messy, too. The room would be smelly and dirty. Roaches would be on the table, crawling around on the food that he would try to eat but would be too sick to eat. Dirty silverware and dishes and pans would be in the sink. When he would sober up, he'd get somebody in and pay them to clean up his place.

I'd stop in and see him when I'd stop to see some of the others in the hotel. One time he gave me his check and he asked me if I would cash it and see that his rent got paid. I said, "Yes, I'll do that for you," also because he was in a wheelchair. He asked me if I would keep his money because, at that point, he felt that it was less likely to be stolen. People usually knew that an older person received checks, and, if they had a chance, some of them would try and take the money, maybe jack-roll the person. So began my management of Henry's money for several years. I would cash his check, pay his rent, and give him money as he asked for it.

One time when I came to visit him, I knocked on the door, but since *I* had a key and *he* couldn't get up, he just said, "Yeah," and I entered. And here I was... there *he* was... there *Gloria* was! Gloria was in bed with Henry, in this filthy, awful, messy bed. Here's this woman and a drunk, half naked man. She had come into his room and was bumming him out of some cigarettes. I don't know if he had invited her into bed or what happened, but when I started to come in, I thought, "Oh, my gosh!" I said, "Henry, I'll see you later!" and I walked out. Now Gloria wasn't a big woman, and Henry was a thin, tall man, but, they were on a single bed — a cot really! The incident was very sad and pathetic. I had never seen Henry with a woman in all the years I had known him.

Gloria was a woman from the area. I don't think she drank. She had heavy legs, and her ankles were very swollen and looked kind of sore. She usually had a lot of extra, layered clothes on. She used to push two shopping carts on the streets, around the hotels, and they would be loaded with stuff. She just was a poor little lady who was the kind that should be in a residential care facility of some kind, because she couldn't take care of herself (though she was intelligent and educated). And in her hotel, they wouldn't clean her room because they couldn't *walk* in the room to clean it, it would be such a clutter. I felt so sorry for her. She recognized me one day after the incident with Henry and talked to me and told me about all of this.

Henry and I didn't talk about this incident because he was embarrassed and mad at himself about it. He reacted the same way one time when I came into his room and said, "Henry, there's lice in here!" He had been having one of the men from the street come up and drink with him, and this man was lousy and was sitting on the bed beside Henry. Lice are sort of community-minded — I mean they flit from one person to another very easily, as I found out from my own firsthand experience in the past [see Nate's story]! Henry was so angry and disgusted that he had allowed himself to get into a situation where he would pick up lice. But you know, when he'd sober up, he'd want his quilts clean! I gave him a quilt for Christmas once and new sheets for his bed. He was so proud of those. He'd make up the bed, and it really would look nice and neat.

At one point, things with Henry just got to be more than I could handle. Pretty soon I said, "Henry, *here!*" and I mean I was angry, really angry, and resentful. I said, "*Here*. Take your money. Drink it up. I'll call you each day to see that you're still living. When it's gone and you're not drinking, then I'll be glad to help you again. When you sober up I'll be back. You have enough food here, you won't starve to death — and you don't eat anyway when you're drinking. And you have Meals-on-Wheels." Then I just



turned away in thorough disgust, slammed the door probably, and walked away, not feeling good *at all* about what I had done, about my reaction and my behavior.

It was very hard for me to see his behavior, and mine too, and I thought, "What am I doing down here on Burnside if this is the way I'm reacting?"

So I began to go to Al-Anon. I had been invited to go by a friend, whose husband was alcoholic. She had been going through hell and had been going to Al-Anon for a couple of years. So I began going, too. And if it did nothing else for me, I learned not to get angry and to just say things like, "Well, you're sick and that's too bad. It's part of the consequences of the choice you've made to drink." I no longer felt the need to rant and rave. But I did say, "Henry, when you ask for money when you're drinking, I'm probably only going to give you about three dollars a day." I figured he couldn't do too much drinking with that, but it would also keep him going so he wouldn't go into the d.t.'s.

Henry went through a three-month period once when he didn't drink. He would be sitting up in his wheelchair down in the lobby of the hotel, and he'd have clean clothes on. He always would look at the ads in the paper, see items for sale, and ask me to get different things for him. Once he saw a little roaster-oven that he wanted, and I bought it for him. But I doubt very much that he ever used it ten times. I remember he always liked ice cream. Often he would ask me to buy more food than it turned out he could eat; and then, of course, he'd start going on a drunk, and the food would spoil and rot!

At the same time that Henry was drinking, Frank was drinking [see Frank's story]. Frank was my amputee friend. Frank and Henry were about three years apart in age. Now Frank had married Henry's mother, and Henry told me that his mother and Frank used to drink together in a tavern. She was older, naturally, and I think it was his only marriage. They were married for seventeen years, and he would have been good to her, because Frank was good to anybody — *anybody*. He just didn't have an enemy in the world, I think.

Frank told me that Henry's mother used to take care of Henry after he'd get sick from a drunk. She would clean up the terrible mess I mentioned. He was her baby when it came to this, but he didn't want to be told not to drink! He didn't do so badly when he drank beer; he didn't get as sick. But when he'd drink the wine, he'd get deathly sick and just couldn't handle it. The wine would spill on the floor or tip over, and then there was all the dirt and the roaches and all this sticky, sugary wine on the floor. But you know, when he was okay, when he wasn't drinking or coming off of a drunk, I'd sometimes ask him to pray for somebody or other that I was praying for especially at the time, and he'd say yes he would. And the next time I'd see him I'd say, "Henry, did you pray when I asked you to?" and he'd say yes — and I don't think he would have said yes if he hadn't.

I had always hoped that I could have taken Henry to The Dalles to see Eileen. She had gone from the Northwest Pilot Project here to The Dalles to work with a parish there. She would call Henry sometimes, but she wanted me to bring him to where she was. She came once in a while to Portland and, if she had the time, she'd stop over and see Henry. She always would say, "Well, he's into his cups, he's into his cups," when he would be drinking. One day he didn't remember that she had been there; he had been in a blackout. He had talked to her but had no recollection of it. I said, "Eileen was here, Henry. She told me she saw you, she talked to you, you talked to her," and he said he didn't remember. *That* told him something about his disease and kind of shocked him.

He always used to enjoy it if I brought somebody with me to the hotel, like a younger person who was making the rounds with me for the experience. Several of the men used to really enjoy seeing the people I would bring around with me, and Henry was one who enjoyed talking to the people. He'd always say, "Come back, come back again."

Henry didn't seem to bounce back from the last drunk. He was in bed more and wasn't getting into his wheelchair. I talked about it a little bit. "I'm all right, I'm all

right," he said. I was getting very concerned about him.

"Henry, you're not eating, you're just not bouncing back, so I'm going to get a doctor to take a look at you."

"Oh, I'll be all right."

"No, I'll feel better about it if somebody comes." He was very, very thin, extremely emaciated.

"Okay."

"If the doctor says that you should go to the hospital, don't fight it. Will you go?"

"All right," he said quietly.

He was sober at this point and had not been drinking for some days, so I called for a doctor. At that time, some of the doctors from up on the hill [Oregon Health & Science University] were making visits to some of the hotels on Skid Road if someone was referred, and I remember leaving a note asking that one come and see Henry. They couldn't get his blood pressure, so they put him on a stretcher, gave him oxygen, and took him by ambulance to the hospital.

I went up to the hospital the next day, and he was in intensive care. We talked for a few minutes. Then I said, "I'll be back tomorrow to see you." The day after that, he was on the eighth floor, out of intensive care, and he said, "How long do you think I'll be here?" I said, "Henry, I don't know, but don't push it. Stay until they discharge you. Don't ask to go home. Stay long enough to build up your strength a little bit before you go home, so you can get well. Would you be willing to stay that long?" and he said, "Yes." So many times I faced people signing themselves out of the hospital, unwilling to stay, and, of course, the hospital wouldn't keep them against their will. The next day he was back in intensive care (I think he was in coronary care at that point). He couldn't talk that day, but he was conscious, and of course he had IVs, oxygen, and a naso-gastric tube for feeding. I believe they had him attached to a heart monitor.

That was the beginning of a very, very beautiful week of healing and my seeing a very different man than the Henry I had known. I'd visit him each day. And they were very good to me, letting me come in and stay as long as I wanted. When I would ask Henry a question, he would nod for yes or shake his head for no. Usually he indicated that he had no pain. When I asked him if he was afraid to die, he indicated that he wasn't. I prayed different prayers with him. I'd say, "Henry, I'm going to pray with you, is that okay?" and he'd nod his head. I would say the Lord's Prayer because I figured he'd know that. Then I'd say, "Henry, I'm going to say a prayer for you that I don't think you know. It's a Catholic prayer, and the reason I want to say it is that it asks for help at the hour of death"; then I said the Hail Mary several times. I used to say ejaculations too, and the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love. This man was not a Catholic, but I'd say these prayers anyway. And each time that I would pray he would kind of nod his head in a way that seemed like a sort of thank-you. He didn't do much moving around; he would move a leg or an arm or his hands a little bit, but he couldn't do much more than that. So I continued to visit him each day, pray with him, and talk with him.

One time I said, "Henry, it looks like you're going to get to heaven before I do. Will you say 'hi' to my dad?" He looked at me with a quizzical look. I said, "His name is Al." He nodded his head. This was an entirely new concept for him. Then another time, I said, "You know, when you die, when you get to heaven, you're going to have a lot of people waiting to meet you and welcome you: your mother, your father, all the people who loved you and that you've loved and known. They're all going to be there welcoming you."

It was the most beautiful week I have ever had. I saw Henry in a way that I never ever had a chance to see him during all his sickness with alcoholism. During that week I also said, "I want to thank you for being a part of my life, but I also want to tell you that I'm very sorry for the times when I got angry and impatient. I'm really sorry for that." Then I said the Act of Contrition. I said, "I'm going to say this in a way that maybe you might say it or want it said." I don't remember how I said it, but I know that

at the time what I said was okay. I didn't get into sorrow for getting drunk; I emphasized more the things that had happened to him in his life because of some of the choices he had made. And I said, "There's probably a few things in your life you might like to have had different, but I want you to know that God loves you very, very much." This is the one thing I used to say over and over again, that God loved him. And I said, "And you've loved God. You used to pray for people when I would ask you to." Later I said, "I want you to know that I really did and do love you, and I'm counting on your prayers when you're in Heaven. I'm counting on you to be waiting for the rest of us, for all the others that you knew and loved — Frank, Eileen Bradshaw, your family, and me."

So each day that week was very different.

No matter what they asked him in intensive care, he just nodded that it was okay. I asked the nurse, "If he at any time starts to go through a change, would you notify me?" and they wrote that down. I gave my number and said, "You can call day or night."

Then one night, I was really tired; I had gotten home late from somewhere, and I was tired. It was around 10:00 p.m., and I was ready to get into bed, when the phone rang. They said Henry was having a lot of trouble with his breathing and it looked like maybe the end was coming. I said, "Okay, I'll be there." So I got dressed and went up to the hospital.

I sat there that night, and I said, "Henry, I'm going to stay here with you." I said, "You know, it takes a long time to die, doesn't it?" and he nodded his head. Then I'd say short ejaculatory prayers — like "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, have mercy on the dying," or "Agonizing heart of Jesus have mercy on the dying." Henry was very quiet and had his eyes closed most of the time, so I didn't say very much. He didn't seem very restless, and he never moved very much. He was lying down, but at one point, all of a sudden, he raised up in the bed and turned and looked over at the corner of the room, and then he laid back down again. He had never done anything like this in all the time I was with him; he would shift his arm a little, pluck at the blankets, move one of his legs a little bit, but he never turned on his own. And it was only in retrospect that I thought, "What did he see? Did he see God, or [the Virgin] Mary, or the saints (as they say so often the dying do)?" I have heard that people who are dying sometimes see something, like beautiful light, or a beautiful passageway, or people waiting for them.

After a while — maybe it was around two in the morning — he started brushing at the oxygen mask. I said, "Is that bothering you?" and he nodded. I said, "You want it off; let me get the nurse." So the nurse came in and she changed it to a more comfortable mask and said, "Is that better?" He nodded. A little later — maybe a half hour or so — he was pulling at the mask again, and I said, "Henry, do you want that off?" He nodded. So I called the nurse and said, "I think he wants the oxygen mask off." She said, "Henry, you may have a little trouble breathing, is that all right?" He nodded yes. So she took off his oxygen mask; you could see a change on the monitor, then all of a sudden his breathing stabilized again and he did fine. A little while later he was pulling at the naso-gastric tube, so I called the nurse again and told her, "I think he wants the tube out." She was so dear. She said, "You want this out?" He nodded, and she said, "I'll take it out for you," which she did. And then still later, he was looking at the IVs, and motioning, and I said, "Do you want those out?" He nodded, and I said, "Henry, are they bothering you very much?" He shook his head no. So I said, "Do you think you could leave those in, then?" and he nodded. It was like he wanted to get rid of everything and just die sort of unencumbered.

Finally, it was about seven in the morning, and I said, "Henry, I'm going to go home, take a quick shower, change clothes, run up to De Paul [Center for Alcoholism Treatment] and see if anything is needed; then I'll come back up to the hospital." I left him at that point. When I arrived at De Paul at about ten to nine, I received word that he had just died. He would have been sixty-five.

We had a simple funeral for Henry in whatever funeral home he was in. Some of the people who had known him attended. Eileen came, and my roommate Sister

Sophie, and Scott [see Scott's story]. I asked Andy Jenkins to do part of the eulogy. Andy worked on Burnside and was a minister of a denomination whose name I can't recall.

In death, I couldn't *believe* it was the same man I had known! Henry was a very fine-looking man in death. He never had teeth when I knew him, but the morticians had filled out that part of his face. I never would have thought of Henry as a good-looking man, the way I saw him when he was drinking, with his little squinty eyes and odd way of speaking — that was the way he always looked to me. But this face in the casket was beautiful, it really was; he had a fine forehead and a relaxed face. And I thought, "Henry... what a splendid man he might have been." It was beautiful to have been involved so closely with somebody for a week as he was dying, and to see the completely beautiful person that I had never had a chance to see in all of his drinking years.

Frank told me afterwards that Henry had been well liked by men but couldn't seem to get along with women. He had been with a woman for a short time, until they split up. She had three children, and I guess Henry dearly loved those children; they weren't his, but he loved them. From what Frank said, Henry missed these three children for a long time, a *long* time.

So that's the story of Henry, very beautiful Henry in death.

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## RAPPROCHEMENT II

REMEMBER

— he said to me —

WE ALL ARE ONE.

*the waters of the womb are one*

Remember this,

and all the rest will come back to you.

1982

## HERMAN

Herman was a manager of the Estate Hotel for a long time. He always thought I was too soft and easy on people, giving them rent and meeting their other needs. And he was probably right; I *was* sometimes enabling people's behavior without realizing it, but at that point I knew very little about Al-Anon and enabling and other aspects of alcoholism. At that point I had gone down to Skid Road to do what I could for people, and I wasn't going to stop doing it.

Herman may have been an alcoholic years before, but he certainly wasn't one in the years when I knew him. He eventually had a stroke or a heart attack and didn't recover from that.

When I first met him in 1971 he was an older man, maybe in his late fifties, and he was maybe seventy when he died.

Herman was good to people. He would always take a rent voucher from me for one of the men, and he always seemed to be able to make decisions in spite of the fact that the hotel was owned by somebody else. He would take people in for me, give me cuts in rent, and wait for the money. He was somebody I always thought about with gratitude, for being as willing as he was to help me and the men I sent to him.

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## HUGH NELSON

Hugh Nelson lived at the Taft Hotel. He was an older person, in his seventies. He had twinkling blue eyes and a long, white beard, and he was always clean looking. He did some drinking, but you really didn't see him drunk like some of the others. He probably just drank enough to feel good. He was really quite a sweetheart.

Hugh was very active with Baloney Joe's and a very staunch supporter of Roger Peters, the director. I think probably every day he would walk down to Baloney Joe's.

Hugh went to several [annual] Hobo Parades, and one year he was King of the Hobos. When he was on television because of this, and they were trying to take a picture of him, he stuck his tongue out at the cameraman — I saw this on TV! I think he was self-conscious and didn't know quite how to deal with that kind of notoriety at the time.

I participated in the parade that year, and it was the only year I think I was available to do that. I was riding on the calliope, with music playing. The parade ended in Pioneer Square, where the crowd then danced [Pioneer Square is a large plaza in downtown Portland where many public gatherings and events take place]. That was the year Hugh was King and Donna was Queen of the Hobos [see Donna's story].

I would meet Hugh periodically after this, and we would chat.

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## HUGH WRIGHT

Hugh Wright looked like a typical, young street person. He had long hair and was emaciated and run down from his alcoholism and drug use. He came into Harmony House Two, which, at that time, was what we called the house in Oregon City. I got to know him quite well. We became very good friends, because he felt that I understood street people.

### **Burnside Projects night shelter**

I don't remember how many months Hugh was at Harmony House, but when he left he found a job at Burnside Projects, down in the Burnside area that he knew so well. He did a marvelous job. I used to call to ask him to hold a cot for someone at the night shelter. The men had to have a quarter (or something like that) to stay. If they didn't have their money, people who *did* were taken first. Once in, the men could get the cot for a week. Those who didn't have the money would have to wait outside until nine at night, at which time, if there were empty cots, they could come in.

Hugh did very well at Burnside Projects. He was kind of in charge of several of the areas there by 1988. Burnside Projects had *really* developed by then. I had a deep respect for what they did. One of the services they had was crisis intervention; if somebody, for example, was being evicted from his hotel, I could pay for him to stay at the Burnside Projects night shelter if there was an available bed. I did this for quite a few months with one man, which was why my ministry funds got so depleted at a certain point.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Burnout*

**Ron:** How did you manage to continue on Burnside without experiencing burnout, given all the pain and human misery that you saw on a daily basis for more than twenty years? Most people would not be able to handle that kind of experience.

**Kate:** I think, Ron, that it's true, I did see a lot of what you just mentioned in your question. But also I saw so many people improve their lifestyle, stop drinking, get into a program, become productive. And I think also that, even for those who were part of the group you mentioned, there was a trust and affection from them that I felt was genuine. Somehow, I felt close to the people. I really truly respected them and I loved some of them very much as I got to know them over a period of time. I realized that I was ministering to Christ, whom I saw in the people. As I have said before, I think the Spirit was behind this. I think I was doing what I was supposed to be doing at that time.

From working down on Burnside, just going around on the streets, then being part of the Burnside Hotel, then later the detox center and Harmony House where people were struggling to overcome their addictions — these were times of encouragement. Burnside was more of a positive place to work. And going to work at De Paul was the same thing, being there for ten years and seeing the success stories that came out of there. So I think there was a balance as the years went on.

I never really did suffer burnout in the way that it could have been, and I was able to stay with it.

**Ron:** From what you have said, it seems obvious to me that one of the reasons people burn out is that there's no longer anything in it for them. Clearly there was *always* something in it for *you*, in terms of helping people and ministry and seeing results. People often burn out when there's no more hope. They're tired. They don't see results. Their job doesn't have *meaning*.

**Kate:** Okay. The other thing I think I could say is that when I started this, and even as I continued, I didn't have any expectations. I just wanted to be there, be a presence for the people, to do what I could, which was in a very small way at the beginning — offering some over-the-counter medications, providing housing, and so on. But I didn't lay expectations on *them* and I didn't have any for myself at that point. I don't know that I ever *would* have, either. I just was always *hoping* that the men and women would make it, and that when they *did* have a good start they would be able to continue their lives in sobriety, being clean [not using drugs] and having something that gave *them* peace and some happiness, even in the sometimes squalor that was down there [on Burnside].

But things certainly changed as the years went on and we saw other drugs abused along with alcohol. The hard part, always, was seeing people relapse and some dying from their choices and the consequences of their disease. I guess you have to let people make the choices that they make and suffer the consequences, and that *does* hurt. That hurts *me* as a person to see somebody that I know have to go through that.

**Ron:** You know, there may be another element here that contributed to the absence of burnout.

One of the things that has always stood out to me about your ministry is that I have never felt that you were down on Burnside in order to "make up for past sins" (so

to speak), to dissipate guilt, to prove your worth to yourself, or to figure out who you were.

By contrast, when I was in direct human services, I saw a surprising number of people in the helping professions who seemed to display a lot of dysfunction. I often had the impression that many seemed to be distracting themselves from dealing with their problems, or delaying this, precisely by getting into a helping profession, where most people would probably consider it a "given" that they had their act together. It seemed they might be feeling the need to prove their own worth by helping others — as though their worth needed to be proved or earned, or could be. It seemed, too, that some of them might be in a helping profession because for them it served, unconsciously, as a hiding place of sorts, a place where they themselves, and others, might not guess that they had whatever problems they had. People in the helping professions are often handed "credentials of worth" automatically by the general public. They are handed a whole palate of positive assumptions that can result in a tricky sense of well-being and not having issues to work on.

But in your case, Kate, I have always felt that you have very good self-esteem. You know who you are. You are comfortable with your worth because you believe that God made you, and *that* is adequate proof of worth for you. The variety and the endless volume of work that you do are not a cover-up for dealing with inadequacies, fear, or guilt, nor are they a distraction from these. You don't walk around with your head hanging down, as it were, trying to make up for lacks you perceive in yourself, as though you are trying to justify your existence or worth by working with disadvantaged populations. You take care of yourself, you make healthy life choices, your attitude is upbeat, you like to have fun, you like good food. You take *delight* in life.

To sum up: Perhaps another element in your lack of burnout is that you were down on Skid Road for the "right" reasons. Even if you don't know what your reasons were exactly for being there (which you have said often), you certainly weren't there as a means to avoid having to cope with inadequacies, fear, or guilt. You went down there with a well-developed positive self-esteem and self-image already in place. You weren't down there to bolster that.

**Kate:** No. I came from a family where I was loved and respected. I guess I feel that something was drawing me, as I have said before, and that the Holy Spirit was a part of this.

**Ron:** Another thing — that may or may not have much to do with burnout — is that I don't think I know anyone who has led a richer life than you have, who has experienced the enormous variety of people and moments as you. Your experiences down on Burnside really added immensely to the quality of your life and enriched it.

**Kate:** They did. I think my life has been blessed. To me — and I'll just put it all into one word — "ministry" has been and still is very enriching, and I have always felt that it was a special gift that God gave me. And the people in my life have been a special gift. I'm grateful for that, and I'm looking forward to seeing eventually, in eternity, those who have passed on. They were special and I certainly loved them, and I know that by many of them I was also loved.

**Ron:** You know, Kate, still on the matter of burnout, maybe another one of the reasons that burnout didn't happen to you was that what you were dealing with was *reality*, as compared with a lot of us who go to our jobs and are dealing with pieces of paper and numbers and theoretical this and that and rules and regulations. You were dealing with the "guts" of life, with *real* people, *real* needs, *real* situations. I would think this would have helped stave off some burnout. Your work on Skid Road was not a head-trip for you.

**Kate:** I would agree. It wasn't a head-trip. These were people many of whom had little or nothing but were surviving. They had a lot of courage in the face of a lot of rejection.



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Murder*

*[Excerpts from "Skid Road murder: 'You forget it,'" an article by Walli Schneider, Journal Staff Writer, in the Oregon Journal, January 10, 1979. Newspaper now defunct. ©1979 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. See Mel and Harvey's story for Kate's recollection of both the man who was murdered and the man who was convicted of the murder.]*

He told it like it was:

"I gotta be honest with you lady," said the Bunyanesque-sized man in the massive red plaid Mackinaw.

"I couldn't any more have stepped in and saved my friend's life than I could save yours. You look at a guy with a meat cleaver in his hand and you haven't got a gun in yours... well, down here [on Skid Road], you just forget it."

Engaged in a macabre mop-up operation, the resident of Blanchet House, 540 NW Glisan St., was describing the brutal meat-cleaver murder of the helping agency's resident manager, Verne Tovrea, approximately 3:30 p.m. Monday [January 8, 1979].

Police Tuesday arraigned Ralph Milton Jarvis, 45, who is charged with the crime.

"We're shook, that's for sure," said Joe Fortier, a volunteer from the Jesuit seminary who's assisting at the agency that daily gives warmth, food and counsel to people in the Burnside area.

Tovrea apparently was struck with a meat cleaver left out when the building's kitchen was being disinfected, and most of the pots, pans and kitchen utensils moved to tables at the rear of the room, according to Jerry Zook, 43, a cook.

"I knew Verne," Fortier said. "He had the respect of lots of people — that's for sure. We're going to miss him. There are people who have, you know, used the Blanchet House for years, and some are honestly in tears."

Zook echoed the sentiment as men mopped floors, waited for jobs and looked forlornly toward the piano bench, near which Tovrea's body was reported found.

"I've known Verne since 1964," Zook said. "It's too bad things like this ever happen. It depresses me. I've been so used to seeing him around and yet I've seen so damned much of this in my life... but I didn't think it would ever happen here."

One man who declined to be identified said he "knew it was going to happen some day."

"Guys down here get uptight. They've been hurt enough already," one said. "Trouble isn't anything new to us. We're just lucky if there is a tomorrow."

Three eyewitnesses to the incident described the scene in the way they only can describe it without hurt or vengeance:

"I saw a quick movement; I heard a blow; then I just thought a chair fell over," one man said. "It wasn't a chair. There was a man's leg sticking up. It was Verne's."

Another man, peeling potatoes in the kitchen, asked himself what he might have done:

"We're not going to bring back somebody by talking about it," he said. "But I still wish I could have done something. It was horrible. Just horrible. Around here you don't even go to the bank without somebody."

Robert Morris, who just was hired to work at Blanchet House Thursday, sounded strong, but with misty eyes admitted: "This hurts all of us. He seemed like a nice man to me."

One solemn man at work scrubbing kitchen floors before the next day's meal

just expressed hope that the work of Blanchet House won't "go down the tube."  
 "We heard rumors up at Baloney Joe's (a day room on Burnside Street) and we don't want anything to happen to this operation down here. We need it so damned bad."  
 Kenneth Callopy has been a resident of Blanchet "off an on for about 20 years."  
 "When something's got to be done down here, we all get together and do it. There's no guns. You cook. You clean. You do your own housekeeping in your rooms. The guy who would want to hurt Verne must have been nuts."  
 "But if I'd have stepped in," another man said, "I wouldn't be alive talking to you right now."

*[Below is copy of article, without photo and caption.]*

## Skid Road murder: 'You forget it'

By WALLI SCHNEIDER  
Journal Staff Writer

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### ***Housing III***

*[Excerpts from "13-Unlucky Number for City," an article by Gary Stout, Office of Planning and Development, in BCC Pipeline, November 1975.]*

[City of Portland] Ordinance Number 135236 was passed... on September 7, 1972. It adopted appendix chapter 13 of the Uniform Building Code as part of the official code for the City. Chapter 13 provides for minimum life/safety fire protection for all hotel and apartment buildings... over two stories in height.... As originally adopted, the code directed that deficiencies be corrected within 18 months after code adoption, or that the buildings be vacated. The deadline was extended to January 1, 1976...

In the course of enforcement, the Bureau of Buildings has identified 530 buildings... in violation of chapter 13. The buildings are located throughout the city, with heavy concentration along W. Burnside [in the Skid Road area]... They are all virtually older buildings. Occupancy is primarily fixed-income elderly, some indigent, and for the most part not transient... The rents generally range between \$40-\$100 per month.

Enforcement of chapter 13 is particularly frustrating for two reasons: (1) compliance is very difficult to achieve and (2) in too many cases the building owner chooses to vacate the building rather than comply with the code.... The net result [of enforcement efforts], three years after adoption of the code, is that currently [1975] 237 buildings have been brought into full compliance, 70 buildings have made no attempt at compliance, and 193 buildings have been brought into compliance to some degree... 30 buildings have been closed or partially closed, with 945 units lost. Of the 70 buildings which have made no attempt at compliance, our best estimate... is that 14 to 16 of them will close. The loss may range from 300 to 800 units.

Contributing to the increasing number of buildings being closed are other economic conditions not relating to the cost of code compliance, such as significant increases in heating bills and other utilities. In some cases, chapter 13 is probably an excuse to close a building — or in some cases simply the "last straw." Even without enforcement of chapter 13 the trend has been for these structures to close (several were found vacant upon initial chapter 13 inspection) but code enforcement is greatly accelerating the closure rate. In many cases the best alternative from an economic standpoint is to simply vacate upper floors (removing the building from the scope of chapter 13). In two situations, buildings were demolished and replaced with surface parking lots

The City was faced with these options: Enforce chapter 13 with the January 1 deadline, which could mean the loss of 300 to 800 units...; or cease enforcement, which would put the City in violation of State law and would perpetuate the fire/life safety dangers of the structures; or relax enforcement, which would, in effect, reward those who have not attempted to comply and also delay the abatement of fire/life safety dangers.

The City chose to enforce compliance by January 1, 1976.

## IAN O'LEARY

I first met Ian when he came into Harmony House. I guess at that point I would have described Ian as eccentric; he had grandiose plans and ideas about himself and about things. He was probably in his late forties or early fifties. He wore a band around his head and had graying, reddish, shaggy hair. He would try to dress with some sort of style. He told me he had a son who was a lawyer. He was always friendly and liked me.

I don't think he stayed in the program too long. He wasn't one to like the regulations that were set out. Harmony House had pretty loose regulations, actually: the men couldn't drink, they were supposed to come to the daily meeting, and they were supposed to try to find a job and pay for their room and board. But this seemed too much for Ian; so he left, and I didn't see him probably for a couple of years.

Then Ian stopped by Harmony House one day. We just sat in the kitchen over coffee for about an hour and caught up on what was going on in his life and in Harmony House. Among other things, he told me that he had won a trip for two to Ireland at a St. Patrick's Day party, and that it was good for two years. He said that he was going to go sometime and take his son with him.

The next day I received a call from Scott, who was living at Harmony House at the time (see Scott's story), and he said, "I have some news for you, but I think you better sit down." I said, "Okay," and sat down, having no idea what was coming. He said, "Ian O'Leary stopped by and left tickets to Ireland and some literature for you and your mother." Scott told me that Ian had said he didn't think he'd probably ever make the trip and, so, wanted me to have the tickets. I thought, "Wow! That was totally unexpected."

I stopped by the Harmony House where Scott was living and looked at the voucher and booklets for the trip. Everything looked authentic, but the voucher was good for only a year, not the two years that Ian had said. I called the travel company and was told that the tickets were authentic.

So I got in touch with my mom and said, "You know, you've been taking *me* a lot of places. This is one time I can take *you* — I have tickets to Ireland! If you're interested, I'll send the literature to you or bring it to you and we can think about going." We eventually took the trip.

Before we went to Ireland, Ian told me that one of the castles there had belonged to the O'Leary family, of which he was a descendent. He said, "If you have a chance, see it." We did visit the castle, which was part of our tour. I obtained a booklet on it, and it does mention the O'Leary family.

I had the booklet to give to Ian, and I had bought him a really beautiful, handwoven Irish wool tie, with softly muted colors. I never was able to connect with him after I returned; I didn't know where he was or how to get in touch with him. After many years, when Sophie, my roommate, needed a present for a nephew, I gave her the tie. [Sophie is a Holy Names Sister.]

I had kept the card of thanks that I had written to Ian. Then last year I received a telephone call, and the caller said, "Kate, this is Ian O'Leary."

"Ian! *The* Ian O'Leary?"

"Yes."

"The one that sent somebody to Ireland?"

"Yes."

"I have wanted to find out where you were and get in touch with you for *so* many years!"

"Could you come out to where I am?" and he named some group home he was in. We set up a date and I went to see him.

I said earlier that when I first met him he was eccentric. Well, this had ballooned considerably. He *really* was different now, and I wasn't very comfortable with him. He was more eccentric now, and more grandiose in a way. He was still in denial about his drinking being a problem; in fact, he was holding a whiskey bottle. I visited

with him for a while. We sat and had coffee and donuts and talked. He told me he was going to move (he could never stay any place too long, I guess). He told me he still drank a little bit off and on. He showed me his room.

Now he's *very* detailed, and if you start to talk to him he cuts you off. "Now wait a minute," he'll say. "Wait a minute. I'm not finished with this. Now listen. Pay attention." He would repeat this, and I would go absolutely cr—A—zy if I was in his presence for very long!

At one point I said, "Ian, I have something for you that I saved. I *had* a tie, but over the years I finally gave that away. I *do* have a Celtic cross made of peat moss, though. And I still have the booklet about the castle. And I'd like sometime to share the pictures that I took. I had all of these ready for you but forgot to bring them."

On another occasion, he called me again and asked if I could pick him up. He had had trouble with his car, which was parked near a Fred Meyer's. I said, "Yes, I'll pick you up and take you home," but I didn't go into his house this time.

Then, maybe two months later, he called me and said, "You know, I threw that whiskey away that you knew I had, and I haven't had a drink," and I said, "Well, that's good."

He told me at some point that he was on medication for bi-polar disorder. I didn't see him again for quite a while. Then one time he called me up and said, "Kate, I'm going to ask you a question. I want a yes or a no."

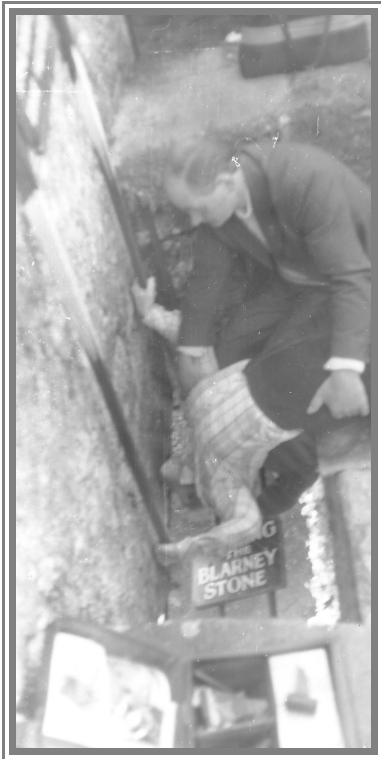
"All right."

"Will you marry me?"

"No, Ian. I can't. I'm a nun, and this is the way I want to stay the rest of my life."

We didn't go into much of a conversation at that point! The other thing that he wanted me to do after marrying him was to run a halfway house with him. He said, "We'd make a big business of it — you as a nurse and me as a financial person." Then he said, "Well, that's that, then, I guess." He hung up, and I haven't heard from him since.

I'm sure I will hear from him, or *of* him, some day, and maybe some day I'll try to call his son, the lawyer. Ian is bright, but alcohol changed a lot of what his potential could have been. I was always grateful to him for that wonderful, wonderful trip, and I still would like the opportunity some day to share the photos I took and to give him the little Celtic cross that I still have.



Kate kissing the Blarney stone during her trip to Ireland.



## IVAN (I.J.) MILES

Ivan was a man of the streets when I was a "street walker." He was a little, bewhiskered fellow with a hat, who usually had a bottle in his hands or under his arm. I don't know that Ivan came to me very often for help; I just know that I knew who he was, and that was about it. He was known as "I.J. Miles."

One time when I met I.J. Miles, he was cleaned up and he said, "Sister, can I buy you a cup of coffee?" I said, "Sure." So we walked across the street and went into the Maletis store on Third and Couch. He bought me a cup of coffee, and we stood there in the store drinking our coffee and talking. He told me he hadn't been drinking, and Ivan's had about seven or eight years now [1987] without drinking.

There was a men's clothing store on Third and Burnside — kind of a corner store — and its sign said "United Clothing Store" or something like this. An older white-haired man named Mr. Clark, I think, managed it. The store catered to the men of the street who could buy work clothes there. Ivan used to help Mr. Clark, and he lived in an apartment above the store for quite a long time. I think he would help Mr. Clark in exchange for the housing.

Then Ivan evidently got old enough to get Social Security, and he came to live in the Foster Hotel, which was a Housing Authority hotel at that time. I was down in the hotel lobby one day, and he said, "Sister Kathleen, I haven't got my check yet, so would you tell Gwendaline," who was one of the Housing Authority people, "that I *will* pay, that I'm honest? Will you vouch for me?" I said, "Sure, Ivan. I know you will pay, and I will tell her." So I called her office. Gwendaline wasn't there, so I said, "There is an Ivan Miles in the Foster Hotel whose check hasn't come yet, and he wants Gwendaline to know that he *will* pay." When Ivan saw Gwendaline he asked her if I had told her about him, and she said no. Well, that made a liar out of me in Ivan's eyes, and for a couple of years he ignored me when I came to the hotel — now this was a man who often used to stop me and buy me a cup of coffee, and I loved the little man! I really loved Ivan, but Ivan would have nothing to do with me after this incident. He didn't trust me. Since I was in and out of that hotel frequently, one time I tried to make a contact with him, and he said, "I've nothing to say." I tried to make some kind of an opening, but in vain. Of course, I hadn't lied to him, and I tried to tell him that.

This situation just went on. I liked this guy so much that it really hurt a lot to have him feel that way about me. There wasn't anything that I knew I could do to break down that barrier. I had tried, but, in the end, Ivan had no use for anybody who (he thought) would lie to him. I used to tell a couple of the men how terrible I felt about all this, because Ivan was somebody I thought so much of. I knew he wasn't well. He had been hospitalized once with respiratory problems. But there wasn't much I could do to help him, because of where our relationship stood at that point.

Now Ivan made miniature covered wagons. He'd put horses on them, make reins with little brass studs, and decorate and paint the wagons. They looked just like the old-fashioned covered wagons, and all of them were different. Carl [see Carl's story] had made a cased-in glass shelf with a lock on it to keep some of Ivan's wagons on display in the hotel lobby; there were at least three in there, and I would admire them.

One day, one of the men said, "Ivan, why don't you take Sister Kate up to your room and show her some of your wagons?" (he had more up in his room). I felt very uncomfortable, but Ivan said, "All right" and then preceded me into the elevator. You had to use a key in that elevator in order to keep street people from going up, because that hotel was much more accessible to street people than many of the other Housing Authority hotels were.

So, we went up. I followed him into his room and he showed me the wagons. There wasn't much conversation at that point, but he was talking, and I said, "Oh, these are wonderful!" I was playing it real cool because I didn't want to blow this moment in *any* way. He said something about, "Well, you can come again," and I said, "Okay."

The next time I came to the hotel, he said, "I have something for you. Come up

to my room." I went up, and he gave me a wagon. Well, Ivan had trusted me again, and we have been close friends ever since. The subject of that incident never came up again.

He's not a well man; he has a lot of respiratory and stomach problems. He'll talk to me and ask me for advice about some of his medications.

His room is as neat as a pin. He buys all these things to repair; he has about five or six radios now that he's working on, and clocks and lamps and other items. He does this to while away his time. He's told me that he doesn't sleep well and often sleeps in his chair.

Ivan gets very upset and angry at the hotel managers because they don't check the people's rooms for things that attract roaches. They just spray the bad rooms, and, naturally, the roaches come out and go into the clean rooms — like Ivan's. Then someone like Clifton (one of the hotel residents) sprays his room with Raid to keep the roaches out, and the spray is very hard on Ivan's breathing.

Ivan really is a very special person. And he's very good and kind to the people on the street; he gave me five dollars the other day to buy cigarettes for someone. He's somebody I would do anything for. I'm sorry that we lost the time that we did lose, but I'm glad it worked out, because it really hurt to know that he felt like he did.

Ivan remained sober for quite a few years, and I visited him often. Then, around 1995 or 1996, when I was working again in Hooper Detox, I had been asked towards the end of the day if I would admit another patient. The man was in the sobering station, and when I went to get him I noticed someone else sitting on a bench at one of the little tables there. It was Ivan.

I went over to him, and he said, "Sister, can you take me home?" I said, "Ivan, I can't. They'll let you out when you're ready to go." His response was, "I'm ready *now*." I told him that I would come and see him after admitting the other man. When I returned to the sobering station again, Ivan was lying on the floor. He asked me again if I would take him home, and I told him again that they would let him go when they felt he was ready. Then I went to one of the staff in the sobering station, told him Ivan lived in the Foster Hotel, and asked if they would take him home in the CHIERS wagon, which was something that was *never* done to my knowledge. [The CHIERS wagon is an outreach van of the local detox center; it picks up inebriated people off Portland's streets and delivers them to safety in the center's sobering program — see *detoxification center* in glossary.] They agreed to do this, so I went back and told Ivan that they would give him a ride back to the hotel.

Ivan later called and told me that someone had robbed him of a hundred dollars that he kept in a coffee can. I told him that he probably had been in an alcoholic blackout and had taken the money out of the can himself, because I knew that his door would have automatically locked when he went out. He agreed this was probably what had happened. As far as I know that was Ivan's last drunk.

One time he told me that he had had a brother who was born in nineteen twenty, named Ivan M. Miles, and that the boy had died. Two years later, in nineteen twenty-two, Ivan J. Miles was born. For some reason, somebody had suggested to his mother that she use the *first* Ivan Miles's birth certificate. So Ivan J. was legally, according to all records, born in nineteen twenty, which would make him two years older than he actually is.

I continue [in 2001] to keep in contact with Ivan by phone or visits, and usually bring him a large can of coffee when I see him. He is one of the last people from my Burnside ministry that I still see.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *On Celibacy*

**Ron:** Kate, I would like to know your thoughts on celibacy. The main reason this comes up for me is, of course, that you are a nun, and, unlike most of us, you have made a commitment to celibacy through your vow of chastity. Too, it seems there are at least three dramatic changes that have taken place in the world since you first entered the convent in 1940, which have their own bearing on the subject of celibacy: the on-going and exploding sexual revolution that began in the sixties; the on-going assertion of the independent person; and a multitude of bold changes in the Catholic Church itself as a result of Vatican II (fewer and less rigorous restrictions, and more freedoms and options, for example).

Given all of this, how did you feel initially about celibacy, and how do you feel about it now? How did you come to accept the decision at the time, and has it proven to be a good one for you? How did you manage to give up spouse, children, and the intimacy usually associated with these?

**Kate:** Before I entered the convent, I never really thought much about anything, and certainly I wasn't realistic when I figured, "If I ever marry and have children, I'd like fourteen of them" — and I named them all; I gave them all Irish names!

**Ron:** How old were you?

**Kate:** Probably seventeen or eighteen.

When I entered the convent just after I was nineteen, I knew I would be taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, not really knowing what any of them would actually entail. I suppose my feelings about or the realization of what it really meant never came into question during the period when I had three years to make up my mind what I wanted to do — whether I wanted to stay in religious life or leave and raise a family.

**Ron:** You're saying that three years was a lot of time to think about it.

**Kate:** Well, yes, but I didn't really think about it. I suppose my real feelings were that I wanted to be a Sister, but I didn't know what living the life would be like. I knew I would probably be a teacher. I just was going through the process of learning how to be a religious. And when they gave us lessons on the vows, especially the vow of chastity, I think it was very scant and sparse as far as information was concerned. I'm sure in this day and age that this is dealt with better in the novitiate (or in "formation" as they call it).

I had been in an all-girl high school in Canada — St. Ann's Academy — which was a day boarding-school operated by the Sisters of St. Ann. We didn't have much contact with boys and I didn't do a lot of dating — most of my friends *didn't* at that point. So when I entered, it wasn't like I was leaving behind some loved one that I had thought about making a future with.

I think I read a book on chastity at one point that gave me a better understanding of what the vow was all about. I didn't find *that* so difficult as much as I did obedience. Obedience was the vow that really bothered me more, because I was a young adult, yet finding restrictions laid on me as though I were a child. And I saw some of the other Sisters getting the same kind of treatment.

Anyway, returning to celibacy, I would say there probably was a big gap before I ever thought about it again.

#### **sisters and brothers in religious orders**

My present thoughts on it are that for women in religious life, celibacy is still a value. The same would be true, I think, for a man who enters community life to become a Brother.

#### **priests in diocesan priesthood**

On the other hand, for men in diocesan priesthood, I think that celibacy should not be a requirement. There should be a change in the Church's regulations so that men who want to be a diocesan priest could conceivably be married and enter the priesthood, or marry later and not be dismissed. I feel, and have felt for quite a number of years, that diocesan priests who left religious life and subsequently married certainly should be allowed to come back and serve in the Church in this day and age when priests are far fewer. The load can fall pretty heavily on one individual pastor these days, who may or may not get some assistance on Sundays from a neighboring parish or a religious order that has extra priests who could help out.

I think that if sacraments are good, you should be able to combine one with another, such as marriage with ordination — two beautiful sacraments. I feel that it would enrich the life of the individual who is married and who also serves as a pastor. In addition, I think it would enrich the contacts of this priest with his parishioners, because he certainly would have a better understanding of the ramifications of marriage and raising a family.

#### **priests in religious orders**

For a man who enters a religious order to become a priest [like the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans, for example], I think the situation is the same as it is for Sisters and Brothers.

**Ron:** You said that you would like to see the possibility of diocesan priests being able to marry. Were you assuming this for religious order priests as well?

**Kate:** No I wasn't, because I think religious order priests make a different commitment. They make a vow of chastity just as we [Sisters and Brothers] do — and there definitely is a place for this kind of commitment. Also, part of the life of religious orders is living in community. So I don't see any purpose in entering a religious order if you're going to get married. There's no point in being a religious order priest if you don't want to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. If you got married as a religious order priest, how are you going to practice poverty, with a wife and kids to support? That's one very strong point. And how are you going to practice obedience when basically you have to work with your wife (your life's companion) and your children?



## JACK

I have a picture of Jack holding a bottle of wine in each hand. He was in the Chicken Coop Flophouse when I first met him, and he was related to one of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon [the religious order Kate was a member of until she transferred to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary].

Jack used to be a bootlegger. He was heavyset and was a heavy drinker. When he stopped drinking and smoking, he began to gain weight. He developed a heart condition and respiratory problems and had several surgeries, one of which was open heart. He almost didn't make it through all of this.

Jack loved people. He was a jovial, genial man with a delightful sense of humor and a very warm heart. He developed a few friendships. There was a young woman, for one, who had a handicap in some way. She would come up to his room sometimes to visit, and he would do things for her at times such as go shopping. Then there was another woman he had met who had severe cerebral palsy. She painted with her toes, and he had several pieces of work that she had painted in this manner. In addition to these friends, his daughter, who lived in Portland, would visit him frequently.

Jack was someone who loved beauty. He had many well-kept plants in his apartment. He spent a lot of time taking pictures, and he had several albums of pictures that he would show me. He loved cats, too, but he was not able to have one where he was living.

He did very well at living independently. He kept a very neat place. Because of his heart condition, he was very careful about his diet, and he took his medications as directed.

On one of my visits to Jack, I found him in bed too weak even to get up for a glass of water; he died soon after in a hospital. I met with his daughter after this, and we exchanged stories about our experiences with Jack. She showed me many pictures and gave me some from his collection in the albums. He always would send cards at Christmas and on my birthday, and we frequently talked on the phone. Jack had a special place in my heart.

Because he used to go down to Tom McCall Waterfront Park, to the area near Oak Street, and feed the seagulls, I was asked by his daughter to join her and a couple of family members to scatter some of his ashes at a monument that is located in that area. The rest of his ashes were scattered at a family farm not far from Sublimity, which is a town near Salem [south of Portland].

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## JAY

Jay is one of the people who was rather special, in the context that we had. I think he used to come in and out of detox when I first knew him. He was a nice-looking man and probably in his late thirties or early forties. He liked women, and when he was sober he would dress up and go out on a date.

One of the times when I was working the evening shift in the old detox that was on Southwest Pine Street, just north of the old police station, one of the aides came and said that there was a man lying on the floor down at the bottom of the stairs and that he had what looked like quite a bit of money coming out of his pocket. I went downstairs, and it was Jay, and he did have a lot of bills wadded up and sticking out of his pocket. I knew he was pretty vulnerable there, so I said, "Jay, I'm going to take your money and keep it upstairs, and if you don't leave we'll get you up as soon as we have a bed." He didn't seem to say much, so I just left him and took the money, which was over a hundred dollars, and put it in a safe place. Later that night, Jay was admitted and came upstairs.

The next day I went over to see him and asked if he remembered that I had taken his money and that I had told him I would hold it for him, and he said yes. I said, "You can have it when you leave."

(The detox center part of Jay's story reminds me of another man who was brought to detox one time by the police. He, too, was drunk and was on the floor until someone left and we had an opening. I bent down and told him we would have a bed soon. He asked me what my name was. I told him it was Sister Kathleen, and he responded with an answer that touched me very much and I have never forgotten — "Oh, you're the one who loves my kinds o' peoples.")

Jay found out that I was a cribbage player, and we would play cribbage when he would come to see me in the Matt Talbot Center (by then I was no longer working at the detox center). He would bring me a bottle of pop and a cribbage board, and we would play cribbage, whether he was drunk or whether he was sober. When he would be in detox, he would be sober of course; but when he'd come to Matt Talbot Center, he'd be usually a little drunk.

Now Jay had a sad ending. He was found dead underneath one of the bridges, naked. He had been killed. I don't remember how the killing took place, but I believe he may have been stabbed. Whether he had been stripped of his clothes after he was dead, or before, or whether the person who had killed him took his clothes, or this was done by someone who came along after he was killed, I don't recall. Nor do I know if they ever found out who had killed him. At any rate, it was a very sad ending. Jay was somebody I missed quite a bit after that because he had been such a loveable man who had a very quick sense of humor and was just fun to be around.

## JEFF

Jeff dates back to the first year that I worked on Burnside. There was a small Drop-in Center on Couch street, between Second and Third, below the Burnside Hotel. It was staffed and supervised by staff or residents of the Burnside Hotel, which Jim Lambert, a Catholic priest, was running.

I used to bring tobacco and cigarettes for the people in the Drop-in Center, when I could get them. This was at the time when I was coming down to Burnside just one or two days a week from Beaverton. I remember trying to put up a banner that I had made for the Drop-in Center. The banner had a quote by Frederick S. Perls that said, "I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, nor are you here to live up to mine. You are you and I am I, and if by chance we meet, it's beautiful." I had had these words lettered on the banner, and Jeff helped me put it up.

During the early part of our friendship, Jeff used to tell me about his sisters. He was the only boy in a family of girls, and he was much loved by his family. He also had been married and had a couple of children, but he didn't have much contact with them.

He went into Harmony House. I don't recall how long he stayed over all, but he was in denial about his alcoholism. I think he always figured he could handle it, to a certain extent; but then there were periods when he couldn't, and he would be in and out of the House as a result. During his sober times, he was a very good carpenter, and there wasn't much that he couldn't do. He was extremely handy, and apparently carpentry is what he had done mostly for a living until his drinking interfered.

There were several years when I didn't see Jeff. Then one day he came into the Matt Talbot Center looking very sick, and he said, "I don't know what is wrong with me, but I've lost thirty pounds in the past few weeks. I can't hold anything down, not even water," and I said, "Jeff, I'm going to get you up to the hospital." So I either took him or made arrangements for him to go to the Veterans Hospital, and they sent him back with a bottle of Maalox. He came to my office a day or two later and told me what they had given him, and I said, "I wouldn't have sent you up there if that's what I thought you needed, because I've got shelves of it here!"

So I sent him up again, and I believe I wrote a note saying, "I think the problem is more serious than a bottle of Maalox will help." They sent him back again and told him to drink a lot of chilled juices and water and to come back in a month. They may have given him some anti-nausea medication, too. Anyway, he came back in another day or two and said, "Nothing is staying down."

I called the hospital again and asked to talk to one of the doctors. I said, "Jeff has been up there twice, and this last time I was hoping that what you gave him would help, but it isn't, and his next appointment isn't for a month. I'm not sure he'll be living by then; he's going to be totally dehydrated." And the doctor said, "Sister, we know he's sick. We don't know what the problem is. We didn't really have a bed; but, if this isn't working and you can see that he gets up here, we have one bed now on the cardiology floor and we will admit him." I said, "I'll get him up there."

So I took him up, and he was in that hospital for over a year. They finally discovered that he had pancreatitis and tried to treat it. They removed part of his pancreas, and left part, hoping that he would still be able to produce insulin; but they finally had to remove it all. By this time, this man was so sick that it took a long, long time to recover, and he was never able to eat as well as in the past. After the surgery, when he was discharged from the hospital, he went back to live in Redmond [a city in central Oregon]. His sister and brother-in-law had a mobile home and prepared a place for him. His sister loved taking care of him, and he got the best of care.

Jeff got well enough and eventually married someone in Redmond. At some point, he drank a little bit again, which was the worst thing he could have done for his health; I think that at that stage he knew he wasn't going to be doing that much more damage to himself. I believe he and his wife separated for a while because it was hard for her to handle all this. And his health deteriorated more.

Periodically Jeff's sister and brother-in-law would bring him to the Veterans Hospital in Portland. She would always call, and I'd always go up and see him when he'd be in the hospital again. The travel back and forth from Redmond to Portland was long and torturous, because he really suffered a lot of pain. Then one day, after they had returned to Redmond, his sister called and told me that Jeff had died. She asked me to tell Scott, because they had been friends [see Scott's story].

Jeff was a real sweetheart and another very special person in my life. I really loved the man.

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## JESSE

When I was working at Harmony House, back in the seventies, a young man came to stay whom I think I had also known on the streets. He was in his twenties. He was good looking and had a very pleasing personality. He was the kind you think has everything going for him and should be a good candidate for recovery.

I don't know if he came to us from detox — probably, because he had quite a drinking problem. When he wasn't drinking, he always seemed to be able to find work. He was a good worker, and he'd get work in construction.

One time he was painting on the outside of the Harmony House on Southeast Thirty-ninth Street, just north of Division, and somehow he spilled a bucket of paint on me! Later, when he got some money, he gave me twenty dollars to get new clothes. I remember buying a red suit and wearing it for Pentecost because they had suggested at St. Andrew's that we try to wear something red that day. [Pentecost Sunday is a Christian feast day commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles fifty days after Easter, and red is traditionally the color of the vestments worn by the priest at Mass that day, as well as of other aspects of the worship service.]

Jesse didn't make it at Harmony House. He stayed for a while but then went on a drunk. I saw him over the years, off and on, and I could see the change in him, the progression of a disease that was aging him. He never did really get into recovery and make a new life for himself. He came into De Paul at one point after Harmony House; but, not liking De Paul's philosophy *or* AA, he only stayed a month.

Jesse had moved into the Rosenbaum Plaza, which is a Housing Authority unit and is located a block down the street from De Paul. I had come to my car late one afternoon and discovered that the battery was dead. It was getting darker outside. I saw Jesse at one point, and I said, "Jesse, would you do me a favor? If I call AAA to have my car jump-started, would you stay with me until they come, and then I will take it from there?" He said yes. It was getting later and later and Jesse stayed with me all the while. AAA didn't come, but Jesse and I managed to find a service station that was still open. They didn't have a battery that would fit exactly, but they did put in a battery that would at least power the car temporarily. I was very grateful that Jesse had stayed with me throughout this, so I told him, "I'll take you home, but before that we'll stop and you can have hamburgers, milkshakes — you name it, you can have it!" So we did that, and then I took him home.

Jesse was what I would refer to as a "periodic drinker," but his drunks were taking more of a toll on him. When he would be sick, he would be heaving violently. He would be very sick, and you could see it. He began to put on weight, too, because I think he was a big eater when he wasn't drinking.

Then I didn't see him around anymore, and I don't mean just at De Paul, but on the streets too. Usually I'd see him occasionally on the streets: we'd pass and he'd always wave, or he'd be going down to the store to buy some coffee, or he would walk with me to my car and we'd visit for a little bit. He was probably around thirty-six by the last time that I saw him.

I always had the feeling that Jesse was one who had a lot of potential, and I wanted to see him make it. But it didn't seem to be working out that way. He was kind of a charmer, and had a beautiful smile and a cute sense of wit. I did find out once that when he'd be drunk he'd be smart-alecky and kind of fresh. I think he told me (or somebody else told me) of a woman that he had taken up with when he'd be drunk. He never seemed to have much time for women in the years that I knew him, but maybe some of that changed, in part because there were a lot of women in the Rosenbaum.

### changing shades of darkness

Going back for a moment to the part of Jesse's story when I had car problems, I would have been afraid to go through that situation by myself at that time [in the mid-to late-1980's]. I didn't want to be waiting alone in that parking lot near De Paul; I was

never comfortable walking from De Paul to the parking lot alone in the dark. I would usually ask one of the De Paul clients to walk over there with me when it was dark. I just was not any longer brave in the dark. So that car incident with Jesse was one time when I really did appreciate help.

In the earlier years, in the seventies, when a good part of my day was spent in the Burnside area, which included Blanchet House, Matt Talbot Center, and local hotels, I was never afraid to walk around alone, even when the days were shorter and it got dark earlier. If anything were to have happened or been threatening, I was well aware that there were many of the men I served who were very, very protective and would have come to my aid.

Later, however, there were many changes in the Skid Road street population. By the mid-eighties in the Burnside area, many individuals were on drugs, were dealing or pushing, and they often operated in small groups, which could appear threatening. Many of the older men themselves were reluctant to be on the streets after dark by then.

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### Photo Gallery III: The Skid Road Years - Part 1



Kate and others, 1970, evaluating the condition of the soon-to-be Matt Talbot Center residence, in which her office (sometimes referred to as little "clinic") would be located.



Walking down the street in the Burnside area, circa 1971. The photos on this and the next page show the final modification to the original habit worn by Kate as a Sister of St. Mary of Oregon, which included shorter skirt, simplified headgear, and options of jumper, dress, or suit.



Kate receives an award as part of the Beaverton [Oregon] Elks Community Project Awards Contest, along with three other recipients, 1972. Her award is for work with Skid Road alcoholics and includes \$300, which she uses as seed money for her new ministry. Photo source undeterminable.



Feeding a rabbit outdoors at Maryville Nursing Home, Beaverton, Oregon, 1972.



On vacation, at home with her family in Washington State, holding one of her nephews, circa 1972.



Kate sitting at her desk in her small office/"clinic" at Matt Talbot Center. Poster on wall reads, "Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil; hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly, as brothers in Christ, and be eager to show respect for one another."





Kate in her Matt Talbot Center office/clinic, 1970s, taking the blood pressure of one of the men. This work area of hers was approximately 8 feet by 10 feet in size. To the right of her desk was a chair for the man she was helping, and probably an extra. There was no examination table or other substantial medical equipment. The room had a wash basin that was installed for her use, with hot and cold running water. In addition, there was a large cabinet which was well-stocked with over-the-counter medications and medical dressing supplies. Kate did not store or dispense prescription medications.



Bandaging a leg for one of the men, Matt Talbot Center.



Treating an eye injury, Matt Talbot Center.



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Letter from Jail*

*[Excerpts from a letter to Kate by a male inmate of Rocky Butte Jail, Portland, Oregon, circa 1972. Begun after Kate had visited the inmate in jail, and completed after he received a letter she had promised to send him.]*

You just left here and I am trying to get my thoughts together. I am still surprised or rather amazed. I just can't understand why you came here to see me. I have seen you do this and similar acts before — yet I can't find the motive. I am not a very religious man so I can only say "thanks." You said "God bless" when you left. Did you stop to think, that I have been blessed! If not for the grace of God things would be worse. Just suppose I would have had a gun! There has to be someone looking out for me or I would have been gone by now. I have been to so many "skid row" missions that my outlook on religion is warped. Yet when I think I am all alone someone comes along then my whole belief is shaken. There are so many things I don't understand. I could ask *why* all day long. I am really confused about you. I know I am not supposed to think of you as a woman but how can I help it. I don't mean romance but I remember once seeing you on Burnside walking with some drunk like myself. I don't know just how I did feel. Maybe it was shock. Anyway I hurried away before you saw me. I know that my way of living is the loneliest there is. Sister maybe I get jealous of anyone that tries to understand. Now maybe you get some idea how confused I am! I want to thank you again for coming here. Kathern [sic], maybe you can tell me what I should do when I get out. I hate being alone but I can't live with anyone that I know. So I suppose I will just have to let nature take its course. Every man should have some purpose, some goal. It seems I just wander like some gypsy. I am only 40 but have lived more than some men twice my age.

I just received your letter and am trying to answer. Most of this I wrote the day you were here. I was going to tear it up because it did not sound like the type of letter one writes to a Sister. But I know you would want me to be honest with myself. Describing my emotions is the only way I might be able to understand myself. I think fate chose you for me to confess to. [...] Kath [sic], thanks for calling me a good man. It really built my ego.

### ***One Good Turn***

*["Willard K. Troyer, 64," a newspaper article. Names of author and publication unknown. Judging from handwriting at bottom of original, article may date from October 1976. Text is presented here in its entirety.]*

I haven't had a drink in two years and I'm a volunteer worker at the Matt Tabor hotel and clinic on Couch Street. [The so-called Matt Tabor hotel and clinic were, respectively, the Matt Talbot Center and Kate's little second floor medical office there.]

I was a wino, dino, dingbat, you name it, and I even landed in jail a couple of times.

But I never really got drunk, although you could say I had a nice glow on for about 35 years.

I was in a flophouse down here [on Skid Road] a couple of years ago when Sister Kathleen of the Sisters of the Holy Names used to come in distributing vitamins and talking to us. I had a bad leg, and she got me over to the clinic and I just quit drinking. [The flophouse was the Holm Hotel, also called Chicken Coop Flop or Flophouse.]

Now I'm her helper and I also work the hotel desk.

She got me into hospital for a big operation and when I was coming out I saw a bill for \$8,080. On the line where it said what I owed, it said zero, zero, zero.

Sister Kathleen explained that it had been paid for by two charities and the state. That's why I do this volunteer work, now that I've got Social Security.

I've got five kids scattered all over and I never see them and I don't care about that any more.

Most of my friends are dead from alcohol.

If you make it to your 60s on Skid Road, you're a rare bird — and probably a lonely person.

**WILLARD K. TROYER, 64**



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**"volunteering"** But I never really got drunk, although you could say I had a nice glow on for about 35 years.

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## JIMMY

One of the men I've known for many years, starting from when I was working in the Matt Talbot Center, is a man named Jimmy. He was probably in his early thirties at that time. He was rather good-looking and had black, curly hair. He liked to play bingo, liked gambling, liked women. He was a friendly person and a very likeable man who never really hurt anybody. Because he had alcoholic seizures, he was on Dilantin and Phenobarbital part of the time, and, when he would drink and use these medications at the same time, his behavior would become quite erratic. As long as I knew him, Jimmy never really lived on Skid Road.

He came up many times to the Matt Talbot Center, wanting some help, one way or another; I don't recall whether he usually wanted housing or medication. At times he'd be injured. I remember one time in particular when he came up; somebody had helped him, but he collapsed in the hallway right outside my door. He was drunk and crying, and I had to ask Bobby, who volunteered on a daily basis, to help him into the office [see Bobby's story]. I remember calling detox and somebody coming and taking him to detox.

Another time he came up, and his whole behavior seemed to be a mixture of things; it was a different type of behavior than he usually manifested. He was very strung out and stated that he wanted to kill himself. Now my office was on the second floor, and he ran to the window with the apparent intention of jumping out. Bobby and I grabbed him and had to forcefully pull him back from the window. I think he actually would have jumped, because his whole behavior was so bizarre at that time. We put him on a chair and held him there and talked to him. In the meantime, one of us called either the police or detox — I think we called the police, actually, because we didn't know quite what to do, since his behavior was so unpredictable. They came, and he was taken to detox after all. I am sure he was given a sedative, because they used to give the clients Librium in those years to calm them down, so they wouldn't go into the d.t.'s. Later on, Jimmy went into a halfway house and stayed sober, which was the beginning of his efforts to make his recovery from alcoholism.

His parents lived in Washington State, and his dad, I remember, called me one time and told me that he had a job for Jimmy and an apartment for him; in a sense, that turned out to be his dad enabling him. So Jimmy went, but he didn't have enough sobriety behind him to cope with the responsibility. After a couple of weeks he relapsed. Because of his history of seizures, he was able to get medical assistance from Adult and Family Services, and housing.

I hadn't seen Jimmy for quite a long time, and then one day I ran into him. He came up later to see me and said, "I have something for you." He gave me a little magnetic, rubberized label that said, "Smile, I love you," which I put on the inside of my car. I remember that maybe a year or two later, he asked me, "Do you still have that gift?" and I said, "Yes, I do."

I met Jimmy again at a bingo game, and he said, "I've been sober for close to a year." He had an apartment, but I don't think he worked at that time; he may have done some odd jobs cooking or helping out, but he didn't have a steady job.

I would see him off and on for a period after this, and sometimes he would be in recovery, while other times he would have relapsed. Eventually, when I saw him again, he had made such a change in his life. He said, "I've stopped smoking. I feel great." He looked good, though he had gained a little weight. To my knowledge he is still clean and sober and still not smoking. He was also still going to bingo occasionally.

I think that every treatment program that people go to contributes to their future sobriety, regardless of some of the failures. I don't think it's any one place that really does it all.

Jimmy was a very friendly person, and I will always remember him and be grateful that he was a part of my life.

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## JOHN

John was a very, very dear person who came in to my life early on in my ministry. Somebody told me that John had said that he had a burn on his leg, but that he didn't want to come and show it to me. I remember saying, "Well, there's not much I can do about it, then."

Despite this, I saw him soon after on the street and went over and started to talk to him. He told me he was John, but that he liked to call himself Michael Patrick Kelly. Apparently, he had a tremendous love for the Irish blood that was in his veins. I told him I was a nurse and that, if it was okay with him, I would be willing to take a look at his leg and see if there was anything I could do for it. But he didn't want me to look at it. "Okay," I said, "that's fine, but you know that I'm around if you do want my help at any time."

The next day he looked me up and said, "I think I'll let you take a look at it." He had quite an ugly looking burn on his inner thigh. Evidently he had been sitting drunk while holding a lit cigarette, and had burned himself. He didn't want to go to the hospital; so, since I had a pretty good stock of supplies at that point in my ministry, I applied medication and dressing and told him I'd like to see him again. But I never saw him again regarding that problem. He did tell me later, however, that my effort had helped a lot, and that the burn had healed. I took his word for it.

Something I learned early on in my work with these street people is that many of them spent a lot of time walking, walking, and walking. They walked miles back and forth, to and from their destinations. They simply had nothing else to do, no place to go. You can still see this behavior today [1985].

John always wore a hat on the street, and every time he would see me he would doff it and bow and say, "Good afternoon, Sister Kathleen!" Or he would come up beside me and say, "Come here, I want to whisper something to you." Then he'd bend down and kiss my ear or kiss my neck. He was so funny! I remember at the time thinking, "Oh, dear God, don't let the lice go from his head to my head!" I wasn't aware then that for most of them the lice were more body lice than head lice.

Someplace along the line, while he was sharing about his family members with me one day, I happened to mention Tara, my niece, and he immediately perked up his ears because of the Irish name. From then on, from time to time, he would get little things and wrap them up, tie the package with green ribbon, and write in green ink, "For Tara." During family visits to Washington [State], I would give these gifts to my little niece and tell her they were from John.

One day, John invited me to his room for lunch in the Home Hotel. This hotel was (and still is) on Third Street [16 Southwest Third]. Our lunch was Pringles, the strongest and blackest coffee I ever in my life drank, and ice cream. It was so funny — and so much fun, really!

There was something very special about John, but he also had a lot of anger in him, and hatred. Evidently his drinking had caused a problem in his marital life. He claimed that his wife had thrown him out, and he felt that she hadn't had the right to do that. After all (as he reasoned), he had worked to pay for the home, and they were lawfully married; so he had as much right to be in the home as she did. He always resented that situation and held a lot of bitterness about it.

John had strong prejudices. He would come in to the Matt Talbot Center, where there was always a motley assortment of people waiting to see me, and, if I was taking care of somebody who was Black or homosexual or belonged to any other minority, he would get very angry. He would call me out into the hallway and say, "You're wasting your time taking care of these people. They have no right to your time." Actually, it was basically people who were Black that he would put up such a fuss about. I had a hard time trying to convince him — gently — that I was there for anybody and everybody.

So John began to keep his distance a little bit from me. He stopped coming

around the office; in fact, I never did see him there again.

Then one time on the day before Thanksgiving, before leaving town to go home to be with my family, I stopped at the hotel where John was staying. I'm not sure why I stopped there, except that I think this is one of many examples of where I have always felt that God was behind the work that I did and kind of nudging me in certain directions.

John didn't look very well. He was pale, but he was up and about. I had no idea what might be the matter, and he didn't say he was sick or anything like that. Apparently the next day, however, after I had left town, he had a stroke and was hospitalized.

When I got back to town, the manager of John's hotel called to give me the news. I went to the Veterans Hospital, where John was. He couldn't talk, but he recognized me. I took his hand and said, "Nod if you can understand what I'm saying. John, I'm going to try and get in touch with your daughter and let her know that you're sick" — he had one daughter who was apparently very close to him, and he used to share letters with me that he received from her. He squeezed my hand, and I said, "I'll go to your room." I was pretty sure he would have some letters there from his daughter, and I knew the manager would let me in. The managers of many of the Skid Road hotels and I were in touch frequently.

I did find a letter in his room, which contained his daughter's first name. When I determined from the return address that she was in Idaho, I tried, through the operator, to get her number, but was unsuccessful. They didn't have anybody listed there by her father's last name, which was the only last name I had to go by. Since there was a lot of advertizing around that time about Mailgrams, I sent her one of these, informing her that her dad had suffered a stroke and was in Veterans Hospital.

The next morning I got a call from her! She came to Portland. We met and went up to the hospital together. Her dad, of course, was delighted to see her, but it was hard for her to see him in the condition he was in after the stroke.

When John had recovered sufficiently, they transferred him to a veteran's hospital in Idaho. I received a letter later saying that he had died.

I don't know how much later after this, I received a letter from California, from another one of his daughters. She expressed her gratitude for the things that I had been able to do for her dad, both before he was sick and afterwards. It was a beautiful letter. We talked about him later on the phone. She told me about some of the things that were

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*Dear Sister Kathleen:*

*This is just a note to let me express my complete gratitude to you for the part you played in the life of my Father [...].*

*There are so many questions unanswered regarding his last few years but after discussion with my sister [...] I know that you were a great benefit to him. When I found out that he was alive, I so desperately wanted him to know how much I really loved him. It was important to me to say "Daddy, I love you". He passed away before that opportunity came, but God's grace always allows for our inadequacy. Thank you for your love and concern for people such as my father [...].*

*—from a letter to Kate written by one of John's daughters*

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kind of hard for him and her, but said that she dearly loved him. I told her that he had loved his children, that it had been his wife toward whom he had felt his animosity, and that I missed him a lot because he was a real sweetheart.

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FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

The Element of Fear

Ron: I am curious about the element of what I will call "fear" in your ministry, its absence or presence. Many if not most people — and perhaps particularly women (to borrow a stereotype for a moment) — would have been somewhat or even quite afraid to be on Burnside's Skid Road in 1970 when you began your ministry. Certainly in the seventies, and perhaps even much into the eighties, the Skid Road area of Portland was not considered by most people as a desirable place to be in. The area had not yet become the popular social spot that it would later become, and many avoided it altogether.

Yet there you were in 1970 and for more than twenty years after: a *woman* on Skid Road; a woman *alone*, who walked the area unaccompanied, as you did so often; and a *Catholic nun* who had been sheltered from alcoholism, poverty, homelessness, hopelessness, and all the other aspects that comprise the difficult life on any Skid Road; you had been sheltered from these facts of life, and you knew you had little experience regarding most of the issues involved in them, yet Skid Road is *precisely* where you chose to go — right square into the middle of harm's way.

Where did your courage come from, Kate? Weren't you afraid down there?

Kate: Ignorance?

I don't know that I was afraid as much as I was uncomfortable. I was a religious, I was in a habit and wearing a veil, and I knew that I was somewhat of a curiosity. I remember walking down the street in the beginning and not really making eye contact with people. But as people got to know me and would greet me with, "Hi, Sister Kathleen," I began to know who they were and feel more comfortable.

I don't think I had an element of fear at all at that point. I was not comfortable with the very drunk person who maybe would come staggering down the street, and I was never comfortable when I would see two men physically fighting on the street. I would sidestep them; I do remember that. But other than that, I didn't really have a fear.

There were a few times later on when I would be in a situation that I could have been fearful of — and I talked about those situations at different times in this project. But otherwise, basically what I felt was being uncomfortable until I got to really know the people whose faces I saw; then I just went up and down the street and was never afraid.

But much later, sometime in the eighties, things changed. There were drugs going around town. There were a lot of people I didn't know. And some people could get in a group and jack-roll a man, which meant man-handle him and take his money from him and maybe rip his pocket off as they were taking his wallet. I wasn't as comfortable then going down the streets or into a hotel when it was darker outside.

And when drugs came on the scene, the *other* thing that changed, I think, was the mix of the people downtown. We were getting Asians in, and a lot of Hispanics, and this resulted in a little tougher element. The Hispanics were willing to work, and the older alcoholic men no longer could get on the buses to work in the berry fields and on the fruit farms because they were being pushed aside by younger men. So the whole population on Skid Road was changing.

Ron: Was some of this uncomfortableness due to the unpredictability of the behavior of people who were high on drugs or needing their next fix, as compared with someone who was "simply" drunk?

Kate: I don't think the unpredictability so much is the answer as some of the *violence* that took place among the men because someone wanted drugs or wanted the money for drugs, and would beat up a person for this. Before the drugs, people didn't beat the drunks so often, though once in a while if a man hadn't paid his debt he could be leery of another man who was drunk who could injure him or, on rare occasions, could kill him.

Through the seventies and into the eighties, the focus for me was more on the alcoholics, who seemed to be the majority at that time, and whose behavior was more predictable when they were drunk than the behavior was later of those who used multiple drugs. I remember that later on in the eighties, at De Paul, we began to receive people into treatment who used one or more abusive drugs along with alcohol, and that's when I began learning more about the unpredictability of drug addicts' behavior.

So I didn't really have the fear that maybe others would think I might have had. I didn't fear, for example, when I went into the Holm Hotel. I *was* a little afraid early on when I would see people having a seizure, because this was pretty much of an unfamiliar situation for me.

Ron: An alcohol seizure.

Kate: Yes. And I certainly had some fear for an individual when I would see him going into delirium tremens and want to do something foolish like jump through a window from the second floor.

Ron: You were not in the habit for very long down there.

Kate: No. I was in the habit from 1970 until about 1973.

Ron: I said that because I think it would not be a stretch of the imagination for some people to think that you weren't afraid because you were dressed in the habit, which, in a sense, already says, "Hands off; this is a nun." But the fact is that for most of your stay you didn't wear the habit.

Kate: No, but they knew who I was by then. And by word of mouth, others whom I hadn't yet met knew who I was.

And in the later years, as time went on and I became more familiar with the nature of drug behavior and the behavior of young people, I lost a lot of that initial feeling of uncomfortableness.

Even so, at Hooper, when I was there from 1992 to 1998, we would have to put someone on "exclusion" once in a while, which meant they couldn't return to us for a designated period of time, which might be from three months to even two years. Exclusion could be because of getting into fights, or having contraband and giving it to other clients, or assaultive behavior toward staff. And the nurses had beepers they could use to sound an alarm, which would result in somebody from the sobering unit coming fast if there was violence or if somebody was threatening a staff person or another client. *That's* unpredictable; but it's there, and it has to be dealt with. It's just a part of working in the field of addictions nowadays.



FROM THE TIMES

Fire in Matt Talbot Center

☎ 222-2378

☎ 223-3734

MATT TALBOT CENTER

222 N.W. COUCH / PORTLAND / OREGON / 97209



2 AM, January 13th. Quiet. Some of the men at the Center watch TV. Most are asleep. The night man dozes. Somebody upstairs yells "FIRE". Running down the hallway, he bangs on doors. The men stumble against each other. Several help the old men down the fire escape. The fire, starting in the wood shop, burns through the stairway and upper floor. Alarms sound. Onlookers gather. Firefighters spray gallons of water through broken windows and over the burnt out roof. On the street, some of the residents argue, some try to help; most of them, dazed, stare at their burnt out home.

In two days, with the help of the Red Cross and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the men's communal spirit, the Matt Talbot Center temporarily relocates on the third floor of the St. Vincent de Paul Residence. The program will continue.

Two months have passed and the roof has been repaired, the interior nearly rewired, and the plumbing will soon be fixed, by means of the insurance. The Center must now refurbish the interiors; painting, replastering, reflooring, refurnishing. Insurance does not cover everything.

[Previous page: Excerpt from a Matt Talbot Center newsletter, circa March 1977, author unknown. The fire in Matt Talbot occurred on January 13, 1977. Kate's office there before the fire and after the remodel was on the second floor.

The St. Vincent De Paul Residence referred to in the newsletter was located at 1320 SW Washington Street. In 1978, it incorporated in the same location, as an independent non-profit agency known as De Paul Center for Alcoholism Treatment, treating men and women with late-stage alcoholism who were also indigent. In 1985, De Paul began serving youth as well. Currently, in 2012, the agency is known as De Paul Treatment Centers.

Working at De Paul is how Kate and Ron met — she provided nursing, referral, and some counseling services there from 1982-1992; he worked as assistant to the president from 1984-1986.]

[Below: "Alcohol, drug programs; Talbott ²² residents eager to continue," an article by Steve Erickson, of The Oregonian staff, in an issue from January 15, 1977. ©1977 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Article presented here in its entirety.]

Most of the 55 residents of the Matt Talbott Center which burned early Thursday had found housing by Friday and were eager to resume the center's alcohol and drug rehabilitation program.

"Men on the program are all for continuing it," said Peggy Seubert, 23, a counselor at the Talbott Center, 222 NW Couch St. "They thought it was doing some good stuff for them and they want to keep it going.

"Some are out shopping around to see what they can come up with as far as a new building," she said.

Miss Seubert said 27 of the displaced men had relocated in the St. Vincent de Paul Residence, 1320 SW Washington St., and many others had found room in downtown hotels.

The blaze apparently started in a third-floor washroom of the Talbott Center, Fire Bureau officials said. About \$54,000 damage was done to the structure and its contents. The cause was listed as "probable arson" Friday.

"Just because the physical structure burned up doesn't mean the men are giving up," Miss Seubert said. "They're willing to help in any way they can. They're trying to come up with some plan and with donations." ²³

Talbott Center personnel have set up temporary operating quarters in the St. Vincent de Paul facility, she said. ²⁴

The Talbott Center was a non-profit organization where residents paid on a sliding scale from \$10 to \$20 a week depending on ability. The center operated with that

²² The correct spelling is "Talbot."

²³ Matt Talbot Center was remodeled after the fire and reopened. It remained operating until some point in 1981.

²⁴ Kate, however, after the fire and during the period of the remodel, transferred her services to the Estate Hotel, which was located (and still is located in 2006) on Northwest Couch Street between Second and Third. This would have been across the street from the then Matt Talbot Center. Kate returned to operating out of the center when it reopened, and she remained there until it closed.

money plus donations, Miss Seubert said.

Brother Fred Mercy, director of the Talbott Center for six years until last December [1976], said, "We are looking for available public money earmarked for alcoholism treatment" in an attempt to keep the program operating.²⁵

At the St. Vincent de Paul Residence, the displaced men are charged \$6 per day for a room and three meals a day. Bob Baker, director of the residence, said the men's board and room would be charged to the American Red Cross.

"We'll pick up the balance," said Jim Monahan, Red Cross disaster director in Portland.

"Thus far our expenses have been a little over \$1,000," Monahan said, "the majority of it for new clothing." He said the rest of the Red Cross expense had been for food and shelter.

"We will be working with these people on a continuing basis until their next paycheck comes in and they become self-supporting again," Monahan said.

Baker said, "Those men who are here will stay until they get checks" from military pensions, Social Security, disability provisions or other sources. "After that they have the option of staying here or leaving."

The St. Vincent de Paul facility, which has operated since June 1, 1975 in what was once the Franklin Hotel, can accommodate 61 people. It has 54 with the addition of the Talbott Center men.

Jane Morgan, a counselor, said the 27 men were "tired and depressed when they came in but they're pretty much getting settled down."

She said the men, ranging in age from their early 20s to their 70s, were "caught in uncertainty. They don't know what is going to happen to them."

One of the men, 57-year-old former jewelry manufacturer Robert E. Williams, said, "I have no immediate plans; I'll just wait and see what develops." Williams said the Talbott Center program was "one of the best I've seen for alcoholism, a great help for down-and-out men who need it. It gave them a lift.

"People should know more about what that place did," he said, "and find some way to get another building.

"Maybe that fire was a Godsend," Williams added, "and more people will find out how to save a man."

²⁵ Brother Fred, a Jesuit (a member of the Society of Jesus), founded Matt Talbot Center.

Recognizing Epilepsy

[Excerpt from "Baker Meets BCC," an article by Barbara Reddick, in BCC Pipeline, October 1975.]

Several residents expressed concern to [Portland Police] Chief Baker about police harassment of epileptics whose symptoms are often mistaken for drunken behavior. Chief Baker agreed that bracelets identifying people as epileptics would be helpful to police. He also agreed that police need more special training to identify symptoms of epilepsy.

KEN

Ken had been sitting in the entrance of the lobby of the Foster Hotel for the last... well, every time that I had come to see him he was always sitting there, kind of sprawled out (and he was a tall man). His liver was enlarged, and his abdomen was very swollen and taut. Several times I'd ask if he wouldn't go to the hospital. I'd say, "I'll take you up." "Nooo," he'd say, "I'm all right."

Then one day, when I stopped by, he said, "Will you help me? I'm really sick."

"Yes, I will, Ken. Would you be willing to go to the hospital?"

"Yes."

"If I send for the ambulance, will you go?" He looked at me.

"No, Sister."

"Ken, what can I do? I'll pray for you." I felt helpless at that time; my hands were tied.

The next day, I think, he was in the chair in the lobby, and it looked like he had never moved. They said he stayed down there almost all night. People would help him. If he went down to the corner, others would help hold him up. He just looked like he hadn't been moving much at all.

On another day, he stopped me, and I remember he took my hand and said, "I want to ask you something. Does God really love me?" (I think the day before I might have said God loved him. A lot of times I used to say to the men, "God loves you.") "Does God really love me?" I looked at him and I said, "Yes, Ken, God loves you very, very much." And I think — and I hate to even say this — I think I said, "You know, he'd like to see you healthy," or something like that, but it was an unnecessary remark to make at that time because Ken was a sick man. But after I told him that God loved him very much, he said, "That's good. I'm glad." Then I went on upstairs and saw the other people that I was making the rounds to see.

The next day, Carl, the hotel manager [see Carl's story] called me and said, "Would you come down? I haven't seen Ken today. I'm worried. Would you come up to his room with me?" I said, "Yes." I think he had tried knocking on Ken's door several times and he hadn't answered, and at that point he didn't want to go in alone; he was afraid to, I think, until we went in together.

So we went up to the room. The bed was over by a wall, and Ken was sitting on the bed, with his back against the wall and his legs out over the edge of the bed. He was dead. His head was to one side, there was dried blood by his mouth, and he looked bloated. It was an ugly and a sad sight. Ken was only in his forties.

He had gone through treatment for alcoholism at one time. After he died, I remember checking his file. Evidently he had had a problem with other drugs, too, and he wasn't ready to let go of that part of his life. He had finally been terminated from the treatment facility; they felt that they had done all they could do for him because he wasn't ready to do anything about the other part of his problem.

So I think that, in a way, the day before, Ken knew that he was coming very near the end. It was my own feeling that when he was told that God did love him, he was ready to let go and was no longer afraid — I don't know; I never thought of him as being afraid, but he seemed somehow to need reassurance.

KEVIN & MICHAEL

Kevin:

Another man who was in the Chicken Coop Flophouse in those early years of my ministry was Kevin. Kevin had real bright blue eyes and white hair. He was probably in his mid-sixties when I first met him, and he had been a heavy drinker. I have a picture of him someplace, standing together with Michael, and I gave a copy of that picture to him after Michael died, because Kevin loved Michael.

Kevin was in that Chicken Coop Flop for many, many years, until it closed, and then he went into the Oak Apartments, on Third and Oak. He was very Irish and very Catholic, and I remember that he had a couple of rosaries hanging on his bed. His friend Michael always used to joke that Kevin was really an Orangeman, which was sometimes used in reference to an Irishman from Northern Ireland who was Protestant. They were both as Irish as Paddy's pigs!

He was very thin, had a lot of pneumonia and lung problems, and may have had cancer of the lungs as a result of his heavy smoking. His pension at that point included enough for somebody to come in and clean his apartment, which he just couldn't do by himself anymore. He was always very neat and clean about his person and surroundings, and even his little room in the flophouse had been orderly.

For various reasons, I didn't see Kevin as much after Michael died, and at a certain point I heard that he, too, had died.

Michael:

Michael was related to one of our Sisters. I would bring the Holy Cross Associates and Jesuit Volunteers to see him when they would spend time with me visiting residents of various Burnside hotels. Michael would always slip me fifty dollars on those occasions, and one time he added, "It's Friday. Go out and have a fish dinner." And if one of these volunteers had a beard, as some of them did, he'd say, "He's got a beard. Why does he need to have that thing for?" When he knew that many of them came from the University of Notre Dame, he loved that because he was a sports fan and would watch the football games. He always liked Notre Dame, which resulted in his liking these people even more. We usually ended up going to Old Town Pizza Company [in the Skid Road area] and having pizza and beer using the money that Michael had given.

Michael and I used to play cribbage together. He was a very, very special person and somebody I really loved, but he could get upset with his friends. He and Kevin, for example, weren't speaking for a while; I think Kevin had borrowed some money from Michael (who always had plenty of money compared with many of the others), and hadn't yet repaid.

He often mixed vodka and orange juice, I believe it was — a Screwdriver. He drank that a lot. He also had beer in his fridge; and he always had frozen strawberries, which he would offer me.

Michael had gout, and he was on quite a few different medications. He had one foot that used to flare up a lot and cause him a tremendous amount of pain.

One day he didn't answer a knock at his door. Since he hadn't been seen for a few days, his friends went to his room a couple of times to find out if he was in there and was all right. When he didn't answer their knocks either, they got the manager and went into his room. Michael was on his bed, with his hands behind his head. He was dead.

That was hard on us. We had a funeral for him at the Downtown Chapel, and I tried to get different people together who had known him. We also got in touch with his sisters, who hadn't seen him for many years, and they came. Since the only picture the sisters had of Michael was one in which he was thumbing his nose at people, I located a very good picture of him and had it duplicated. I gave one to each of them, one

to Kevin, and one, I think, to Jack [see Jack's story].

Kevin had the picture propped up by his television. He and I were talking after Michael's death, and he said, "I talk to him. I talk to him everyday, but I'm not sure he listens to me. I'm not sure he listens to me." And I said, "Oh I think he listens to you all right, Kevin. You may not get whatever it is you want, but he hears you."

Kevin was lonely for Michael. I can just see the two of them in heaven eventually, in eternity. They're going to have a darn good time because they were such good friends for so long.

KIRK

Kirk is a man I met at Harmony House. He was kind of an attractive man, with black curly hair, who was always very cheerful, enjoyed playing cribbage, and was a tease. He loved Missy, the three-legged dog at Harmony House, and used to give her his ice cream bowl to finish.

It is important to know that Harmony House was not an alcoholism treatment center such as De Paul Center; it was an alcohol- and drug-free environment in which everybody who was on the staff was a recovering alcoholic, and the people were expected to go to the house meeting. They were not expected to go to AA meetings. It was a supportive atmosphere and a supportive group of individuals, and that was about the sum of it. Some of the men did very, very well; they stayed with the program long enough, they got a job, and then they supported the program by paying for their room and board at the house. Others, if they didn't look like they were making efforts to look for or take jobs, or if they drank, would be asked to leave. It was rare that people were asked to leave if they were trying.

As many of the people at Harmony House did, Kirk got a job in the warehouse at St. Vincent dePaul Society, on Southeast 28th and Powell. He had a pretty responsible job there for a while. I believe they had him be a watchman and gave him a little house to live in that was near there. He was a good worker, but he used to have his relapses into drinking, which would result in his being out of the Harmony House program for a while until he stopped the drinking.

I didn't see Kirk for quite a while, but the next time I saw him he was working as one of the main dispatchers at St. Vincent's, sending out the trucks for the pick-ups of donations. He told me later that he had cancer of the lungs, and one of the employees of St. Vincent's told me some months after that that Kirk had retired. Kirk was a very generous person and likeable man who had picked himself up and got his life together.

KURT

Kurt was a man I first met when he came to Harmony House. He hadn't been sober much at all; he was just a pretty constant drinker. He seemed to be a well-educated man. He spoke well, and I found out later that he also wrote well.

Kurt soon established quite a feeling of loyalty toward the staff of Harmony House and also toward me. People in Harmony House were expected to get jobs, and Kurt got a job working for the St. Vincent dePaul Society. He was a good, hard worker, but he had a habit of going through donated items. He'd shake boxes, and, if he thought they sounded interesting, he'd open them; if he'd see anything that he thought had value, he'd take it out. He kept many things, and his room got very cluttered with radios and other of these items.

Every so often he would bring me something. One time, he brought me an item and said, "I want you to keep this. Don't ever give it away." I kept it because I didn't know what else to do with it; but there were a lot of times when what I did was collect a lot of the things he had given me and quietly see that they were returned to St. Vincent dePaul. I did keep a necklace that Kurt gave me, because I really didn't know how he had obtained it. It was an ivory carving of three roses, and even the beads and the clasp were carved out of ivory. I had a special feeling for that piece of jewelry because, when I was a child living in Skagway, Alaska I had an ivory necklace that had got lost in the many moves that we made.

Kurt was quite active in the meetings that we had at Harmony House. I was doing the counseling at that time, and I remember him bringing me a dilapidated little book that he had picked up from among things that had been donated. It was an ancient book with little pages, some missing or loose; he wanted me to read or use one part of it with the group one time, which I did.

There were a lot of changes going on at Harmony House, including a change of staff, and Kurt couldn't handle the new manager. He ended up leaving Harmony House, but he continued to work for St. Vincent dePaul for a while. He had been sober for two years, but then he began to drink again, which he's continued doing off and on ever since. I still see him every so often.

Now he has cancer, and he is still drinking. He's a veteran, and was in and out of Veterans Hospital receiving care for a while; later he was in a nursing facility. He finally got on disability.

Kurt is in his fifties, I would imagine, and that's kind of young to die. Hopefully he will be able to die peacefully.



KYLE NEWTON

Kyle Newton was a younger man that I knew for quite a long time. He lived in the Holm Hotel for a long period, and then, when that finally closed, he moved into the Home Hotel on Third Street. Periodically, when he would have a little money, he would give me a dollar to use in my work. I think he did farm labor or took whatever jobs were available to him at the time. He had a gentle face and brown eyes, and there was something dear about him. I always enjoyed talking and visiting with him.

He'd come to me when I would be at the Home, and he'd want me to see a woman who was in his room. He'd say, "She's got a lot of lice bites." He very often had a woman up there, and the place was just filthy. I said, "Kyle, there's not much I can do for her." I didn't want to get into that mess, and, besides, there really wasn't anything I felt I could do. I said, "If she's in bad shape, she really needs to go to the Clean-up Center and get medication, or go to the Access Clinic," which was on Southwest Fifth and Stark.

Kyle was a pretty heavy drinker. His alcoholism progressed, and I could see a change in him. He died eventually. I think what happened was that he was drinking so heavily that basically he died of his disease. And he died *early*; he wasn't that old. His death was rather surprising to me because, while I could see the ravages of the disease, I hadn't seen him often enough or long enough to form an accurate picture of his health. He'd come out to talk to me in the doorway of his room when he'd hear my voice, but his room was always so dark that I couldn't see him that well. I just wasn't really aware that he was in that bad of physical shape.

So Kyle is gone, but he's somebody that I remember and probably will always remember as another dear man. As far as I know he never really hurt anybody but himself.



FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Kate Brings Services to the People

Ron: Something occurred to me tonight, Kate, [April 1996] that I never really thought of until now: In 1970, you were the first woman *on* the streets, who went *to* the streets. You went *to* the people. It's not that the people always had to go somewhere to receive your service — *you* went *to them*. You encountered them where *they* were, both in the Skid Road hotels and on the streets.

Kate: I think *so*.

Ron: And you were maybe the first medical personnel? Or was there a doctor down there who went to the people?

Kate: No, there wasn't a doctor at that time, that I was aware of.

Ron: So you did go *to* the people. It's not that the people had to go somewhere to get the service. *You* went *to them*.

Kate: Yes.

But I started at Blanchet House. My initial contact that first day at Blanchet was (as I have said elsewhere) standing on the street corner outside of Blanchet and a man coming up to me and asking me for some Librium. All I had in my purse was aspirin, I think! But that incident opened up to doing dressing changes, which I began doing *inside* of Blanchet House, where food was being served — *no* place to be doing it, even though I was using a little room next to the manager's office. I mean, if the health board had known! In *this* day and age, I would *never* do that because I would know much better. But that was the way it was at that time. There was no other place to *do* it.

I know that Betty Stevens was down there on Skid Road; she was a public health nurse. At the time, I don't know in what capacity she was working, but the only clinic that I was aware of was the TB clinic. As a public health nurse, when she knew about me she wanted to know just what I was doing and wanted to go around with me to observe; she felt responsible for health care, and I wasn't working for any agency. After she went around with me, she was satisfied that what I was doing was fine; I wasn't giving out prescription drugs, and I was making good referrals and recommendations.

So, yes, I do not know of any other woman or medical person when I first began. There were other women who came after — Sister Eileen Bradshaw for one.

Ron: But, again, she was in an *agency*. See? What I'm trying to say — one of the things that's dawning on me tonight — is that *you* were *alone*, going *to* the people. You were a mobile medical personnel of sorts. You see what I mean?

Kate: Yes. That's true.

Ron: And then you were at an agency *later* — De Paul Center, for example — even though you continued going to the hotels and seeing and helping the men right on the streets.

But at first, it was *you* going to the *people*. That's quite a different emphasis than the men having to go somewhere *else* to get help.

[Extra material from this interview session follows. For more on Kate's not having a plan when she started her work on Skid Road, see: From the Interview Sessions — Neither Mission Nor Plan.]

My making referrals and recommendations had to build up because I didn't have any of that information when I started on the street — *nothing*. I was afraid to confront an alcoholic. I was afraid to *talk* to one! I didn't know what I could do down there; I had no idea. I went into my ministry as a blank piece of paper, and learned, little by little.



FROM THE TIMES

One Woman

[Excerpts from "Woman leaves suburbia; Molly embraces Skid Road," an article by Steve Erickson, of The Oregonian staff, July 16, 1978. ©1978 The Oregonian. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.]

Any judgment of Molly — and there have been many — would conclude that when she abandoned "respectability" in favor of Skid Road, she truly hit the skids. Molly's self-judgment is something else.

"It's very interesting here and I like it much better than PTA-land, the suburbs where I raised the kids," she said. "I left the straight life behind. I even hate to cross Burnside now." [Burnside Street basically divides Skid Road on its north side from downtown on its south side.]

And the 58-year-old university graduate rarely does, even though she has four grown sons in the Portland area who frequently try to persuade her to adjust her lifestyle, live with them, or accept their money, their help.

Instead, she lives in lower West Burnside Street hotels. [...]

Molly is a decided minority along Skid Road's mean streets. Figures compiled by the federal Public Inebriate Project, which operated for several years in the area, show that of its 1,700 residents, 8 percent are women.

Molly, a journalism graduate of the University of Oregon who also attended Stanford University and Reed College, said, "I could have moved. My son was going to send me money. I said, 'Don't.'"

"They say poverty is creative," said Molly. "I don't like asking the kids for money. I never did. I'm independent."

It has been a costly independence. Molly has been raped, beaten and, perhaps most cruel of all, rejected.

"The way I landed in this neighborhood was because I was raped in a hotel in a dumber part of town," she said.

Later, Molly was in her room at one of Burnside's lesser hotels last June 20 when "two women marched right in and beat me up." The women, she said, were big and tough, so "who could fight 'em?" [...]

Rejection was recalled by one of Molly's sons, a 29-year-old [...].

"She runs out of money and gets kicked out of rooms," he said. "One hotel after another. She's slept on streets, sidewalks. You know, sometimes she just ends up without anything."

"It's harder than hell. It's tough seeing your mother down in a place like this," he said. "It's the bottom of the barrel."

Molly, who lives on \$185 a month (federal) Supplementary Security Income for a disability, plus \$12 welfare, was born in Portland [...].

[...] "She was doing real well," her son said. "Then, 1-1/2 years ago she stopped taking medicine for mental balance, said it made her a 'welfare zombie.' [...]"

"She started on a downhill swing that ended here," he said. "I've seen her at least every other week, inside of innumerable Skid Road hotels. She says she's down here because she wants to be, because it's reality. [...]"

"She's smart," Molly's son said. "If she could just settle down she could do something. She's capable. It's so hard. What's happened to that mind? [...]"

Molly said such familial concern is unnecessary.

"I do something a little fun and they get worried," she said. "I don't think they

should."

[...] Molly lighted another filterless cigarette, revealing a peace sign tattooed on an inner upper elbow.

"It cost me a dollar," she said. "I pretended it didn't hurt."

Housing IV

[Excerpts from "Phillips Hotel to Close," an article by Teresa Jesionowski, in BCC Pipeline, April 1976.]

Most folks hardly notice the Phillips Hotel on the southeast corner of 2nd and Couch [one block down from where the Matt Talbot Center was at that time], but the 92-room hotel had a reputation up and down the coast as a clean, quiet, inexpensive place to stay.

On May 1 [1976] its doors will be closed. The regular core of thirty-five pensioners, some of whom have lived there as much as 20 years, and another 20 people staying there have mostly all moved out already. They have scattered "all over," said Erven Barber, who has managed the hotel for 28 years. They have moved to the east side [of the Willamette River], downtown [as little as a block south of the Skid Road area], other places in [the] Burnside [area]..., and some are leaving town.

[The owner]... cites high vacancy rate and the fact that... [the owner was] "losing money hand over fist" as the reasons for the closure. There are no immediate plans for an alternate use of the space.

The rents were the lowest in Burnside: \$36 a month for a regular room; \$25 a month or \$1.10 a night for the "cages." Although the regular rooms have been full, there was a high vacancy rate in the cages, which are tiny, chicken-wire-ceilinged rooms originally built to house shipyard workers during the war.

Moving — especially when you're old and have called a place home for 5 to 20 years — is a major hardship. So is the big jump in rent that people encounter.

"One fellow had to go to \$75," Barber said. "You can't get much for less than \$75 any more, you know."

Most of the tenants were resigned to the closure, Barber said. "Nobody's mad; it's not unexpected..."

LARRY

Larry was an older, white-haired man. He was Irish-looking, with a very beautiful smile. He was a typical street person at that time — he would drink when he had the opportunity and the money or when someone offered him a drink. He drank cheap wine, I remember. He was a tall man, so he probably wasn't as much victimized or at risk of being jack-rolled as others who were shorter or smaller. Every time I met Larry, I'd say, "Hello, Larry, how are you?" and he'd say, "Pretty good for a young feller." This was always his answer. He walked with a cane because he had broken either his leg or hip, but he was doing fine.

He was in one of the low-cost housing units at one point, but he had a hard time staying in hotels or being kept in one. If he left the wine alone, he'd be all right; but when he'd get on the wine, he'd get very sick and lose all control — and, of course, many of the hotel managers didn't feel that their hotel was a nursing home or that they should have to clean up after the people. So Larry would find himself without a place to live.

During this period, St. Francis Outreach, on Third Street, was a place where men could get many and varied types of assistance, such as money management and used clothing. Birthdays were celebrated, and, for those living in single room occupancies, some rooms would be cleaned by workers or volunteers. This was a wonderful resource and opportunity for people to get help when they needed it. Larry had a wonderful opportunity to return to the Midwest to visit relatives in the farming area where he was raised, and this was one of the things that St. Francis Outreach did for him.

The last I knew, Larry was sober and living in the Foster Hotel. I knew him as a very dear and very special person — always cheerful, always smiling, always happy. He never hurt anyone.

LENNY BRIDGEWATER

I met Lenny Bridgewater in the Holm Hotel, also called the Chicken Coop Flophouse. He was a little man and a heavy smoker; as I look back on him now, he probably had emphysema and possibly cancer. He used to be one of the desk clerks at this hotel.

I found out later that he really feared dying. It was startling for me to know that he was afraid of dying, because many of the men weren't afraid or didn't *seem* to be. I think for many of them it was a kind of relief to know that the struggle would be over — and it *was* such a struggle in those days.

Lenny was a pal of Oliver and Jack and some of the others that I have talked about [see stories of Oliver and Jack]. They would go fishing or camping with Oliver and would drink a lot. They were very good friends and they had a lot of good times together — getting drunk, swapping stories, and other things that they did. So I think that this part of Lenny's life was enjoyable for him, as I know it was for the others.

Later, Oliver told me that Lenny had died. He was one who died rather early during my ministry on Burnside and probably at a considerably young age — I think he was in his fifties. As far as I know, he died of lung disease or cancer. He was a dear person, and I really liked him a lot. He was a very quiet and gentle person who was thought a lot of by the rest of his buddies.

LES

There were several services in the early seventies down on Burnside that were a godsend and a blessing for the homeless. The name Burnside Projects probably covered the Burnside Hotel, the Drop-in Center on Couch Street between Second and Third, and, for a short time, the Cardinal Café. There was also a Clean-up Center in the basement of the Downtown Chapel, which possibly was also part of the Burnside Projects. Most of these services provided an alternative to sleeping under the bridges or in doorways. At the Clean-up Center, the men could shower and get an exchange of clean clothes for the ones they were wearing. The Drop-in Center was a small area beneath the Burnside Hotel, which provided shelter for the men who came in with their bedrolls and would sleep on the floor. During the day some of the men in the Drop-in Center would socialize and play cards. I used to provide tobacco, cigarette papers, and cigarette rollers for the men there who had none.

Now Les lived in the Burnside Hotel [208 Northwest Couch Street, second floor, now closed], which is currently La Patisserie and is right above the Jazz de Opus [neither of these latter entities exists in 2012]. The hotel was like a halfway house in a way, in that the men had to be sober and they had their own rooms. Where La Patisserie's kitchen is now was the kitchen of the hotel. I ate at this hotel many times when I first met Les.

Les was an obese man and a heavy smoker, probably in his forties, with kind of graying hair. He was a very pleasant person. I think that in this day and age we would probably look at him and say that there was a fair amount of denial in him about his alcoholism.

Les both helped in the hotel and had charge of the Clean-up Center. He proved to be pretty reliable and had that job for quite a number of years.

In those earlier days, after I had graduated from nursing and started on Skid Road, one of my instructors always used to ask if it would be okay if a group of students followed me around and helped me for a day. I would say yes; so, for a couple of years, she would cycle different groups through. The students always enjoyed the experience. Sometimes having them with me slowed me down a lot, particularly if there were more than one or two of them. Anyway, any time that I would bring these nursing students around I would also take them to the Clean-up Center, which would give them a good picture of some of the services in the area. Les would be always very courteous to them and explain how things worked. For him, his work was a mission; it was his contribution to the Skid Road people, and he was good to them. He got along fine; but if he was given some authority he would use it. He didn't let the men get by with a lot, though some could be very demanding. Maybe one of the men would want a better pair of shoes than he had been given, for example. And, of course, Les would have to be watchful, because if a man didn't really need the shoes he might take the second pair out and sell it for wine. In fact, some of the men weren't above taking the shoes off their own feet, selling them, and then later getting somebody to give them money to buy another pair.

After Les left the Burnside Projects, I don't know what he did for the next few years; I really didn't see him during this interim.

Then I got a call from someone one day, when I was working at De Paul Center, telling me that Les wasn't in very good shape. So I went over to see him in his hotel. He was still a very obese man and a heavy smoker, and he had severe heart problems at this point. I remember he used to huff and puff trying to get air to breath. I think he knew that his time was very limited, and he was prepared for that. We talked a little bit about this. At that time he gave me some photos, which I still have. He said, "I think you might like these. You're the only one left that I know of that would know some of these people." I went to see him a couple of other times, and he seemed to be doing all right; but then I heard that he had died.

Les had been a good person who really had a sense of ministry in his job and

a dedication to it.

I think it is still one of my regrets that working at De Paul for those ten years from 1982 to 1992, as involved as I was, took away the kinds of visits and type of ministry that I really love, which is visiting the people and doing what I can for them, spontaneously, as the need arises — not just to work in one agency in one place (as was the case at De Paul), but to be a little freer than this. I missed this activity, even knowing that by that time there were many social services in the area that covered much of what I had done earlier, in the seventies. There were by then a public health clinic, an alcohol & drug treatment center, and money management for some, to name a few of these services. I felt then, and still feel, that the spontaneity and going where I feel called have been at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and I am sure that working at De Paul was also part of responding to the Spirit.

LESLIE BRUNELLE

Leslie Brunelle was somebody I knew during the first couple of years that I worked down on Burnside. He was rather tall, had black curly hair, brown eyes, and was rather nice-looking. I remember him with a good feeling. I liked him. He was always kind of gentle, never obnoxious, never a problem. He was often in need of housing and other services.

Leslie's health was declining because of his drinking. In those days, many of the men would drink "Rub-a-dub", which was rubbing alcohol mixed with pop, to make it more palatable. It was pretty lethal, and it was *hard* on the men. I could smell its strong odor, which I don't know how to describe. Some of them would have so much of this in them that, when I would get near, all I would be able to smell would be *not* the alcohol that I knew, but the smell of *raw* alcohol.

Leslie Brunelle died in about 1973.

LEWIS

I believe I first met Lewis at Harmony House. I knew him a long time, and we would see each other at different times on the streets, in the halfway house, and also at the detox center. He had brown, wavy hair, and he was gentle. I remember he'd remain sober for a while, then he'd start drinking and have to be out of the house.

One time, I was working at the detox center, and he told me that he was gay. He said, "It's very, very hard, because you get older, and the one you were with, who you loved, now wants somebody younger. It's hard." At that time he was in his forties and I didn't think of him as old (he was younger than I was!). Then he added, "I've often wanted to commit suicide. There doesn't seem to be much in life for me; it's hard for me. I don't seem to be making it this way."

On another occasion, we had a conversation in a small café. I asked how he was and how he was doing. I said I had seen him not too long ago and he hadn't looked too well; he said that he had been sick. It wasn't a long time after that visit that I heard he had been found dead.

Like so many other people, he died prematurely of his alcoholism. He was lonely in his lifestyle, but he kept trying to find happiness. He never really hurt anybody. I always had a special feeling for Lewis. It was hard to see him not make it in spite of his efforts, and to know that he died of his disease.

FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Development of Kate's Vocation to Become a Nun

Ron: Where did your vocation to become a nun come from, and how did it develop? You told me that, at the time of your eighth grade year as a boarder at St. Mary of the Valley School in Beaverton [Oregon], the last thing you ever dreamt of becoming was a nun. So someone might naturally ask, "Then where did your vocation come from?" Unlike so many of the other questions I have put to you during the course of this project, *this* question may be harder for you to answer because it is not about the people and the world around you, but about your own inner world.

Kate: That question is, as you have indicated, a little harder to answer. Actually, a vocation comes from God. It's an inner desire that a person feels that possibly they are being asked to serve God in a special way.

I don't remember as a child that I thought I wanted to be a Sister. I attended first and second grades in Winnipeg [Manitoba, Canada] in a Catholic parochial school, but in Skagway [Alaska] I attended public grade school. I remember there were some Sisters who came to Skagway — Sisters of Saint Anne. They weren't associated with a school, but one of them was a music teacher, and I took piano from her for a while. Then when my parents decided to send me from Skagway down to Beaverton as an eighth grader, to board at St. Mary of the Valley School [operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon], classmate friends of mine said, "Oh, *you'll* become a nun like Clair did!" (Clair was one of my friends) and I said, "Oh no I *won't*!"

Well, I went to St. Mary's [the boarding school in Beaverton], and I found the Sisters very loving and nurturing. Being away from home for a solid year had an influence on me, and I decided I would like to be a Sister.

Two years later, and probably against the better judgment of my parents, I asked to enter [become a member of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon religious order], and the Community accepted me. By that time they accepted fifteen-year-olds, and I had just turned fifteen.

When I had first asked to be a Sister, I don't think I was aware at all, really, of the rules and regulations that were involved, and of the separation that was required from everyone other than the novitiate members and the Professed Sisters, [the latter of] whom we had to deal with either through education or as directors.

Keeping the rules for me was very difficult at that time. I was breaking silence rules and rules of separation — speaking to the girls, for example, which was forbidden. Since I had been a boarder so recently, I was still in the same classes as many of the girls I had known, which made it even more difficult to keep the rules. After nine months in the religious life, I was asked to go home, and to come back when I was older. I always felt that I had been "kicked out," because I didn't really want to leave. I remember crying and asking if I could continue, saying that I would keep the rules, but it was against their better judgment to do that, and I've never regretted since that this happened.

During the interval when I was out, I finished my high school education in Victoria [B.C., Canada], where my dad had been transferred from Skagway as an immigration officer. Also, I became interested in two areas: nursing and missionary work. I think I got the idea for both of these ministries from different things I had read about the Maryknoll Sisters.

When I finished high school and began to think about what I was going to do, I hesitated to go back to St. Mary's because they did not have nursing at that time and

they also didn't have any foreign missions. But I made a rosary novena with three others — a classmate; Brother English, an Irish Christian Brother; and a Sister who, as a nurse, had taught us home nursing and first aid in our senior year and had made the comment that I would make a good nurse. These three made the novena with me in an effort to help me discern where God might be inviting me, and before it was half over I knew without any further thought that I would be going back to St. Mary's. I re-entered the Community, then, in 1940, as a postulant.

Ron: Kate, I've never had a vocation to the priesthood or to religious life, so I am curious to know how you thought this through. I mean the whole idea of not marrying, for example — or were this and similar thoughts about what you were getting into just not conscious thoughts of yours at that time? [See also *From the Interview Sessions: On Celibacy*.]

Kate: I came from a family that... well, I wouldn't call them *religious*, really. We did say grace at meals. And we were taught to say our night prayers when we were very small. We went to Sunday Mass. We went to First Friday devotions. But in Skagway I was attending a public school, so I didn't think much about a vocation.

With the Catholic education in the eighth grade, however, I began to see Sisters that I admired and respected. I remember at one point saying to my eighth grade teacher, "How do you know when you have a vocation?" and she gave me a holy card with a poem. I remember the title of the poem was "I Wish I Had a Vocation," and the poem went like this [Kate recited this verbatim on the spot]:

"I wish I had a vocation, I heard a little girl say, and I thought, 'Little girl, the Christ Call is given to you this day. For not amidst thunder speaks Jesus when he calls to his chosen few; he quietly leads them to wonder why they may not follow him, too.' I wish I had a vocation, I heard a little girl say, and I thought, 'Little girl, the Christ Call is given to you this day.'"

Now, in a way, I think that probably speaks of what goes on — you begin to wonder if God might be calling you to serve him in a special way.

At *that* point, as a child, it didn't seem unappealing to me at all. But I think that nowadays when people enter religious life they enter with far more life experiences and knowledge of what religious life is all about, and they think it through very carefully. Still, it's Christ calling, and you don't have to answer the call; you may or may not. I'm sure that lots of people decide, "No, I don't want to be a religious," and maybe *that* would be a sign that they didn't have a vocation at that point.

Also, much later in religious life, I began to realize that sometimes there would be what is termed "temporary vocations." In other words, a young woman would enter religious life, and maybe after ten or fifteen years, she would realize that God was calling her to something else, and she would leave the Community and later marry and have a wonderful family. I remember reading that in a periodical, and it was an article that impressed me at the time because it gave *me* better feelings about those I had known in religious life who had left. I mourned their loss, inasmuch as they were friends; but I think it was actually a fact that theirs were temporary vocations.



FROM THE TIMES

To Feel Useful — To Contribute

[Excerpts from "He sweeps NW streets without pay," an article by Lionel Fisher, correspondent, The Oregonian newspaper, date unknown (circa 1980?). Reprinted with permission of L. Fisher.]

Oblivious to everyone around him, he attacks the sidewalk with a large industrial broom, never lifting his gaze from the pavement. Almost frantically, with a seeming air of desperation, he pushes the dust and litter into neat piles, foraging occasionally in the gutter for a discarded bottle or crumpled cigarette pack. With the aid of a small dustpan, he scoops the mounds of trash into a cardboard box, then hastens on.

He has swept the streets of Old Town [Skid Road] in this fashion for the past eight years, working frantically, compulsively, in no discernible pattern. "He's usually already out there by the time I open at 8:30," said Harry Steinberg, 76, who has watched the frail, stooped figure through the window of his shoe repair shop ever since Cacciopoli began. [Mr. Steinberg's shop was across from the Matt Talbot Center.]

"Someone told me he starts at dawn. I once saw him at 1 in the morning, right out in the middle of Burnside. He jumps into the street without warning. I'm afraid he'll get killed one day."

The street sweeper of Old Town is a familiar figure to the residents, shopkeepers and drifters of the Northwest Portland neighborhood. Only a few people know anything about him, though. One of them, and perhaps the person closest to Cacciopoli, is Max Frohman, 85, owner of the United Clothing store on Northwest Third Avenue where it runs into West Burnside Street.

"Most people think he's crazy," Frohman said. "He has a severe speech impediment, but he's nobody's fool. He doesn't drink, and he won't take a dime from anyone. He just wants to clean the streets. It's something he has to do. I think it keeps him alive."

Cacciopoli [...] answers with a guttural "a—a—a" when spoken to. This speech impediment discourages conversation.

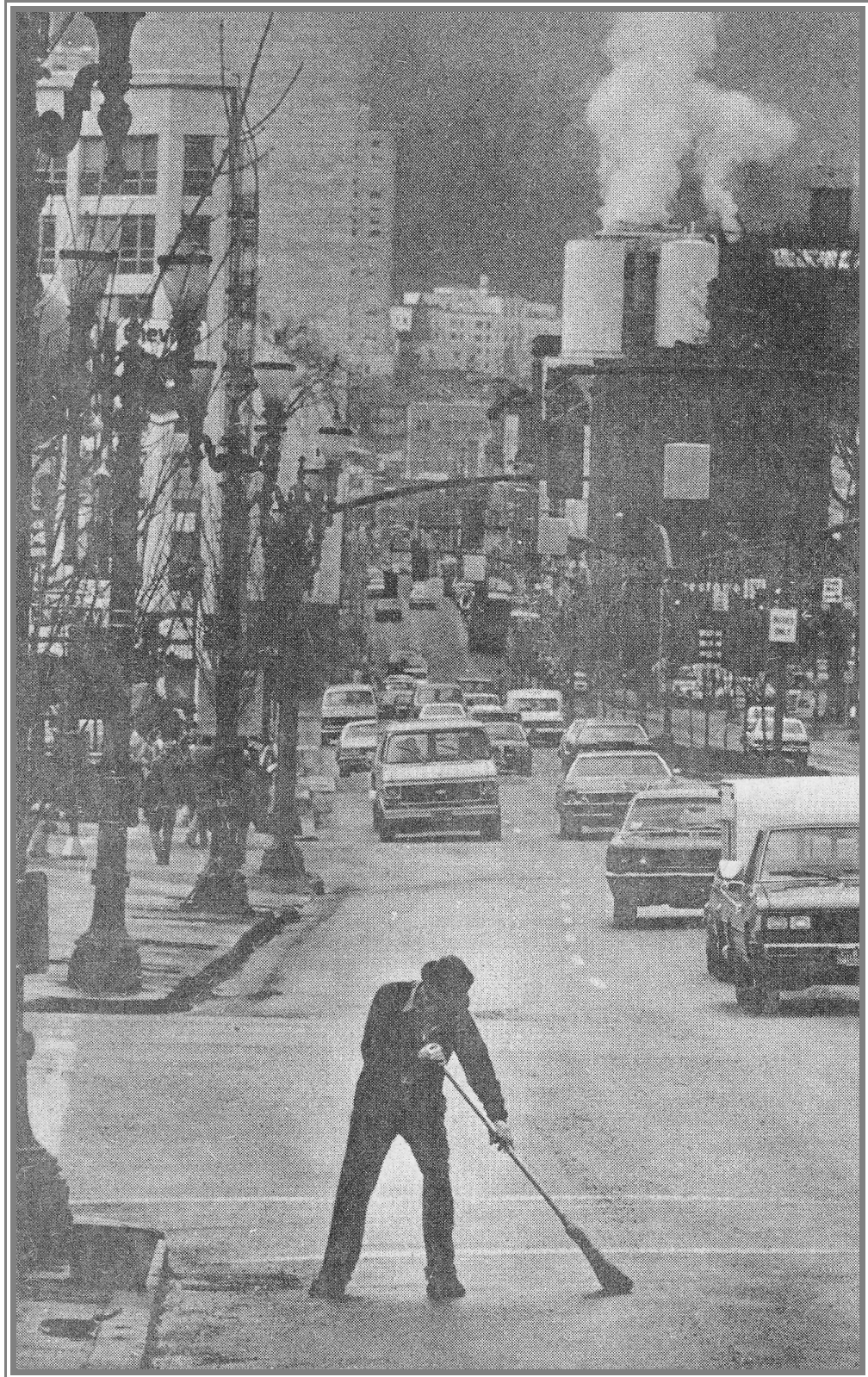
Frohman, whose store has been a landmark in the skid road area for 63 years, receives Cacciopoli's Social Security check [...] and does it to the old street sweeper in the form of several dollars a day. "I sort of look out for him," Frohman said. "He comes to me for the few little things he needs. He doesn't bother with anyone else, and he never complains. His whole life is sweeping the streets."

[...] "That old man really works hard," shoemaker Steinberg said with a tinge of wonder in his voice. "He'll get down on his knees just to pick up a matchstick. I've seen him in the pouring rain, scooping garbage out of the gutter. Sometimes he'll lie right down and reach under cars. He'll come to something ground into the sidewalk and scratch away at it with his fingernails. He'll fetch water in a tin can to wash away some spit."

"The longer he's out there, the lower he'll crouch. It must really kill his back. I've seen him so tired he'll literally be shaking."

Asked [...] [why he thinks Cacciopoli does it,] Frohman said, "Sure I know why — for the same reasons I still work at 85. To keep busy. To feel useful. To contribute. Maybe it keeps his mind off himself. Maybe it helps him sleep at night."

[See next page for photo of Joe Cacciopoli, which did not appear in article above. Photo is from The Oregonian, date unknown. Used with permission.]



Photographer Tim Jewett/The Oregonian

Letter to the Editor

[A letter to the editor, in Hobo News, Spring 1985. Author not indicated in original source.]

Dear Neighbors,

I don't really live in the Burnside Community, but I do work here. That means I spend about 10 hours a day here, shop at the same markets (Ray's and Maletis') [two small grocery stores on Skid Road] that you do, and walk across the Burnside Bridge a couple of times a day.

And every day, several of you ask me for money: 6, 14, 22 cents... or whatever. And I don't give it to you.

It seems only fair to tell you *why* I don't give it to you. I'm afraid you're going to buy wine with it. A lot of you have problems (who doesn't?); but of all your problems, alcohol has got to be the worst. (This is equally true of guys in suits.)

I'm no evangelist and I have no hidden message. I'm just telling you what I see.

I'll tell you what I do instead of giving you handouts on the street.

I pay taxes, which pay for the street-cleaners that clean up the broken bottles and sandwich wrappers you leave in the neighborhood (I've never figured out why you can't use the trash cans like everyone else does); which also pays for the police who keep the bitterest among you from annihilating the merely unlucky; and which pay for the ambulances which pick you up when you're sick.

I bring recyclables and clean, useful goods to Baloney Joe's [a night shelter].

I hire people from the Burnside Job Corps to do odd jobs.

I donate money to the Burnside Community Council.

Once in a blue moon when someone asks for food instead of money, I'll buy him food.

What I'm trying to tell you is that even if people don't give you change on the street, that doesn't mean that they don't support you. Some of us choose to give to the organizations that give you something good instead of helping you buy things that give you something bad.



Hobo News

The Voice Of The Burnside Community

Spring 1985

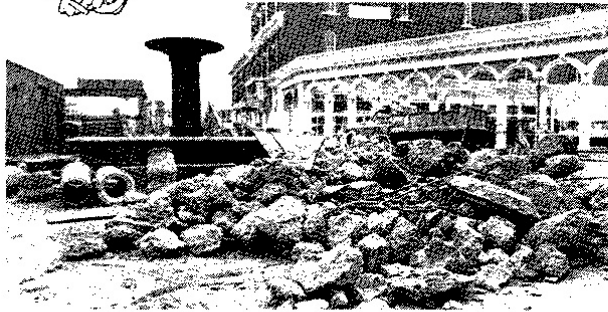


photo by Robert Collins

The Many Faces Of The Street

by Carol Alelyunas

BURNSIDE IS A CHANGING COMMUNITY. This is something we experience. I've been experiencing the Burnside Community for over 8 years. This isn't very long in my life, but it's a long time on Burnside. One big change is the attention the community is getting now. The world outside of Burnside recognizes that the homeless "live" in the Burnside Community — even if they are just passing through. In spite of the city planners' predicting that the Burnside Community will just melt away as the bus mall and local businesses build up property values, Burnside is still there. There are more street people than ever on 3rd and 6th. The Drop-In, missions and Baloney Joe's are overcrowded. Burnside folk are walking back and forth across the bridge from Union and Grand.

In terms of money and services coming into the area, Burnside is gaining. Some of the old hotels, the Butte, the Biltmore and the Broadway have been renovated and are going to be open for a

long time. There is more money for alcohol treatment, for CMI services and for emergency housing in the winter. Baloney Joe's is open at night as well as in the daytime, and serves meals. There are meals available at the Estate. The Burnside Job Corps takes up some of the slack from the State Employment office which can't begin to supply jobs for all the people in the area.

But the overwhelming feeling about Burnside is not gain but loss. The loss of the old hotels and stores that have closed is obvious. The loss that is subtler and harder to assimilate is the old familiar faces that are gone....Lord Byron, Frank Simmons, Frantz, Cletus, Merl and the others.

No matter how many new people come to the area, we still miss them. Some of them went on to other places and a new life, but too many went down to sickness, accidents, old age, hard times and death.

And for every face that passes on, — more hungry souls take their place.

Mayor Studies Portland Homeless Community

by Christopher Craske

Since the general theme of this issue of *Hobo News* is "Change on Burnside", this reporter and his wife tracked down Portland's new Mayor, Bud Clark to see if he could be pinned down to a more specific agenda than has surfaced in other media.

Mayor Clark is obviously very concerned with the plight of Portland's homeless and while he admitted he "just doesn't know" the answers at this point, he is busy setting up a task force to study and recommend long term solutions. He feels strongly that up to now most efforts have been reactive, "band-aid" solutions and the goal of his task force will be to formulate long term, permanent answers.

Among the areas Clark prioritized as urgent are permanent solutions to basic human needs such as Shelter and Food. According to Clark, "Once these basic needs are met, people can begin to take stock of their situation and hopefully begin to strive for change in their lives' directions."

Some fundamental things that Clark would like to see on Burnside include increased efforts to work with alcohol and drug dependant people. He would like to see funding that would provide

cont. on page 2



If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

John F. Kennedy

Cover of issue of *Hobo News* in which article on previous page appeared.

MARK

Mark was an exceptionally skilled worker at carpentry. He was a red-headed, blue-eyed, loving, teddy bear of a man. For a short time he lived in Harmony House, on Southeast Twentieth and Taylor, and after he was sober for a while he moved back in with his wife, a few blocks from the halfway house.

After Mark moved, I sometimes would get a call from his wife asking me to come and see him; she'd be afraid that he was going to fall and hurt himself, he'd be so drunk. She loved him a lot. She'd try to pick him up if he fell, but it was impossible, so Scott and I would go to help her [see Scott's story]. I remember sitting on the side of his bed talking, and saying, "Mark, are you ready to go to detox?" "Naa...aah, Sister Kathleen, I'd do anything for you, but don't ask me to do that." I used to be called to their house often, and I usually would get somebody to come with me from Harmony House because I knew it would take more than just one person talking and trying to get him into the car to go to detox. Sometimes we would be successful.

Sometimes, too, when Mark was drunk, he would be mean to his wife, and the next thing I heard was that he was not with her anymore; she had left him.

Mark eventually got sober and remained so, and I remember I went over to see him a couple of times. He was a sweet person and a very good man, and it was great to see him sober! I was hoping to get to see him again because he was one of the earlier memories of my ministry and he was doing fine, but he died in the meantime. Mark died of cancer, but he died sober.

MARTIN SANDUCCI

Martin Sanducci was someone I knew on the streets before I knew him in any of the hotels. I used to see him around on the streets in the Burnside area, *sweeping*, with his broom and a dustpan. And he didn't just sweep the sidewalks or the gutters; he would be out in the middle of the street — for instance, on Third and Burnside during heavy traffic time! There Martin would be, bent down, sweeping up these little piles of debris of cigarette butts or *whatever* he saw. This was an obsession with him, because you almost always saw him doing it. There was a picture of him in the newspaper that showed this. When I'd stop and say, "Hello, Martin," he had a *beautiful*, sweet smile, and he would respond, "Oh. Oh. Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. How are you?" and nod his head — his responses would often be very quick and short like this. He was very special.

The next part of Martin's life involved living in the Matt Talbot Center, where he did fine as long as he would be on his medications. I remember that he came in to see me once or twice in my office at Matt Talbot and that, one of those times or both times, he had written me a note that said, "Please help me. I need to go to the hospital." We would talk a few minutes, and I *did* get him to a hospital. But as time went on I found out that he had a pattern where, apparently, if he either needed medication or was running out of medication he would want to go to the hospital and be re-evaluated.

Martin had paranoid tendencies and behavior; he would sometimes disturb the whole hotel and *s-c-r-e-a-m* out the window, saying, "They are putting hot wires in my ears!" Usually, I think, this type of behavior would occur when he wasn't taking his medication as directed. It must have been pure agony for him to go through this sort of thing, actually feeling that people were burning him or hurting him.

When he would be feeling well enough, he seemed to always have money to buy candy. He ate a *lot* of candy but was a very thin man. He would go back to the Midwest at times, to Minnesota, and visit some relatives, and then he would always come back and stay in the hotel.

When Matt Talbot closed, I believe that Martin moved into the Home Hotel, on Third Street; and his behavior was a problem there too. I had talked to the manager about him, and they began to get help for him when he needed it — they'd take him to a hospital, for example, or call for transportation for him. And then I think he probably was more permanently placed in a group facility where his medications were supervised and he could receive the care he needed.

Martin was very dear, and he was always very intent and very intense in whatever he was doing. He was a very smart man, I believe, and he appreciated anybody taking the time to realize that he had a problem or to listen to him.

MATTHEW

Matthew was a man I met when I was working at Harmony House, which was a halfway house for men who were alcoholics. He had come into the House and into the program. The program was low-key: the men were expected to go to work if they could, they had group meetings, and they met individually for counseling with some of the staff (including me at that time). They didn't have to come to us from detox; they could move into the House just on the basis that they were alcoholic and wanted to remain sober.

Matthew was a loveable fellow and a great big man. He had come from Arkansas. He had been married, had a daughter, and hadn't seen wife or daughter for thirteen years. He had left the home and them at some point, and gone around the country drinking, basically, until coming into Harmony House.

As he began to sober up and maybe see a different way of going on in life, he wanted to contact his ex-wife and see his daughter. He went through the Red Cross for this, I believe, and was able to obtain his wife's address and make a contact with her. She had married again but didn't have a husband at that point because that marriage had ended in divorce or death (I don't recall which).

So Matthew went to kind of get reacquainted with her and with his daughter, and eventually they remarried. I don't know how it worked out, but I do know that he came back to Portland and back into the House again; he didn't stay very long, though (maybe several weeks), before he returned to Arkansas. It's my assumption that something had bothered him, that something had happened that made him temporarily leave the relationship — run, which is so typical of the alcoholic. He had been gone from Portland for several years, and, when he came back that second time, I don't recall if he came to us from detox or if he just simply came, knowing that he wanted to stay sober.

And that's really the last I heard of Matthew.

I remember that one of the funny ways he used to tease me was by saying, "Why won't you marry me and come back to Arkansas and raise 'how-ogs?'" — he would say "hogs" in a funny way.

Matthew was a delightful person who went on to recovery and hopefully was able to remain in recovery after returning to his family.

MAURICE LECHNER

Maurice worked at the Home Hotel, on Third Street. Before that, he had been in the Chicken Coop Flophouse; but when Ed and Gina retired from managing the Home, Lechner took over there [see Ed & Gina's story]. He was pretty much an alcoholic, and at one point he realized what was happening to him from the drinking and he tried to quit. I remember when he told me he hadn't had a drink for about a month; even a few weeks without alcohol for some is a long, long time. But then he started to drink again, managing the hotel satisfactorily even so.

Different owners bought that hotel over the years and fixed it up inside. They wallpapered part of the lobby. They put a little pot-bellied stove in the lobby, and the men would sit around it. There was a card table near the stove, and the men would play cards there sometimes. The owners made a nice bathroom out of what used to be just a cruddy dark little room; they tiled and painted it, and they put in some wash basins.

I was still calling Maurice and stopping to see him in 1988, but by then the hotel had a much different clientele than it used to have. For one thing, they had begun taking women. It was just a different kind of set-up by then, and there weren't too many people that I still knew.

MEL AND HARVEY

Mel:

I met Mel during my first visit to the soup line at Blanchet House. He was the live-in manager at the time. People used to think of him as bossy, even kind of autocratic or dictatorial. He would not tolerate any disturbance in the soup line. He would yell at "the crew" — as he called them. He didn't just talk to them; he'd get out his megaphone and call out his orders. He wasn't very popular because of this.

Mel had a generous side, though. If, for example, people came and asked for a cigarette, he would give them one, and he never put them out unless they were drunk or being disruptive.

He was also the most observant person I ever knew. He noticed any change in physical appearance. For example, at first when he knew me, I was wearing the veil; but later, when I stopped wearing the veil, if I had done anything to my hair, he would notice it, and he'd say, "You cut your hair," or, "You've got your hair longer."

When Mel would have a vacation, the men used to say he'd go and stay in a hotel. He never walked the streets; they said he was afraid to because he used to kick people out of Blanchet if they were drinking or causing trouble, and he was afraid he might meet them on the street and they might try to get in a fight with him. He used to have fear because people used to threaten him. Mel was a small man, and so was no match for some of the larger men, especially if they were angry.

One day — it was sad — a terrible incident took place. After the soup line was finished, and while the place was being cleaned up, Harvey, who was living at Blanchet, came up to Mel with a meat cleaver and started to hit him on the head with the cleaver until Mel was knocked down. Then he kept hitting Mel while he was on the floor, and he said, "You'll die now." This incident happened so fast that no one was able to intervene until it was too late. Somebody did come at a certain point and take the meat cleaver away and give Harvey a cup of coffee, while another one called the police. Harvey didn't struggle; he just waited.

That was a very, very sad and violent ending for Mel. He had been at Blanchet for over twenty years before he was killed. He had already been there for twelve years when I first went there in 1970. It was a sad way to die, and it reminded me of those times before, when he had been afraid to walk the streets alone because he feared that something might happen.

Harvey:

Harvey was a nice-looking man with bright blue eyes. I would say he was in his forties. He used to wear a suit coat with a leather belt around the outside of it. Often I would see him going through the circular cement trash containers downtown, sometimes taking out part of a sandwich.

Most of the people that I talk about on Burnside had their drinking problems. Many were alcoholics, yet not everybody down there was. Harvey, for example, I never saw drunk. He was just mentally sick.

Both the prosecuting and the defense attorneys came to Matt Talbot Center and asked if I knew anything about a man named Harvey, because they were trying to gather all the facts and information that they could. I kept a little card file, with a 3" x 5" card on most of the people I saw; I would write their name, age, religion, whether they were a veteran, what service I could give them, and so on.

On the card for Harvey — though he had come only for a cold remedy — I had written the statement that he had been done out of three to five million dollars more or less. I don't remember the exact number, but I do remember writing "more or less," which I had written down as he said it — and *that* was enough to trigger my memory. I remembered being uncomfortable when he was in my office because of the types of things he was saying. He said, for example, that he helped assassinate President

Kennedy, that he helped assassinate Martin Luther King, and that he had no use for the Roman Catholic Church and didn't want anything to do with it. I was uneasy also because he knew I was a nun.

I was subpoenaed, and the lawyers asked for the card from my file. They were trying to prove that Harvey was criminally insane.

Soon after I arrived in the courtroom, they brought Harvey in; of course, his hands were handcuffed behind his back. I remember that he looked at me and smiled and said, "Ohhhh... hello, Sister Kathleen."

"Hello, Harvey."

"How's everything down on Burnside?"

"It's pretty busy."

"I'll be back down there again pretty soon."

And I thought, "I hope not!"

I wasn't called upon to say anything in the courtroom, but somebody did say, "Sister Kathleen is present, and she has a card that the attorney asked for."

They really tried to get a lot of facts. They had gone back to Harvey's school records in Minnesota, which showed nothing out of the ordinary. At the time of the court hearing, he was claiming that his parents weren't his parents and that he was a son of Satan. It was very weird. His mother and father and aunt were in the courtroom, and it must have been very sad for them.

When I stopped to think about it, Harvey was probably already sick when I saw him in my office before the murder. But I think no one would have ever thought of him as being violent — except, of course, when he talked about the assassinations I mentioned earlier and his anger at the Pope. The murder aside, I don't think Harvey would have ever done anything at Blanchet that would have caused a problem; he wasn't that kind of person. But he was obviously irritated at something that triggered his actions. Maybe Mel had corrected him for something, or maybe Mel's authoritarian ways got to him. At the time of the court hearing, the two Jesuit novices who were volunteering at Blanchet at the moment of the murder had no recollection of any problem that had occurred which could explain Harvey's actions.

So Harvey, I'm sure, is probably still put away for the criminally insane. I doubt he will ever be released, with that kind of crime behind him.

some Blanchet House history

When I first was associated with Blanchet House, there were some dormitories upstairs where people slept. Remaining sober was one condition the men had to meet in order to remain there; they also had to work, preparing the two meals that Blanchet House provided to the street people daily. The men had to get up early in the morning to prepare the six-thirty breakfast — they served between two- and three-hundred people at breakfast. The eating area accommodated only fifty at a time; so, as each man finished, another took his place. After that, they would clean up and start preparing for the soup line at noon.

Usually the lunch consisted of soup and bread, and any other foods that may have been donated. During the lunch, the men would see that there was enough bread and other supplies on the table and do whatever else was needed. The street people got their hot food in a line and then sat down wherever there was an empty place at a table. There was always a big tray of bread at each table, and people could take it with them; they could get a paper bag or an empty bread bag to put the extras in. There were also donated pastries and sometimes fruit, which, if there were extras, the people could take with them as well.

After the soup line was finished, the area would be prepared for the next day. This was done in sort of an assembly-line fashion. The tables would be cleared; then some of the men would wash the tables, and others would follow to rinse and dry them. Next, they'd put the benches on the tables, and the floor would be swept and mopped. After this, they would go upstairs to the dormitories. Blanchet House was kept clean —

it had to be in order to meet the requirements for serving meals to the public.

The house workers would eat an early dinner. It would be a more bountiful meal than the food in the soup line had been; after all, they had done all the work, they had worked hard, and they deserved a hearty meal.

There is a farm in Carlton [Oregon] that Blanchet owned. It was called Blanchet Farm. George Dawson, the director of Blanchet House at that time — and a very good and generous Irish Catholic man — spent time out there, and he had some street people spend time there as well. Blanchet raised nuts and prunes, and men lived there throughout the year. It used to be George's dream that quite a few of the street people would go out there and spend the winter; they would have warmth and food, and they could work a little bit and be away from the streets. But a lot of the people didn't want to be that far away from Burnside for so long; they would be there for a while and then move back to town.

At one time there had been a chapel at Blanchet House, where Mass was occasionally held, but by the time that I became involved with Blanchet, the board would have Mass in the Downtown Chapel every Saturday morning and hold a board meeting afterwards. George would be there, of course, and I attended once or twice.

After the Studebaker that I had at one point would no longer run, George gave me thirteen-hundred dollars to get a new car; I guess he had talked it over with the board. I bought a Rambler for \$1300 exactly. And Blanchet used to pay my gas and oil for years, until they couldn't afford it anymore; by then, my Community was able to pay for it.



Photo Gallery IV: The Men

There is no formal photo gallery of the men, here or elsewhere — regrettably. The original idea with the gallery was to honor *all* of the men from the stories in picture form. But only very few photos of the men were available, and the contexts of many of these did not seem appropriate. In addition, it was desirable (however impossible) to present the men collectively as a unified body, without any of them missing and with their sense of solidarity with each other left more in tact than would have been possible using only a few photos. As a result, I decided not to use *any* of the photos in my possession but rather to remember the men "pictorially" here in a manner which, admittedly oddly and ironically, is void of *all* images.

Though here you do not see the men in pictures, yet through their stories you see them all and know them more in their depth than most any photo gallery or camera's eye could disclose, for yours has been an invitation to journey inside their private worlds, rarely seen.

Sequentially this "gallery" has been placed between the two Skid Road years galleries which, symbolically, puts it surrounded by Kate.

So hold to your own unique visualization of each man, as suggested by the narrative about him and influenced by your own life experiences. Surround that image with a frame of dignity. And in some privileged corner of your mind's eye, honor it closely for as long as time will allow.

-Ron

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*"I never distinguish loves."  
(a.k.a. "What is love, anyway?")*

*[This interview session is different from the others in that it deals with a subject Kate was not expecting and goes in a direction I had not planned. The idea for the session came to me after a statement about love in her life that Kate had made during a previous interview session, a statement which had left me puzzled and wanting to know more, and one which — as I found out below — I had misinterpreted. The interview turned out to be mainly a light-hearted session and is offered here in that spirit; it also gives further insight into Kate.]*

*It occurred to me after the interview that Kate's understanding of love may be far more intuitive and basic than analytical and logical, and be more all-inclusive than limited and prone to discriminate. For her it may be true that love cannot and need not be bound by labels and definitions and by the barriers to loving that often result from them.*

*Kate's experiences of life seem boundless at times — both in number and variety — and her candor, as evidenced below, has always the welcome flavors of joy, reality, and the uncomplicated.*

*Both of us get caught off guard here, and the spontaneity and transparency that ensue have a freshness that I trust will be appreciated. -Ron]*

**Ron:** You recently said in one of the interviews, and I assume you meant it — you said, "I always fall in love with different people all the time." Then you laughed and made a couple of other statements that seemed to me to clearly support a particular meaning. [Ron and Kate start laughing at this point, though still serious.] And I didn't get specific about it that day because I wasn't sure I wanted to know. I didn't ask if you meant *really* fall in love... or what. And I don't really need to know (unless you want to say something). But I... [realizing Kate might want to say something] I don't know if you want to say something.

**Kate:** Every so often I meet somebody that I, I just, I use the *term* "fall in love with"... that I could or I just dearly love. And I don't know how to explain that exactly. Like I'll see somebody at Our House [a resident at Our House of Portland, a care facility for individuals with late-stage AIDS, and where Kate volunteers], and, I haven't fallen in love with all of them, but — like I fell in love with Ben. I just dearly love Ben. I just fell in love with Ben.

**Ron:** [sure of himself] You're talking about Platonic love.

**Kate:** Uh, you want to explain that? I never distinguish loves.

**Ron:** [Ron laughs in surprise] You're not talking about romantic love.

**Kate:** Well, no, I'm not talking about... [hesitation]... no... [hesitation]... well?... [hesitation]... no [Ron is laughing] — all right, what can be part of Platonic love?

**Ron:** Platonic love is what *we* have. You and I.

**Kate:** Oh.

**Ron:** We're not romantically involved. I don't—

**Kate:** Well what do you mean by romantically involved?

**Ron:** [pauses searching for an answer, then sighs, confused and frustrated] What do I mean by [starts laughing, then Kate joins in] romantic?! I mean you don't want to [hesitation]... kiss me romantically or be in that kind of relationship with me.

**Kate:** No.

**Ron:** Right.

**Kate:** But kissing — yeah I've kissed people.

**Ron:** Yeah but—

**Kate:** I kiss.

**Ron:** I know, but you don't mean romantically, do you?

**Kate:** Well, no. I guess I — just friends.

**Ron:** Well that's Platonic love. But in one of the interview questions, you said, "I always fall in love with different people all the time" — those were your words. And I didn't know if you meant that at times in your life you have been romantically in love with someone... or—

**Kate:** Well I'm not going to tell you about my love life in the past; that has nothing to do with my ministry.

No. I've never — I've been *proposed to* in my ministry.

**Ron:** You mean by what's his name [one of the men whose stories has been told].

**Kate:** By several.

**Ron:** By several?

**Kate:** Well the one said, "When are you gonna take that veil off and marry me?" My answer was, "When are you going to stop drinking?" Well that ended *that* proposal.

**Ron:** Well I didn't mean to get into romantic love, but you did say what you said and I wasn't exactly sure what you meant. So this maybe negates the whole point of my question, which was going to be if you ever—

**Kate:** [interrupting abruptly] No. [Ron laughs at having been cut off at such a point.] No. I never was romantically, where I thought I'd like to make a future with this person or something like that. No.

**Ron:** Right.

Well, that... that knocks out the reason for the interview question.

**Kate:** It would be interesting just to hear what else you have on that page! [the page Ron is reading the question from]

**Ron:** Well, my question was if you were—

**Kate:** You didn't read it all.

**Ron:** I didn't read it all. No.

**Kate:** That's what I thought.

**Ron:** Well... so [Ron decides to read the question after all]... "Why did you not leave the celibate life of a Sister in favor of exploring a relationship with a man and having a family?"

**Kate:** Okay.

**Ron:** See? That's pointless now.

**Kate:** Because it's the same reason why I didn't leave the Church. I felt committed. I mean, I love the Church and I love my vocation. Although there were times when I would renew my vows in the chapel after Communion, which we used to do as SSMOs [Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon], which I would do privately — times where I would say, "*I want to want my vows. I want to want my vows.*" I couldn't at that time honestly say, "*I want my vows.*"

**Ron:** Are you saying there were times when you wondered if you might not want to be married and have children?

**Kate:** No. I don't think I came up with that as much as thinking, "Is this the life for me?" I didn't think about it as going out and marrying somebody and having a family; I just was not so sure that living in Community life... was the life I wanted to live.

But it didn't take me too long to discern that yes, I wanted to stay.

But when I went through that period "*I want to want the vows*" — if after that I had said that I didn't want them, then I probably would have looked into the procedure of getting dispensed [of her vows and leaving the religious life]. But it wouldn't have been because I knew somebody or wanted somebody — because how did I know if anybody would even want me?

Once I got into teaching and Burnside ministry and things like that [pausing as though finished]...

**Ron:** You didn't have those thoughts anymore.

**Kate:** I don't think so.



## FROM THE TIMES

### *When Work Is More Than Just a Job*

*[Excerpts from "I Wish I Could Serve 'Em Like My Sister Kate," an article by Roger Repohl, N.S.J., in U.S. Catholic, October 1978. Reprinted with permission of R. Repohl.]*

[...] Working out of a little office in the heart of the Row [Skid Road], she [Kate] treats minor medical problems, dispenses vitamins and nonprescription drugs, refers people to hospitals and alcohol-treatment facilities, finds the homeless a place to stay and pays their rent if necessary, buys them coffee and cigarettes, and listens.

"This is probably the worst hotel in Portland," she says as we trudge up the drab stairway. The stairs lead to the second floor "lobby" which looks more like a subway station: one large unlit room filled with men — sitting, lying, pacing, killing time. The room is guarded by what resembles a ticket booth. Behind the cage is a short man with a square face and a baseball cap; a sign on top of the cage says, "No Rooms To Day [sic]." Sister Kathleen asks him about some of the residents. The desk clerk tells her what he knows. A big gray man weaves up to the window and mumbles to her that he is behind in his rent here; she tells the clerk to pay him up through the month and put it on her tab.

She walks down the hallway to one enormous green room divided into cubicles maybe six feet wide and ten feet long with ceilings of cardboard and chicken wire. She stops at one room and knocks.

The door opens and Jerry, a very little man in his undershirt, sits on his bed. Beside the bed there is a table with a bottle of Lucky Lager [beer] and ash trays and newspapers on it. In the opposite corner is a table with a TV and a hotplate, some dirty dishes and an empty wine bottle. There is no place to sit and practically no room to stand. Shirts and socks hang drying on a wire stretched across the room.

Jerry tells Sister Kathleen about the trouble he's been having with his lungs, his times in the hospital, his stomach operations. "If I could only get off these cigarettes," he complains.

"Try to smoke less," she tells him. "Try to drink less. If you feel bad, call me up, and I'll get you into a hospital."

Making the rounds of the city's flophouses [those in the Skid Road area], is just one of the activities that occupies Sister Kathleen's day. Three mornings a week she provides nursing services for the residents of the St. Vincent de Paul Society's alcohol-treatment facility [which later becomes the De Paul Center for Alcoholism Treatment, now called De Paul Treatment Centers]. Twice weekly she combs the city's detoxification unit, keeping tabs on old friends who are drying out and looking for encouraging prospects for Harmony House, the work-rehabilitation center which she helped to found. Every afternoon she opens her office [at the Matt Talbot Center] and receives dozens of men suffering from the long-term effects of alcohol, malnutrition, and unsanitary living conditions. In addition, she leads therapy sessions at Harmony House and frequently acts as advocate and liaison between skid-row people and the Veterans' Administration or Social Security.

In the seven years since she first started her work, this fury of activity has made Sister Kathleen the most well-known figure on Portland's Skid Row. Often she is the single link to people for whom anonymity is a way of life.

"Since I was a kid, alcoholism and alcoholics had always been in the back of my mind," she says. "When I first entered the convent, I used to have this little litany that went something like, 'For priests, alcoholics, drug addicts, convicts, hoboes, Negroes...!' They just seemed to be groups of people that I thought needed prayers, and I took them in. I thought of hoboes; they were in my mind, even though I never knew any — I didn't even know that skid rows existed at that time."

It was not until 1966, as she began a career in nursing, that Sister Kathleen discovered where her earlier prayers were leading.<sup>26</sup> At the University of Oregon Hospital [in Portland], she first met a skid-row bum. "I knew from the first that these were the kind of people I wanted to spend the rest of my life working with," she says. She began volunteering her services as a nurse at various makeshift skid-row clinics, working there on her days off from her regular job [at Maryville Nursing Home]. When she applied to her superiors for permission to work on Skid Row full time and failed to convince them that this was her calling, she transferred to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who gladly encouraged her work. [...]

It is the first of the month. The streets of the Row are crowded with ragged men and fat, seedy-looking women. Indians stand in gaggles on one corner, blacks on another. Whites are gathering in front of hotels or pacing up and down the block in their oversized, gray winter coats and crumpled hats, dodging the drops of rain.

"The government checks come out today," Sister Kathleen tells me as we walk to another hotel. "This afternoon these people will get several hundred dollars apiece, and by this time next week they won't have a dime. One reason why they end up on Skid Row is that they can't hold on to money. They spend it as fast as they get it, and they don't like paying off their debts with it either. That's why you'll see the hotel managers all around the area today."

Two men hail her from across the street. "Hey, Sister Kate!"

"Jim, how are you? You've started already."

"Just a couple of beers, Sister. I had some extra change."

"When you get your check you'll start in earnest, won't you?"

"Yup. I don't know how to stop; you know that. Besides, I don't want to stop. There's nothing else to live for. I had my mind blown away in Korea 25 years ago, and I haven't been sober since then." [...]

Jim points to his friend, a bald-headed fellow who looks 70 but is probably around 50, pale as a dead man, struggling to stay standing. Sister Kate is asking him about his health, but all he can do is say, "See, it's... it's...", and jerk his arm in the air.

"Jim, take care of your friend here. Don't let him drink any more today. If he's in trouble, call me up, and I'll get him into the hospital."

"Okay, Sis."

"And you watch it yourself when that check comes in. So long. Don't get too sick..."

Sister Kathleen is no prohibitionist or social reformer. [...] "I like the quote from F.S. Perls, 'I'm not here to live up to your expectations, nor do I expect you to live up to mine.' That's partly my philosophy, because I don't make demands. But I do confront — like today, I was talking to a man who is just drinking and drinking. He told me he doesn't care. He's lost his will to live, so he wants to just go on blissfully drinking himself to death, and it should be nobody's business as long as he's paying his rent. He's 63, and he's got some money, but I guess he really doesn't have much to live for. I told him, 'Well, I'm going to keep seeing you and encouraging you to do something about

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26 This was after teaching primary school children for twenty-five years at a large number of schools throughout the northern Willamette Valley, both in the city and in the country.



your life.'

"I try to respect what they want," she continues. "If they don't seem happy or satisfied, believe me, I keep presenting all the different alternatives that I can think of — but for most of them, my goal is just to keep them as healthy as possible and let them know that somebody loves them.

"They live to drink, and they drink to live. It's hard to believe, but when I see some of these guys in the hospitals after they've been dry for a few weeks, they look worse than when they're drinking. They're healthier maybe, but they're sad and depressed, and they can't wait to get back to their drinking buddies and their hotel and their bottles of wine. You can't blame them, really; it's their way of life. Lord, they've been doing this for what, 10, 20, 30 years. As an old man once told me [...] — I said, 'Wouldn't you like to have the security of a bed, a place to sleep, regular meals?' He looked at me and said, 'Yes, I suppose so, Sister, but you know, I've spent most of my life on these pavements, and when the time comes, I'd just as soon die on the pavement there.'

"Most of the people I work with I've found to be gentle and very sensitive — yet there is just so much that they haven't been able to cope with, maybe all their lives. A lot of them started drinking after a real traumatic experience such as losing their wife and family. A lot of others get down here because they can live here without pressure, without responsibilities, without too much harassment; they're very satisfied to be here where no great demands are made on them. All in all, most of these guys are so nice you just can't help loving them."

And she does. She listens for hours to their stories. If they ask her about religion, she tells them about God and faith, but she doesn't push the subject. "Heaven knows," she says, "they get enough of that at the rescue missions." [...]

On the other hand, being a sister has some advantages. "People seem to trust me more [...]. They know that I'm doing the work because of the love of God, because I love them in God and Christ. They know that it's not just a job with me, that I really do care about them."

What keeps her going? "My love for the people I work with. I love them, and I love my work. I look forward to going to work every day. I love the service that I'm able to do for them."

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### **Postscript**

In what appears to be a letters-to-the-editor section in the March 1979 issue of *U.S. Catholic*, Brother Fred Mercy, S.J., who had been director of Matt Talbot Center for a period, writes in reference to the article above: "[...] How many of us would walk into the worst hotel in the slums of the biggest city in the state? One doesn't do that on courage alone, but with a deep, abiding love and faith that the God who loves me will be with me and protect me in whatever I do and wherever I go. This is where Christ's life becomes alive. [...]"

## Housing V

*[Excerpts from "Burnside Housing: What's Available," an article in BCC Pipeline, December 1976. Author not indicated in article.]*

"Your home is a pleasant place from which you draw happiness." —from Chinese fortune cookie

Nearly 2000 individuals call Portland's skid row home. Most live in 26 hotels with facilities ranging from cubicles with chicken wire ceilings to remodeled apartments subsidized by the Housing Authority. The primary rental unit is a sleeping room with bed, dresser and chair. There may or may not be a sink. Toilets, shower and/or bath are down the hall.

Not one of the approximately 1600 rooms is at street level, yet there are only four elevators in the neighborhood. Hot plates are the common means of cooking, though five hotels do rent rooms with a stove and a refrigerator and three have community kitchens.

Within this rather narrow range of accommodations exists some variation in the quality of service. Different standards of cleanliness, tolerance of noise levels, and definitions of security are reflected in different environments.

Missions provide another housing option in Burnside. For 75¢ at the Salvation Army and for 50¢ at the Rescue Mission, a shower and a clean bed are available nightly after a mandatory religious service. During the colder months the Saly [Sally, for Salvation Army] also opens a sitting room overnight.

The Everett St. Service Center provides, at no charge, a blanket and a wooden platform for 118 persons every night.

| HOTELS        | INSIDE SLEEPER                   |        |       | OUTSIDE SLEEPER |        |    | BATH & TOILET |    |    | INSIDE HOUSE-KEEPER |    | OUTSIDE HOUSE-KEEPER |    |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------------|--------|----|---------------|----|----|---------------------|----|----------------------|----|
|               | Day                              | Week   | Month | Day             | Week   | Mo | D             | Wk | Mo | Week                | Mo | Week                 | Mo |
| Stewart       |                                  | \$15   | \$60  |                 | \$15   | 60 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Broadway      | \$4                              | \$14   |       | \$5             | \$20   |    | \$6           | 24 |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Broadmoor     | \$4                              | 12.50  | \$50  | \$4             | 15.50  | 55 |               |    | 85 |                     |    |                      |    |
| Everett       |                                  | \$10   |       |                 | \$14   |    |               | 17 |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Barr          |                                  | 15-17  | \$60  |                 | 16-20  | 80 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Arlington     | \$4                              | 13.50  | \$54  | 4.50            | 14.50  | 58 |               |    |    | 16.50               | 64 | 17.50                | 69 |
| Biltmore      | \$4                              | 13.50  | \$54  | \$4             | 13.50  | 54 |               |    |    | \$17                | 68 | \$17                 | 68 |
| Athens        | \$4                              | \$16   | \$55  | \$5             | \$18   | 60 | \$7           | 22 | 70 |                     |    |                      |    |
| Butte         |                                  |        | \$48  |                 |        | 48 |               |    | 55 |                     |    |                      |    |
| West          | \$3                              | \$15   |       | 3.50            | \$17   |    |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Hood          | \$4                              | \$15   | \$55  | \$5             | \$16   | 60 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| York          |                                  | \$12   | \$44  |                 | \$17   | 60 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Grove         | \$4                              | \$20   | \$60  | \$4             | \$20   | 60 | \$5           | 22 | 70 |                     |    |                      |    |
| Irving        | 1.75                             | \$11   | \$45  | \$2             | \$12   | 45 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Beaver        |                                  | \$15   | \$55  |                 | \$15   | 55 |               |    |    | 17.50               | 65 | 17.50                | 65 |
| Royal Palm    |                                  |        | \$45  |                 |        | 45 |               |    | 55 |                     |    |                      |    |
| New Palace    |                                  | \$9.50 | \$40  |                 | \$9.50 | 40 |               |    |    | 50                  |    | 50                   |    |
| Estate        | \$3                              | \$15   | \$50  | \$3             | \$15   | 50 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Mission       |                                  |        | 38-40 |                 |        | 42 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Villa         |                                  |        | \$45  |                 |        | 45 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Erickson      | 3.75                             | 12-14  | 50-55 |                 | \$14   | 56 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Home          | 2.50                             | 12.50  | 47.50 | 2.50            | 12.50  | 50 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Holm          | 1.50                             | \$10   | \$38  | 1.50            | \$10   | 38 |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Shoreline     | \$3                              | \$14   | \$50  | \$3             | \$14   | 50 |               |    | 55 |                     |    |                      |    |
| Old St George | sleepers 65-95 depending on size |        |       |                 |        |    |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |
| Foster        | apartments 25% of income         |        |       |                 |        |    |               |    |    |                     |    |                      |    |

Blanchet House has 31 beds for those willing to work for room and board by helping prepare and serve the center's two daily meals. And the Matt Talbot Rehabilitation Hotel [Matt Talbot Center — where Kate volunteered her services during this period] offers a bed in conjunction with a counseling program for those who recognize a need for such a service. Prices are on a sliding scale, from \$10 to \$20 per week, depending on income.

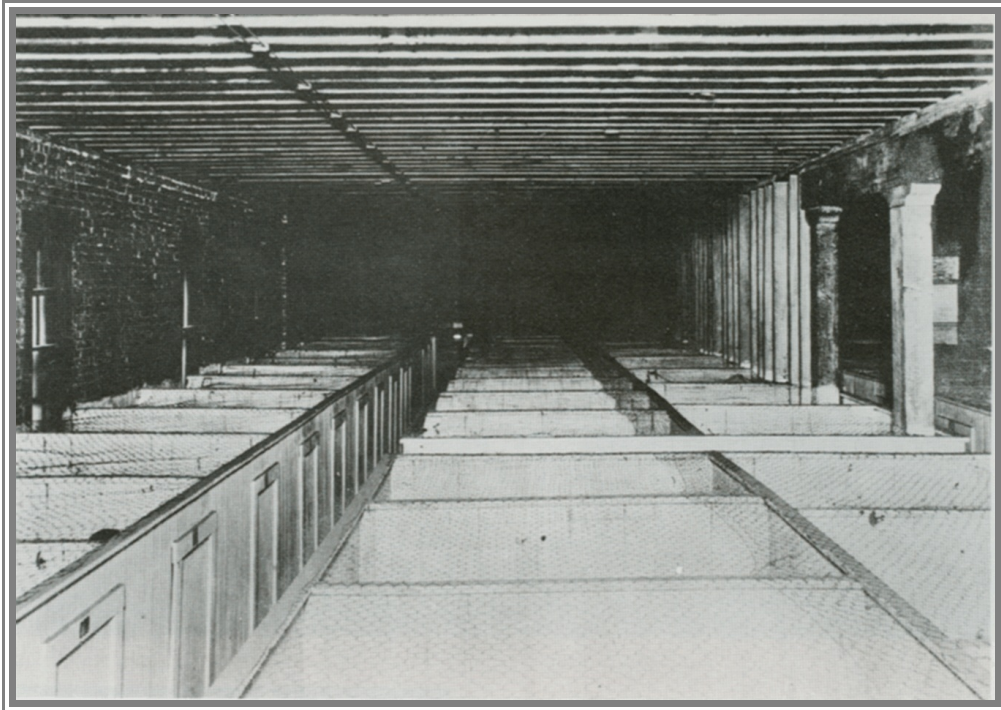
For \$1, the Round-Up Theatre can be a place to spend the night. The Detoxification Center and the city jail also are temporary shelters. In addition, there are people sleeping along the river, in the freight yards, in doorways, and under loading docks.

[...] Economic pressures continue to change Burnside from a residential community to a shopping district, yet this concentration of cheap housing exists nowhere else in the city. [...]



Room in Skid Road hotel, probably an outside room in Holm Hotel. Photo is from *Burnside, A Community: A Photographic History of Portland's Skid Row* by Kathleen Ryan, text by Mark Beach, Coast to Coast Books, 1979. Reprinted with permission.





Example of "chicken coop flophouse" hotel on Portland's Skid Road: partitioned cubicles covered on top by chicken wire. View is from above, looking down at the cubicles. Photo is from City of Portland Fire Department files, in *Burnside, A Community: A Photographic History of Portland's Skid Row* by Kathleen Ryan, text by Mark Beach, Coast to Coast Books, 1979. Reprinted with permission.

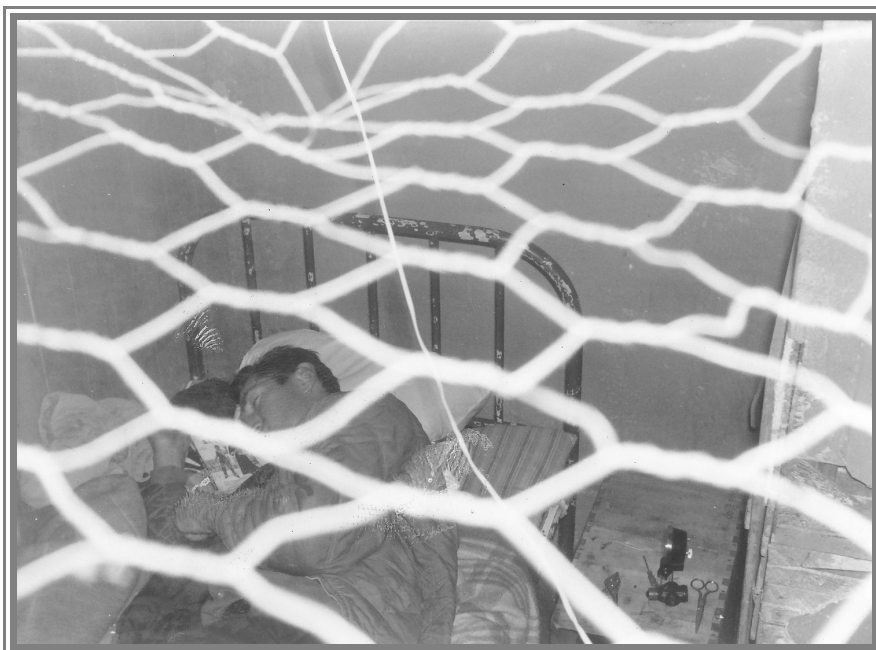


Photo from 1970s of man in room of Holm Hotel, referred to often by Kate in the stories as the Chicken Coop Flop. View is from above.

## MELVIN

I first met Melvin in Harmony House when he came into the program. He was a good man, a good-natured person. He was very helpful as a handyman, and he *always* looked like he needed a shave.

He had a rather sad story, having seen his wife burn to death. Her clothing had caught on fire, and he was unable to do anything to save her. She died as a result of the burns. It was sometime after that that Melvin began to drink, and apparently his drinking became enough of a problem that he needed to get into a program such as Harmony House.

From Harmony House, he got a job at Marylhurst [Marylhurst University, then Marylhurst College]. The Sister who hired him knew that he was a recovering alcoholic, because she hired him upon my recommendation. As I said, he was a very handy person, and he would always tell me, "Sister said I did a very good job and how nicely I worked," which certainly helped his self-esteem. He lived in what I'm going to call the men's cabin; it was a house that had several rooms where the men lived who worked on the grounds there. Living there was the beginning of some problems for Melvin, because the men would have a few beers after work, and, not being alcoholic themselves, they couldn't understand why Melvin wasn't drinking.

Then Sister talked to me once and said, "You know, I hate to tell you this, but I think Melvin may be drinking." We talked about it, and she said, "I want to help him, and we really like him; he does a good job, but we can't have that." So I talked to him about it, and he told me what the men were doing. He did eventually lose his job there. He moved into the Foster Hotel and was an assistant to Carl, the manager [see Carl's story].

Melvin did a lot of handy things. He could take a large piece of agate and make a clock; he gave me one of these. He also could take burls of wood, polish them, and use them for the bases of clocks. He bought a van and fixed it up. He would take trips, and he even took along Missy once — the dog from Harmony House that lived in the Foster at that point. He would go into the mountains for a few days; he liked to get away alone, into nature. And anytime I needed any help moving or whatever, Melvin would always be willing. He certainly stayed sober during that period.

After he retired and could draw social security, he continued to live at the Foster. After Missy died, he got another dog. I don't know of any family that Melvin had that he made any contact with.

### **more about Missy, the three-legged dog**

In another story, I told about Missy the dog and how she came to lose one of her hind legs while she was at Harmony House. She could walk on her three legs, but she hobbled and limped. She used to dance around on her hind legs before she got old. When she got fatter, she found it hard to go up the stairs (but she could do it), and she couldn't leap up on your lap as easily. Carl brought her to the Foster when Harmony House closed, and she was very much a part of life at the Foster until she died.

Missy seemed happy at the Foster, but she didn't like it when one of the men would be drunk. There was one man in the hotel who dearly loved her, and she would always come to him and would play with him; but one day, when he came in staggering drunk and said, "Come on, Missy," she just backed off and wouldn't have anything to do with him. For a long time, she barked at women because she had become so used to men at Harmony House. She knew *me*, but she would cause quite a stir if another woman came or if I brought a stranger.

## NATE

Nate lived in the Chicken Coop Flophouse when I first met him. He was a very small man and always very pleasant. I used to see him at the Flophouse, I'd see him in the streets, sometimes he would come to see me at the Matt Talbot Center where I had a little office, and other times I'd see him in the soup line at Blanchet House.

One day Nate came to my office at the Matt Talbot Center. He had a white shirt on and dark slacks, and he was sober. When we were finished with whatever we were doing, he said, "I know my time is coming." I don't know why he said this, but he must have had an inner feeling about it. He said, "I've never been baptized." He evidently knew, or had the feeling or conviction that baptism was necessary for salvation. Then he added, "When I die, I want to be with my parents." I said, "Well, Nate, I could talk to Father Webster and set up a time," and he said, "Well, couldn't *you* do it?" I told him I could. So I got an emesis basin and a cup of water, I had him bend his head over the basin a bit, and then, there in the office, I baptized him, saying, "I baptize you, Nate, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." As he smiled, I told him that he was a baptized Christian but not necessarily a Catholic (I knew that one of his parents had been Catholic and one hadn't). Whenever I would see Nate after that, he always had an extra special smile — there was something special between us. Being able to baptize him was a special grace for me, a special gift that I received.

This was the second time I had baptized someone. I think I told Father Webster about the baptism afterwards, and I believe he entered it in the baptismal register of the parish. I knew Father pretty well. I could call him whenever I had a woman or a married couple who needed housing, and he would tell me to send them to the Broadway Hotel; then he would pay the bill.

Maybe a year or so after the baptism, Oliver, the manager of the flophouse, called me and asked if I'd come and see Nate [see Oliver's story]. He said, "He's very sick. I think you can talk him into going to the hospital." These people always seemed to have a lot of faith in what they thought I could do.

Nate was upstairs on the third floor, the top level. He was in a large, large room which was subdivided into smaller, partitioned, rooms with chicken coop wire over them. Some of the partitioned rooms were along the window side, and they were brighter and cost more. There was an aisle and then a big square in the middle of this large room, and that square was subdivided into small rooms. There was one little light bulb up in the ceiling of the entire space, so you can imagine how little light there was. These inside rooms were usually the kind that would be rented on a one-night basis to people who just wanted to stay a night or two; those who were there for a longer term had the outside rooms. In the early days when I first started down on Burnside, the outside rooms were sixty cents a night and the others were fifty. When I'd send people to that hotel, Oliver would always give me the rooms for half-price or less, even much less, in spite of the fact that he took a loss on this favor. I would pay the bill, then, at the end of the month.

When I went to see Nate, he was in one of the darker, inside rooms. He was just sitting very quietly on the side of his bed, pants open. The room was very dark, and he seemed a little delirious, like when a person has a high fever. I talked with him for a few minutes, asking if there was anything I could do for him; he shook his head and said he was okay. I said, "Nate, you're pretty sick. Would you be willing to go to the hospital?"

"Not today, Sister. I'll go tomorrow."

"Nate, you know tomorrow never comes."

"Yeah, I'll go tomorrow. I'll go tomorrow."

I had gone through this over and over again, when one of the men would say, "Yeah, I'll do it tomorrow," but they wouldn't do whatever it was. Yet, when *they* wanted something, they didn't want it tomorrow, they wanted it now — believe me, they wanted it *now*!

At any rate, I felt Nate's forehead, and it was cold. He looked very pale. I tried to take his pulse. Then I said, "Okay, Nate. I'll be back," and I went home.

That night, as I was getting ready for bed, I noticed this little gray crawling thing, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, I've got a louse!" So I stripped my clothes off fast. I think I found about fifteen lice in my clothes, and I thought, "*Nate*... it has to be Nate!" I hand-picked them all off and threw them in the sink, I ran all my clothes in the washer and dryer a couple of times, and then I hung them for a few days. Later, I found one more louse where I guess a nit must have hatched. I got that one, and then I went through all the clothes again, seams and all, but I found no more lice. I put the clothes through the washer and dryer *again* and re-hung them.

The next day when I went back to the hotel, Nate was still sitting on the side of his bed, in the same position practically as when I had left him. The first thing he did was hand me an empty wine bottle, saying, "Would you get me some water?" I took it out into the hall and had one of the men go into the bathroom and put some water in it for me. I brought it back, and he drank it and drank it; he must have been dehydrated. Then he asked me for his cigarettes and I said, "Where are they, Nate?" "In my coat pocket," he replied, and I thought, "I'm not going to *touch* that coat pocket!" Well, I gingerly touched it anyway, just with my fingers, though, and with none of my clothing touching anything where a louse could be. I said, "I can't feel any, Nate." He said, "They're there." Since I couldn't find any cigarettes in his pocket, I said, "I'll go and get you one." Then I went down the hall and got two cigarettes from one of the men. I brought them back, lit one for him and I gave it to him.

He finally was willing to go to the hospital, but I thought, "If I send him to the hospital and he's lousy, they may just send him to detox right away"; the hospital often did that — they didn't want to deal with a person who was as dirty as Nate was. So I said, "Nate, what if I send you to detox first, and then they'll send you to the hospital — would that be okay?" He said, "Yes," so I called detox.

Now, there was another man, Norm [see Norm's story], who was pretty drunk, and whom I had been trying to get to go to the detox center, too. So when the detox people arrived I told them, "Norm is on the second floor and Nate is on the top floor." They helped Norm down to the van first; then they came up for Nate. They said to Nate, "Can you walk?" When he said, "Yeah, I think so," they began helping him. When he got down from the third floor, where the stair turns and there's a triangular platform, Nate collapsed. So I got a pillow or something soft for under his head, and I said to them, "You people go ahead — take Norm — and I'll call for an ambulance."

I called for an ambulance, and when they came I explained what had happened. When they were about to pick Nate up, I said, "He's lousy," and they said, "Well that's par for the course." They picked him up by his pants and his coat and swung him onto the stretcher; his clothes hung pretty loosely because he had lost a lot of weight. They put him in the hallway in front of a dingy little office. I looked at him — and he was *crawling*, he was *alive* with lice. His pants and shirt had parted, and wherever I saw his skin it was just full of infected sores from lice (bites from lice are itchy and get infected when scratched). And there were wine sores also; with the men's heavy drinking and lack of protein, they develop what are called "wine sores" — their capillary system is so fragile that it doesn't heal easily. The sores become deeper and deeper with infection, and they may scab over. Nate's body looked like it was covered with scabs, too.

Then the paramedics looked at him and said, "He's gone." I looked at him and I thought, "He can't be!" But he was dead. He had died just like that. And so they covered him and took him away to some mortuary. They did try to contact his family, but unsuccessfully. I don't remember anything at all about the funeral arrangements; I didn't get involved at that time with conducting funerals.

I don't know whether it was one or two years after Nate's passing that a woman came up to Matt Talbot. She told me she was Nate's daughter and that someone had told her I might have known her dad. I told her what I knew about him, and about baptizing him, which she was very happy to hear. She wondered if her dad had ever talked about

his children. I had never heard him do this, but I said, "I am sure he loved his family very much" — I didn't say he had never talked about them. Then she got out a wood carving Nate had done, which had several interlocking parts. It had been carved from a single piece of wood, which took a lot of skill. She said, "He carved this for us when we were little, and I have it now." She said that he was meticulous with doing something like that. She also showed me a picture of him when he was young, with her and one or two other children in the picture, too.

This incident helped me to be aware that the men, whom I got to know only in the later stages of their lives, had a past, and that I occasionally was privileged to glimpse it. The families of Skid Road individuals were usually very important to them. The men loved their children but had often alienated themselves from them. The men had often lost contact because they didn't want to embarrass their families anymore, or hurt or anger them, or because they had worn out their welcome with them.

So Nate now, I know, is one of the many waiting up in heaven for the rest of us.

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## NATHAN

Nathan had white hair and blue twinkling eyes, and he drank quite a bit. He was a small man, and older; he looked like he was in his seventies, but he may have been in his late sixties. He was a veteran.

They found a cancerous growth in his nose. The surgery involved making an incision from above the left brow, across the bridge of the nose, and then down the cheek-edge of his face. They folded that back, removed the growth, and then did a little graft using skin from near his hair line.

When I first saw him after the surgery I said, "Nathan, what happened to you!" He said, "Well I could tell you that some of the women in my room took a knife to me and cut my face, but that's not really true." It was really kind of cute the way he said that. And then he told me what had happened.

A couple of days later, when he still had a patch on, the incision looked like it was wide and going to result in a permanent groove, but that didn't turn out to be the case. Nathan was very cheerful and upbeat about all of this — no complaining, although he did say the area itched a lot. He said that after the wound healed a little more, they were going to take a patch from his ear and graft that inside the nose, to help fill in a hollow area on one side of his nose that had resulted from the surgery. That apparently would build up his nose and make it look more normal, and probably make it more functional.

It's amazing what they can do with surgery nowadays and what Nathan was willing to let them do. A lot of the people I worked with didn't want to be cut on anymore and didn't want to go to the hospital again; they would fight and resist it. But Nathan was willing to let them go ahead. He must have had good surgeons who explained the procedures well; I think also that he was a very well-educated man, which probably helped.

He was well-read. He'd read when he wasn't drinking; and when he'd be down in the lobby of his hotel he'd be reading all the time. He looked clean, dressed neatly, and probably had a reasonably good income.

At the beginning of the month, there were some women who would come into his room and bleed him for just about all he had; and then, before the end of the month, he would be borrowing from some of the people around him. It was important to him apparently to have the attention of these women, whatever went on in his room. One day, I guess there were two or three Indian [Native American] women in his room. I always felt badly about how easily some of the men would end up without money, but this was the result of choices they had made.

Nathan was doing all right the last time I saw him. His wounds were healing, and he was waiting for the next part of the surgical procedure. I just hope they removed all of the cancer, because I can't think of anything worse than to have cancer in the nose, the throat, the mouth, the face, or near the eyes. That would have been bad, and he knew it, too.

## NICK

Nick was a friend I got to know much better through the years. I first met him in 1970 or 1971 when he was a clerk at the Chicken Coop Flop. Later, he moved to the old Western Hotel, which adjoined the Chicken Coop, on the Second Street side. The Western had been closed by the time I began on Burnside, but it was later renovated with studio apartments for low-income housing. You had to be admitted by someone releasing the door lock. The four floors opened onto a courtyard that was open to the sky and uncovered. This open area was surrounded by walkways on all four sides that led to the rooms. You could look up to the open sky or down to the level below. Nick lived there until he moved to the Oak Apartments; after the move, he began to disassociate himself from some of his old drinking buddies. Then he moved to the Marshall Manor in Northwest Portland, where I visited him a lot.

I began to see another side of Nick as time passed. He went through the process of having me named as his power of attorney because he wanted me to have access to his money so that rent could be paid and any other need taken care of. He used to ask if I would take him to various appointments and to some shopping areas away from the city center. He shopped a lot at thrift stores, where he would buy different items. He would use an item (say a heater or fan or lamp) until he found something else that he liked better, then he would ask me if I knew of anyone who could use the item he no longer wanted. This went on for a couple of years.

Nick was not well, and his health began to be a matter of concern for him when he had to face the possibility of open-heart surgery. He had high blood pressure and cardiac complications, and he had apparently had some strokes as well. He tried to walk for exercise because he knew that was good for him. He no longer drank.

He read a lot, was quiet, and was very neat and organized. He had been a merchant marine, and he would roll his clothing or towels into rolls in order to pack them, or to store them on shelves in his little cupboards. This used to fascinate me because I had never seen it before.

Nick had come from one of the maritime provinces in Canada. He had never married, and he had no contact with any of his family members, but he did tell me that he had a brother. He wanted me to get him some forms to make out a will; I did that, and he had the will set up. He said, "I'm not going to have much, but whatever money is left I'd like to leave to you to use in your work. My furniture and other things Ed and Jack can have [see stories of Ed and Jack]. They can have whatever they want."

In April of 1995, I received a call from the manager of the Marshall Manor telling me that Nick had been found dead in his room. He had apparently changed his sheets, done his laundry, and was looking out the window waiting for a maintenance person to check on something in his room. When this man entered the room, he found Nick on the floor — dead from cardiac arrest, apparently.

Since Ed and Jack were dead by this time, it was up to me to dispose of Nick's possessions. And they were many — many more than I had thought! I invited a number of his friends who lived on his floor to come and take what they wanted; I distributed some linens and towels to Hooper Detox, and most of the clothing to the MacDonald Center (which at that time was located in the basement of the Downtown Chapel); and I gave some of the other articles to the individual who had helped me bag and load all these things. Everything else was left for the manager to dispose of.

I arranged for a little memorial service at the Marshall Manor. After this, I had a box of his ashes to dispose of. I bound up the ashes and was prepared to throw them over the Sellwood Bridge in a reinforced bag [the Sellwood bridge is one of Portland's many bridges that span the Willamette River]. A friend at Hooper Detox, however, offered to take them with her and her husband to a secluded area on the Willamette River and dispose of them after a little prayer service. I appreciated her offer because I felt it was a more dignified way to dispose of the ashes than what I had originally

planned to do.

When I went to the bank to withdraw Nick's money to pay for his funeral expenses, I found out that my power of attorney had ceased at his death and that I had to wait forty days before I could have the money.

Nick was a very dear and sweet person, a very pleasant man to know, and a friend I learned to value and appreciate over a period of twenty-five years.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Effects of Kate's Ministry on Her Growth as a Person*

**Ron:** Talk with me about the combined overall effect of your Burnside ministry and your work with gay populations on your personal growth as a human being. In other words, Kate, what has been the impact on you of the life you've lived with alcoholics, the disadvantaged, and gay and lesbian individuals? What has that life given to you over the course of more than thirty years? How has it changed you? What are you *now* that you were *not* thirty years ago? Because of all of these experiences, how are you different today?

**Kate:** That's a good question. The impact that all my experiences have had on me is that I have come to realize that *every* person that I ever meet, and all those I won't meet, are very much loved by God. They have their own special beauty and dignity. I began to feel that God loves all unconditionally. This is something that I strive and have strived to apply in my relationships with others, in my own limited way. And it doesn't always come that easily, because sometimes I find myself quick to make a snap judgment in my mind; not consciously, it just happens. Then I have to stop and go back and think, "Now wait a minute. This person is very much loved by God. I have no right to judge anyone."

My experiences with alcoholics and gay and lesbian people have also changed me, in that I am more aware now that for many people there is still a lack of understanding and acceptance. The suffering that others have gone through has made me, I think, more compassionate, more loving, and a more accepting person, striving to love unconditionally all those who come into my life. I'm sure I don't do that as I would like to; I have a long way to go, and I probably won't reach it until Eternity.

I have been able to defend them in the light of others' criticism. I've received a lot of support through articles I have read in the National Catholic Reporter [a newspaper] and in the annual Call to Action conferences. Call to Action is a Catholic group and is a strong supporter of social issues in society and in the Church. It's a very liberal organization, supporting issues such as abolishing the death penalty, ordination of women [priests], and complete acceptance of gays and lesbians. I, too, strongly support these issues. Prejudice and homophobia in the Church itself are something that I constantly will fight against and struggle over with the Church. There *is* homophobia; it exists. I've known some priests who are gay and known *of* other priests who are, and some have died of AIDS. And I know some lesbians in our parish who are beautiful people.

**Ron:** It sounds like one of the things you are saying is that you have become more liberal.

**Kate:** Yes. I have, definitely. I do think I'm very liberal, and I know that at times I feel very intolerant of the ultra-conservative, self-righteous approaches of some in the Church, in government, and in society.

**Ron:** Do you think that you have developed stronger feelings against some of the attitudes of the Church toward gay and lesbian people partly because of your history of these last thirty years?

**Kate:** Yes I *do*.

**Ron:** And against the Church's attitude about not allowing priests to marry or women to become priests?

**Kate:** Yes. Plus the fact that the Church forbids even any *discussion* of women becoming priests! I also feel that priests who have left and have married should be welcomed back to serve as priests again in the Church.

**Ron:** Were you sort of always liberal?

**Kate:** I possibly was always somewhat liberal, but I definitely feel that these last thirty years have contributed to it and made me stronger in my own understanding of what I think God is about and of the people that God has created and loves so much.

**Ron:** So, in a way, your very work *within* the Catholic Church, and the beauty of that work that you find and live and love, has also brought you into conflict with some of the Church's views.

**Kate:** That's correct. I feel very supported by my Holy Names Community, by other Sisters, and by other people such as you and other friends who give support through their love. Some even give financial assistance.

**Ron:** We've talked a lot together, both now and through the years, about the conflict you feel with some of the Church's views on certain subjects — priests getting married and homophobia against gay and lesbian people, to name two of these. And I wonder if this thirty-year-plus ministry of yours has helped free you up to see things that perhaps the Church can't see yet. [There is a long silence at this point in the interview; then Kate and Ron begin to laugh.]

**Kate:** Oh, would that they made *me* an assistant or a counselor or a mentor to the Holy Father! No... [indicating that she is only jesting] But, yes, I think you are right there. I *know* you are right.



## FROM THE TIMES

### *Slave Market*

*[Excerpts from a Matt Talbot Center newsletter published somewhere between 1971-1981. Author not indicated in original source.]*

A "Slave Market" is an employment agency that deals with men who wish to work today, maybe not tomorrow. The nice and socially acceptable term is Day Labor. There are three parties involved: 1. A vulture: An employment agency acting in the function of employer. 2. The employer: A business or corporation paying \$3 or more an hour to the agency. 3. The victim: A man actually doing the work who ends up with around \$1.30 an hour.

The basic event happens something like this: Mr. X. calls Vulture Work Agency for a man to clean his grain storage unit. Jim Doe, who happens to be looking for work that day is in the office and agrees to take the job. Neither Vulture Work Agency nor Mr. X know if Jim is capable of being lowered several hundred feet by rope into a grain elevator to clean it. Neither does Jim as far as that goes. So out goes Jim to work for \$1.30 an hour on a job not only extremely hazardous, but hard. Meanwhile Vulture Agency picks up the balance which — sometimes, depending on how well he milks Mr. X. — is often double & up the wages being earned by Jim who is doing the work.

The above story is true. It has a tragic ending, for Jim, a young friendly 27 year old resident at the Center who had cooked our Toastmaster Dinners for four consecutive Sundays fell in the grain elevator he was cleaning and died. Vulture Work Agency called us asking for the address of his parents as neither they or Mr. X had this information.

There are so many different ways the human vulture can pick his brothers. He can lay down extra stipulations on taking a job. The agency might say to someone like Jim: "We won't pay you until the end of the week, but you can make a draw." Imagine that... a draw on \$1.30 an hour. Then, if Jim doesn't return for his money at the end of the week — which often happens — our human counterpart to the vulture gets an extra portion. The similarities of the animal vulture to his human counterpart are so striking [...] After all the work has been done, in come the vultures. [...] Vulture Work Agency merely puts the two parties together and feasts off both.

So there it is: Jim works for \$1.30 an hour with all the garbage that goes with it and Vulture Agency picks up double that for sitting in an office and we've all heard this story in a thousand different ways.

## ***Wine Sores***

*[Excerpt from "How to: Prevent and Treat Wine Sores," an article by L. Darneille, in BCC Pipeline, April 1975.]*

A common medical problem among Burnside residents is stasis ulcers or "wine sores" as they are commonly called. These appear as ulcerated sores mainly on the legs, but can appear at any place on the body.

The main causes of these sores are poor circulation of blood flow, poor personal hygiene, and usually minor breaks in the skin. [...]

To keep the body in good running order and free of "wine sores" a few health practices should be changed. In the diet one should eat more of vitamins A, C, and thiamin. These vitamins help protect the skin from infection and keep it healthy, help the healing processes, and strengthen the walls of the blood vessels. Good food sources of these vitamins are dark green and yellow fruits and vegetables, whole milk, pork, liver, and citrus fruits like oranges. [...] Keeping clean is very important so breaks in the skin do not get infected. It is good to try to wash socks everyday and keep trousers clean. Clothes that do not fit well rub the skin and cause irritation or poor circulation. This happens a lot when shoes do not fit well.

Walking is good exercise and helps the circulation. Instead of sitting around try walking around the neighborhood to see what's happening. When cuts, insect bites, and bruises happen try to keep them clean, avoid scratching, and bumps.

If you have "wine sores" they should be treated. This can be done at the walk-in clinic at 104 SW 5th Street [this would have been about one block south of Burnside and within easy walking distance of the general Skid Road area]. [...]

## NORM

Norm was a special friend of my earlier days in the Burnside area. He lived and worked at Blanchet House when I first met him. He helped in the dining area at the early morning breakfast and at the eleven-thirty lunch for the hundreds of men who stood in line.

In the early seventies, Blanchet House received some government surplus foods such as butter and peanut butter, and Norm would give me a pound or two of butter to take home to the Sisters every time I came. He didn't mention this to Mel, the manager [see Mel's story], but I know Mel wouldn't have cared, because I was always welcomed by the staff, who themselves had at one time been in the soup line.

Norm had a decided drinking problem, and, since people couldn't stay at Blanchet House if they were drinking, he would have to leave when he would start drinking, until he was sober again. He was a pleasant and easy-going man who had no problem returning to Blanchet each time he stopped drinking.

His next move after Blanchet was to the Matt Talbot Center. He frequently would offer to help in my office by sweeping or mopping the floor, and by doing other tasks. He was a very willing person, and there wasn't anything he wouldn't do for me.

After one of his drinking episodes, Norm had to move out because the men were not allowed to drink at Matt Talbot either. So he moved to the Chicken Coop Holm Hotel on Second and Burnside, where he stayed for a while.

Norm showed me how to play about eight solitaire card games. He showed me a way of trying to beat the odds, but it never worked for me. He would say, "You know, if you haven't won, if you can't get all your cards, you're allowed to turn one up just once in this whole game." When I mention this to other people, they really get a bang out of it because they say that's definitely not according to the rules as they know them. But I always do it and think about Norm!

He was interesting to talk with. He used to like to read a lot, and he read without glasses, which fascinated me because of his age. Years ago, when he would get his income check, he'd often want to take me to a certain restaurant, which at that time had a lot of western artifacts around. If he had been drinking, he couldn't eat very much, but he would be in good enough shape to take me out. When his health began to deteriorate more, he had trouble walking and breathing, and he began to develop a heart problem. For a while, I believe there were some college students from the University of Portland who would visit him.

After falling and fracturing a hip, as happens to so many of these people, Norm was eventually put in a nursing home, and I used to visit him there. His condition was worsening, but I remember that Bobby and I [see Bobby's story] picked up Norm one morning and took him out to breakfast. He was one of the few patients that people could talk to at the nursing home, because a lot of the others there had memory loss or dementia and couldn't carry on an intelligent conversation.

While I think of it I might add here that for Norm and some of the others I met in my ministry, there were no family connections. As a result, I was often the individual they would name as a contact person on various medical forms. And because they would write "Sister Kathleen," I was sometimes thought to be a biological sister in emergencies.

Norm was probably in his sixties when he died, very peacefully and quietly. He was special to me, and I lost a dear and gentle friend.



## OLIVER

The Holm Hotel on Second Street and Home Hotel on Third Street were run and managed by Oliver, a very large man who used to drink off and on. My first contact with him would have been at the Holm in 1970.

I had a lot of mixed feelings about Oliver because, from what they told me, a woman had never been let in the Holm. I remember when I first made a contact with [Father] Jim Lambert about possibly volunteering in the Skid Road area, and I expressed to him my Superior's concern that I'd probably be raped or something, he said, "The men are far too deep into their sickness — their alcoholism — to have any time for sex at all, in any way."

I don't remember my very first reason for going to the Holm, unless it was to visit one of the men I had met in the street. At that time I was going to different hotels to do whatever I could for any of the men.

The Holm was a hotel that many people were rather aghast that I was going into, because it actually was the very worst of all of the flophouses and hotels; it was the worst I've ever seen. Many men came for one night; and that's what a flophouse was — a flop, a place to flop for the night. At that time, there was a sign above the door that said, "Room to let, 50¢-60¢," the difference being that an outside room with a window was sixty cents and all the inside rooms were fifty. At the time, I remember thinking of the song, "King of the Road," that said, "Room to let: 50¢."

When I entered the hotel, I climbed a long, dark stairway, and right at the head of the stairs was a room which looked like a cage of sorts and served as an office. This room had a small opening for the clerk to receive rents or give mail to the men. The room had bars which served as a protection for the desk person who was on duty at the time. It was a tiny, cluttered office. The area around that was a larger room with a rather old-fashioned stove and a few benches along a wall. Some of the benches were like church pews or park benches, with backs, while the wall served as the back for others. A little further back was a washing machine that some of the men or the manager would use for washing sheets or other items. Some of the men didn't have much on their beds to wash, in the way of coverings, and some slept at times just on their mattress.

To return to Oliver, he had been a bootlegger. At this time I didn't have a lot of respect for him because I knew that he "made runs," as they called it, for people who were too drunk to make them for themselves — to go get a bottle of wine. So Oliver would buy the wine and then charge them extra because he had made the run for them. At the beginning, I didn't think that was too fair, but then afterwards I realized that the men knew what was going on and that they were willing to pay this extra money just to have somebody go and buy them the wine when they were in no shape or condition to get it for themselves. I was a new nurse at that time, and I knew very little about alcoholism; still, I realized that Oliver was kind of perpetuating the drinking pattern of many of these people. I remember thinking, "Let them get their *own* wine." Well, they weren't in any shape to do this, of course, and, a lot of times, if they didn't have the wine they would have quite severe withdrawal symptoms.

In 1971 or around that time, Oliver asked if I would go to court with him. They were going to take his license away to manage the Holm. I said I would. So I went to court and the judge asked me if I knew Oliver and what I thought of him. I was able to very truthfully say that Oliver really was interested in the people, concerned about the people in the hotel. I said that when any of them was sick, or when Oliver was worried about their physical or medical condition, he would call me and ask if I would come and see the person and convince him if necessary to go to the hospital. Most of the people, no matter how sick they were, did not want to interrupt their drinking long enough to go to a hospital. They didn't want to have to go without the wine, especially if they were on an ongoing drunk.

Oliver told them that he no longer did any bootlegging; he said he hadn't done

anything like that for whatever the number of years was — it had ended certainly before I got down there. (I think this was the first time I was aware that he had done bootlegging.) The judge did grant Oliver's license, and he thanked me for coming and testifying for Oliver.

This was a whole new world for me at that time. I was in the habit still, working in the Community's nursing home. I was just beginning, really, to volunteer on Burnside, and here I am appearing in court, standing up for this man who was running the worst of the flophouses!

In 1970 or 1971 I received the J. Arthur Young Award for community service, which included several hundred dollars. This was the beginning of seed money for my ministry. With this and other donations, I made up my mind that when people needed a place to stay, I was going to try to find a place for them. I could send someone who was drinking to the Holm Hotel, for example. I'd call Oliver. He'd give me cheaper rates and I could let the bills run up a little bit. I would send a note over, or I'd go over with the person, and ask Oliver for a room for two or three nights. Sometimes I would do it for a whole month, depending on the person's situation. As the prices of rooms got higher for the other tenants, I would give Oliver a little more because I knew he was losing by giving me reduced rates. I couldn't get cheaper prices out of Salvation Army, but I did get them out of Matt Talbot Center and a couple of the other hotels at that time in addition to the Holm.

One day, Oliver told me he had been separated from his wife because of his drinking. Now that he had been sober for some time, he said he wanted to bring her up from California. His wife did come up, and I met her — Barbara. She was very nice. Apparently Oliver did not get along too well with Barbara's mother, though, because she always felt that her daughter got short-changed, with Oliver such a drunk all of his life.

Oliver and Barbara had several children, and Oliver really loved his youngsters — too much, in a way. He was a tremendous enabler (as we call them now), because if any of his kids messed up and was in jail, Oliver would pay their debts, fines, and even their rent at times. He'd take them in if they didn't have a job or a place to stay. He would just do whatever for them. And he loved his grandchildren. He was all heart; I mean that, as a rule, he just couldn't refuse them anything within reason.

Periodically Oliver would invite me to come and have lunch with his wife and often one or two of his daughters. We usually went to Elmer's. He enjoyed that.

Then his wife got cancer. She was very ill, and I went to see her several times. When she died, I went to the funeral. His family was there and a few of the hotel people who were sober enough or well enough or knew the couple enough to come. The fact that Oliver's mother-in-law had not forgiven him for some of his past ways was very hard on him during and after the funeral.

I saw Oliver every so often after that. He came with me to Craig's funeral [see Craig's story]. He talked now and then about getting together; he said he wanted to go with me and Gina to see Ed who, as I have said elsewhere, used to live with Gina in the Holm [see Ed & Gina's story].

Approximately a year after this, on October 9, 1987, Oliver died very suddenly. I received a call from one of the hotel managers whom Oliver used to supervise that he had died that morning of a heart attack, at 9:30, in the hotel where he was living at the time, which was the Stewart Hotel, on Northwest Broadway.

I contacted his son, Conrad, and talked to him. Conrad was probably the only one who was going to be able to do anything as far as the financial costs of the burial were concerned. After Oliver's wife had died, Oliver bought a double plot. He apparently had told her that he would be buried beside her when his time came, but I guess he didn't keep up the payments on this plot, because when I talked with Conrad I had the impression that Conrad might have to finish the payments. One of Conrad's sisters wanted the dad buried with the mother, but, because his dad had chosen to receive Social Security instead of veteran's benefits when he retired (the later would have given him more money), and because he had bought a plot that was not at the

veteran's cemetery, the veteran's would not give money toward the burial. The veteran's would have paid for Oliver's burial, however, if the family had decided to bury him at the veteran's cemetery, which, of course, would have meant that Oliver and his wife would not be together. Rhonda, Conrad's sister, was very upset at the possibility that her father and mother might not be buried together. So Conrad had to make a decision about this, and he decided to bury his father with his mother and to use Caldwell's [Caldwell's Colonial Chapel] as the funeral home.

I had told Conrad that I thought he should do according to whatever he felt he could afford. Because of all that his dad had done during the years when I was sending people to the hotel — giving me cut rates and being so good to the men — I also told Conrad that I would help pay for the cost of the funeral. The next day he called me and told me he couldn't believe that the cost would be eighteen-hundred dollars, which was not including the plot. I said, "I will help you. I'll pay five-hundred towards it."

When I went to the funeral, I saw one of Oliver's boys I had known when he used to help his dad in the hotel at times. I sat by him and talked before other family members arrived. Rhonda had wanted to duplicate some pictures and make a little memento for the people who attended the service, so she came late. I didn't see anybody else from the family because they were in the family room.

I had been asked to say a few words, so I talked to Frank [see Frank's story] and quite a few other people and asked them what they remembered about Oliver. At the funeral, I mentioned that Oliver had been a bootlegger and had profited from some of the things that he did, but that he was concerned about the people in his hotel and cared about them. I said that when they were hospitalized he'd go and visit them two or three times a week. He was aware of what went on in his hotel, and, when he knew that somebody was very sick and should be hospitalized he would call me. I talked about the fact that he had a deep love for his family. One man said that Oliver would give a helping hand *anytime* to *anybody*. I began to see Oliver in a very Christ-like way — a beautiful character and a gentle person. And he had a deep love and respect for his wife, and, of course, deep regrets for the many lost years during the period when the marriage was split because of his alcoholism. I know he had a deep respect for me. Gathering some of the information for my remarks had quite an impact on me. I told them, "The grieving is going to be very natural, and you need to take time to grieve over the loss of someone; but then you need to be able to let yourself be comforted and to comfort each other." And I ended on that note.

Oliver is at peace now, and, after almost eighteen years of friendship, he's someone I will miss during my next few years of ministry downtown.

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## ORVILLE BUCKMAN

I don't have a lot to say about Orville. He lived in the Home Hotel, on Third Street, and he used to be a heavy drinker. I remember I'd go up to his floor, and many of the men would be sitting in one room, "passing the jug around," as they called it, from person to person. When Orville would be sober, he would visit his sister (in Washington, I believe it was).

Then Orville quit drinking. I don't know what motivated him to quit, but I think he knew it was affecting his health — and, also, he was beginning to enjoy doing things with his family.

He moved out of the Home Hotel finally, out of the Burnside area, and moved to where his sister lived; I think she had invited him when she realized he wasn't drinking anymore. When I asked about him at the hotel, they told me that he had gone there to live. He had found a different way of relating and living, and he was satisfied with that. This happy ending was not the usual one I heard about with many of my other friends on Skid Road.

### **drinking in small groups (the social dynamic)**

A typical picture that I saw of these men was two or three of them sitting on the side of the bed in someone's room, talking, laughing, smoking, and sharing the bottle. They would have a bottle to share between them and would pass it back and forth. If everybody else was drinking and one of them wasn't, he would feel kind of left out; he couldn't just go in and sit and have everybody passing the jug around and say, "No, thanks!" — he would feel he was being a wet blanket. After a few drinks they would all feel pretty good, and if they were lucky they would have a couple of bottles.

This was their social life, their camaraderie. They would be very convivial. It was part of their friendship, part of their enjoying each other. They were happy. I'm sure there were payoffs for this lifestyle; they were lonely otherwise, for one thing. And they weren't destroying their lives in the same way that the young people that we meet now [1988] are. They were surrounded by their buddies. They had a place to be. They got along well. They paid their rent. They didn't bother other people, and other people usually didn't bother *them*, because they were all often supporting each other and looking out for their buddies. None of them was interested in sobering up at that stage of their lives.

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## OSCAR

Oscar lived in the Holm Hotel, on Second and Burnside — the "Chicken Coop Flop" as the men called it. He was a tall man who had lost an arm (I believe it was his left). People used to describe him as kind of mean, rough, and tough. He was usually in better condition than many of the other people in the hotel were, and I remember that Dan [see Dan's story] used to tell me that Oscar could really wheel that stump around pretty hard. He was not someone who appealed to me — I'm not really sure why — and I know that the people in the hotel were not overly fond of him either. He *was* trustworthy, and Oliver, the overall manager of the hotel [see Oliver's story], trusted him to do the clerking at the hotel.

Oscar used to tell me that I was too soft on the people, that I shouldn't be paying for their room. That was his own thinking, his own judgment, and my answer to him would be, "They need help; so if I can do anything, I will."

This was one of the hotels where I could just give a man a note that said, "If you have room, will you put so and so up for three to five nights?" and they would do it. They would mark down the number of nights that he stayed, and then at the end of the month I'd pay the bill for that person and for however many others I might have sent. Oliver was very good about helping me in this way, and he gave me cut rates (which Salvation Army did *not* do). He reduced the rates for me, and he kept them much, much lower, even when he had to keep raising prices for others because of heating and utilities.

There were no women in that hotel at all; in fact, they didn't even let women up. But Oliver got to know me and trust me, and the fact that I was a nun I know had a lot to do with allowing me in.

Oliver [not Oscar] was making runs for some of the guys. If they wanted a bottle or a jug, he would get it. And, of course, he would raise the cost about a dollar as his fee for going up and down from the streets to their rooms. The men knew that he was doing this, so he wasn't ripping them off in that sense. They wanted the booze, and I think they were glad for the service.

One day Oliver asked me to come and see Oscar. He said, "I think he's pretty sick. I think he really needs to go to the hospital; he'll listen to you." This is what Oliver always would say when one of the men needed help — "He'll listen to you," or, "They'll listen to you." So I went to talk to him and convinced him that he should go to the hospital. He had cancer of the lungs, and also pneumonia I believe. He died from the cancer.

When Oscar was in the hospital, I wish now that I had gone up to see him, that I had talked with him, that I had been some sort of comfort or let him know that I cared. I had never let him know that I cared for him in any way when he was in the hotel, yet this possibly never bothered him. It's probably one of many different times that I'm going to regret that I didn't do more, or I *could* regret if I let myself think about it.

And yet, maybe all I can hope and believe is that if I move when the Spirit seems to move me, then I'm doing the best that I can. I think timing is a part of all this. I think God places certain people before us, and we can either walk around them, bump into them, or stop and have an encounter with them. I regret the times I have walked away from one of them, avoided eye contact, or walked around them, even if I might only have suggested going to detox or a halfway house. And yet I know there are others that I *have* stopped for and become involved with in conversation and interaction, and those are the ones I'm going to feel much better about.

But I never thought about visiting Oscar at the time, except once or twice maybe. And it could be that maybe my schedule was too full or that I used that as an excuse. The fact is I didn't go see him and, for some reason (though he was not a well-liked person), I wish I had. I'm sure Oliver must have gone up to see him. And while maybe he wouldn't have cared to see me, I think that when you're dying you're glad to

see *anybody*; you do appreciate the visitor being a part of your life or showing you they care about you. So Oscar is another one of those I will regret not letting know he was important.

"Anyway, Oscar, I will meet you in Heaven, and we'll have a good old talk, and I know that you don't worry now about what happened."

**brief exchange between Kate and Ron at the end of Oscar's story**

**Ron:** So you're saying that you regret not being able to like them all. Yet there are some people we just don't get along with that well, aren't much attracted to; and you said that Oscar was one of these. Do you ever just let yourself say, "I don't feel the same way about everybody and he was one of them and that's just the way it goes," or do you sort of not forgive yourself?

**Kate:** Yes, I realize that, Ron, but I think a lot of the people *themselves* took the initiative of making contact. *They* would come, *they* would want to talk. In fact, two or three might be there with me, and one would say, "*I'm* talking to her now, you just keep still, you shut up, let me say this..." They'd go through this; they could be like little children at times.

I got reports a lot of times that Oscar was really rough on people and that the men didn't overly care for him. I have found that sometimes when I get this kind of information before I get to know the person, I come into an encounter with those feelings, those thoughts, those reminders, those memories. Because these people were so dear to me, it bothered me to have somebody in authority, like Oscar, who could lash out at them. So I think that that may have been partly a barrier to my being able to relate with him.

I remember seeing him go out on the stretcher and my saying, "I'll pray for you" and "good-bye," but I didn't go up to the hospital, and it's bothering me tonight for some reason and I don't know why, because it certainly hasn't haunted me through the years or anything like that.

At any rate, I'm sure that when people die alone God more than makes up to them for the lack of any of us. I feel that God steps in and takes care of these people when I can't give generously or I don't give as generously or as willingly as I could. It still doesn't make me comfortable, but I also realize that there's a lot of me that needs to change and improve and that God isn't finished with me yet.



## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and Limbo*

*[The following exchange between Kate and Ron occurred spontaneously. The subject matter was not one that Ron had ever thought to interview Kate about; rather, it just showed up, unannounced, during a casual conversation the two of them were having a few minutes before one of the interview sessions.]*

*This exchange is included here to offer additional insight into Kate. It is recommended the dialogue be considered primarily as something of an overheard private conversation between Kate and Ron. There was no thought or desire or effort in that moment to present Catholic teaching or theology; there were only searchings of the soul.]*

**Ron:** Kate, you and I were chatting a few minutes ago, and I was saying that I pray every day for President Kennedy and Jackie in appreciation still for what they gave us as a people in the sixties, in terms of new energy, hope, and optimism. I said that I do this all the more whenever I realize that we in America have not seen that depth of motivating spirit since. Then you asked me, "Do you pray *to* them, or *for* them?" When I told you that I pray *for* them, you found this curious, and we soon found ourselves somehow in a discussion of heaven, hell, purgatory, and limbo! Let's have that discussion again.

**Kate:** At one point in my life, I probably would have done the same as you — prayed *for* them. But someplace in my life I began to pray *to* deceased persons rather than *for* them, and to feel the conviction that this was really the case.

I think you said at that point, "Do you believe in hell?" and I said, "I'm not sure that I do."

I feel that God loves unconditionally, and that if God created people out of love, to love and serve Him or Her (because there's no gender there), then God is capable of giving a choice for repentance and forgiveness to someone at the moment of their death, even if it's someone who has committed what *we* look at as atrocious crimes. Many terrible crimes are committed, I think, because of inability to cope or mental illness.

I remember a long time ago thinking this as far as Judas was concerned [Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed Jesus Christ] — that there was forgiveness of his actions, even in spite of the fact that Jesus said at one point that it would have been better for this man if he had not been born. And I used to think, "Does that mean that Judas is never going to get a chance for eternity?" But I don't feel that. I just think that people are given a last chance to accept God's mercy and forgiveness. Even if, as they die, they don't seem to accept God's love, or they seem to disclaim the fact that there is a God, I think there is a moment of recognition and acceptance offered to them by God, that God loves and forgives them in eternal love and mercy, and welcomes them.

[Related to this part and other parts of the conversation is the principle of free will, which I asked Kate about in 2005, several years after the present interview. While she confirmed that she believes in free will and, thus, in the freedom of the individual to choose not to want to be with God in eternity, she does not believe that an individual would reject God if they understood truly what they were rejecting. Since this belief on Kate's part is not named by her in the present conversation but influences it, I have included it here. -Ron]

And Limbo... I quit believing in it a long time ago.

**Ron:** Limbo? ...or *purgatory*?

**Kate:** Limbo *and* purgatory, actually.

Limbo I disbelieved in a long, long time ago because it didn't make sense that God would create a little individual who had absolutely no choices in life and was going to be separated forever.

But purgatory also I began to feel differently about than what I had been taught was the teaching of the Church. I think some of this came from different articles that I read. I'm certainly no literary scholar in any way, but I do know the feelings and the convictions that I seem to have developed as years went on. For me, purgatory is a cleansing, healing process that many times takes place in the suffering that people go through in their lives, perhaps especially towards the end of their life. The suffering that many go through, I think, can be a means of building a deeper and closer relationship with God. This can be a time of grace — to know that God loves them unconditionally in spite of anything in their past that they might have regrets for. Even if they experience a sudden death in an accident which the individual is totally unprepared for, I feel that, in that split second, if they have anything at all to reconcile, they can see and believe in and love and accept God.

**Ron:** So, in effect, are you saying that purgatory, seen in another way, in a different light, could be considered for some as a part of our *life* and not necessarily as something that takes place after death? That it can be a period of journey in *this* life, of cleansing and healing ourselves and becoming all the good that we can become?

**Kate:** I didn't think about it that way. I guess I never thought about it as being our whole life of doing something, as much as my thought about it towards the end of life, either in illness or in a momentary, sudden, tragic death.

**Ron:** But in *life*.

**Kate:** In life, yes. But my previous belief, having been taught, was that it was a place of waiting after death, as suffering, but knowing we *would* get to heaven. It was sometimes depicted as people coming out of flames, as a cleansing fire.

**Ron:** And always *after* death.

**Kate:** Yes.

No one has ever come back to really tell us exactly what it's like. There are people who have near-death experiences and say they'll never be afraid again, for whatever they experienced as they were dying. There have been people who seem to see one or more persons when they're dying, as though they are waiting for them. And I have told some who were dying that those who loved them would be there to accompany them.

And I'm just rattling on now!

**Ron:** No, I don't think so. I'm intrigued by all of this the more I think about it, Kate. I'm reminded just now of that line from the Apostles' Creed "he descended into hell." I remember I used to wonder how that could be intended and why God would go into hell. But in the scenario I hear or sense you describing, where there might not be anyone in hell, because no one would choose hell over being reconciled with God, maybe one could think of "descended into hell" as meaning instead that Jesus descended into this *life* of ours. That he went through the hell-like moments that we all go through, including when we wonder if we have been abandoned by God. And that as part of that he provided us with a model to use to reach through those sufferings both to the grace and blessing that lie beyond them and to the journey of purification they are part of. And



it's in *this* life, not after death.

**Kate:** I never thought of it that way, but that's one way I think you could look at it.

Another way that I think of "descended into hell" was when he was suffering in the garden the night before he was crucified, when he took upon himself the miseries, the sins, the burdens of the whole world, that only God *could* take on, and experienced the terrible, terrible agony at that time. That could also be the hell that Jesus experienced.

**Ron:** That's what I'm saying, too. But not just in the agony in the garden incident; rather, in the whole of his adult life, when he experienced so much of our rejection of him, and when he both experienced and witnessed so much human suffering.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Ron:** The other thing I didn't want to lose sight of — and this just occurred to me — is that, in a *way*, with all of these men whom you helped and who experienced so much pain and suffering and rejection — in a *way* you could think of that pain, suffering, and rejection as their purgatory experience in life rather than after death. I mean that that painful part of their lives might have been a self-cleansing of sorts and a long process of preparing to go on to something better: to eternity and seeing God face to face.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Ron:** And so, in conclusion, for you, *everyone* gets to heaven.

**Kate:** I like to think that. And I think that if *I* think that way, how much more *God*, who loves unconditionally and created everyone for a special purpose, to be happy with God in heaven. I mean if I as a human feel that way, how much more God must.



## PAUL

As I have said earlier, Paul was another man I first met while I was working in the County Hospital, the year before I started going down on Burnside, and I got to know him much better later on, on the streets. He was in the hospital because he had been in a car accident and broken his hip, which had become infected.

Paul was tall and good-looking. He didn't seem to have friends, and I don't remember ever seeing him sharing wine bottles on the streets, as so many others did.

I mentioned in a previous story that at one time, in the back of the Last Chance Café, I would meet with some of the street people who would want to see me about some medical problem or other need. This was during the Vietnam War when some conscientious objectors were putting in community service. One of these conscientious objectors had opened a little space near the entrance to the Burnside Hotel and called it the Last Chance Café. Street people could get soup or chili, and coffee, and I believe bread, for twenty-five cents or less. In the back of this, in a little dark room, I had a small area to work in. It had no running water and just one light bulb hanging from the ceiling. I think I only spent time there during the lunch hour, around noon. The Café itself probably didn't last longer than a year — if that. I would simply see a few people who had come for help. I would do things like make referrals to other services, call for transportation, and distribute simple, over-the-counter medications such as remedies for pain and colds.

I remember one time in particular when Paul came in. I was still wearing the veil and the modified habit. He started to slip his hand under my skirt, and I thought, "Wait a minute!" So I put my hand on his hand as a way of stopping him. At that point he said, "Why are you holding my hand?" and I said, "Would you believe I like to hold your hand?" — I was just trying to make light of it, hoping that somehow he would stop. But he started again, so I said, "Paul, I'm here to help you if you need help; if you don't, get out." He left.

There were several occasions when Paul would be sober and would ask me if I would loan him money. "I'll pay you back," he'd say. So this one time I did; I loaned him whatever he wanted — maybe seven dollars — and he did pay it back. He came again when he needed money, and he said the same thing as before, "I'll pay you back. You know I will." I ended up loaning him money about three times, and then I thought, "What am I doing?" I wasn't as aware of recovery issues at that point in my ministry as I was later in life. Even so, Paul was drinking heavily now, and I must have begun to suspect on some level — however vaguely yet — that I was enabling his drinking. I could see what he was doing to himself — he wasn't eating and he was losing weight — and I could see the ravages of the disease just taking over. So finally I said, "No." He said, "I'll pay you back," but I repeated, "No. I know that. You always have. But I don't think I'm helping you this way."

I don't know how old Paul was, but he finally got on disability, based on his poor health. He received a check for approximately three-thousand dollars, which was retroactive to the time he had applied for SSI. Often the men, once they got on disability, would get between two- and three-thousand dollars retroactively, in one lump sum. I remember saying something to Paul about putting it in a bank, but he didn't do that; he began drinking. Within three weeks he had gone through most of the money, and about three weeks later I heard that he had died. I think Paul must have died a lonely man.

Many of the people on Skid Road, including Paul, who drank excessively over a prolonged period of time, developed liver damage, and many died of cirrhosis. The liver can only metabolize about one ounce of alcohol per hour, and when someone has been drinking a half gallon or more of hard liquor a day, or up to a case or more of beer a day, say for five or six days or more, the liver can become swollen and painful. As time goes on, fatty tissue develops. The swelling and the fatty tissue are reversible when

they quit drinking. However, many alcoholics with a long history of drinking also develop scar tissue, which is the beginning of cirrhosis. Scar tissue is not reversible, and it can spread until only a small portion of the liver is left functioning. At this stage, one is very near dying a painful death, and the doctor may tell him that he has only one or two drunks left.

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## PETE

I met Pete in 1969 or 1970 when I was working at the County Hospital. He was a nice-looking man in his fifties, and he had cancer. I remember that he gave me a picture of himself, and that at some point I met his daughter and her children.

One day Pete and I were talking, and I said, "Pete, have you ever been baptized?" — I asked this because he appeared to be terminally ill. "No," he said. I said, "Would you like to be?" and he said, "Yes." I told him I could get the chaplain or I could do it myself. "Why don't *you* do it," he said. So I baptized him in the hospital.

One other time, when his daughter and grandchildren were visiting him, he told them that when he was well he was going to bring a grandmother home for them. Apparently *I* was going to be that grandmother!

Pete died eventually and was buried in Willamette Falls Cemetery.

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*Dear Kathleen [...] You can never know how dear you are to dad & my family. It means so much to us that you are taking the time to go and see him.*

*As far as I know, he was never before baptized. I'm so thankful for his "hearts" [sic] condition as to allow you to do this. Much prayer has gone up for him & I feel a peace within my own heart that he is ready to meet the Lord [...].*

*[...] my mother is still living [...] She is married to a fine fellow [...].*

*I've always been so fond of my father [...] The time we have had him here with us is so very special. All of our children think so much of him and are missing him now. Naturally, we are hoping for his soon release from the hospital [...]. By the way, he will be 55 [...] this month. I'm sending him a letter which I will enclose. Please read it to him as he sometimes can not read too well. Much love to Kathleen [...].*

*- excerpts from a letter to Kate in 1970 from Pete's daughter*

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## RANDALL

I first met Randall in the Chicken Coop Flophouse, as the men called it — the Holm Hotel. Now the Holm and the old Western Hotel adjoined each other and were on Second Street, between Burnside and Ankeny, right across from Salvation Army; but, at the time I started on Burnside, the Western had been closed down. When I think of it now, I realize there were fire traps that existed in some of the buildings on Skid Road during that period; you could have really gotten trapped if there ever had been a fire in one of them.

The Holm had never let women come up before (at least that's what I was told), but early in my ministry they used to let me in; I am not sure why they allowed this — perhaps because I was a nun.

Randall was a night watchman in the Holm. He lived inside a little area on one of the floors that had at one time been an entranceway between the Holm and the Western. This opening seemed more like part of a knocked out wall than anything else, and I remember I could see the beams of the Western from Randall's space. He had a little bed or cot and a light.

He used to talk to me. He did his drinking off and on at that time. I remember that he was still working there when he told me that he had just found out he was diabetic. He later left that hotel.

The next time that I ran into Randall was at the Oak Apartments, on Southwest Third and Oak, which is part of HUD and is much like the Housing Authority of Portland units, where the government subsidizes housing. Randall was disabled by this time and receiving SSI because of his diabetes. He'd go to see the doctor quite regularly, and I visited him frequently. He kept a very neat apartment, and, when I'd go up, he'd always insist that I have something to eat that he had prepared.

As he got older, and with his diabetes, he became kind of an irascible person and was estranging himself from many of his old friends in the hotel. He would be grumpy and feel sorry for himself a lot.

He'd tell me about his diabetes. At that time, he began having some ulcers on his ankles, and he was always complaining about the cost of the medications. I think he was a veteran, but he couldn't get enough of the supplies that he needed from them; he *could* get the dressings, though, and he had been taught how to take care of the ulcers and more or less to control the diabetes with insulin.

One day he told me that he just wanted to leave. He said, "I don't know where I'm going to go, but I'm going to go." He said that he would be going very soon, and I think he asked me if I could help him financially to accomplish this. I don't think he knew why he wanted to leave. I know that his brother had come, that he didn't like his brother and didn't want him around because he thought he was going to make demands on him. And I think, too, that Randall's illness and its effect on him had a lot to do with his decision. Also, he didn't like some of the people in the hotel that he used to be friends with. He was cutting himself off from everyone, and he felt that he really didn't have any more friends except me and that I wouldn't be seeing him that much. His cutting himself off from his friends was the part that really hurt me; it bothers me when I see the men do something like that. So, having apparently decided to make a clean break of it, he left.

Then I received a letter from San Antonio, where he had gone. He said in it, "When I got to the bus depot, I had no idea where I was going to go; I just knew I was going." He saw a bus for San Antonio and bought a ticket.

When he got there he found a place to live, but since his check didn't get forwarded in time he asked me if could send a month's rent to his landlady. He said, "I'll pay you back," which I knew he would do. I talked to his landlady and said to her, "I'll send it. You'll receive it in a couple of days." She said, "Okay, Sister, that's fine." Using my ministry funds, I sent whatever it was that he needed. So he didn't have to

worry about his rent that month. By the time the rent was due the next month, I believe his government check had come through to him; at any rate, he paid me back right away. I used to hear from Randall off and on, but then he quit writing. I hope he's well.

### **transient behavior and changing times**

Moving around is kind of typical of these people on Skid Road; I mean, they've lived in many places. They'd be in one place for a while, and then they'd take off and go to some other place. Many of the men rode the freight trains for transportation. Almost all the Burnside people I met who ever did any tramping around had been in almost every state in the Union and on the skid roads of all of them. I am not sure why they moved on so frequently, but my guess is that it may have been due to several factors. Maybe they'd think they were getting into trouble with the law or were wanted a few too many times by the police or were in trouble in some other way. Others had begun closing all doors and, as a result, felt the need to move on. Many of them would go from one town to another because maybe they had heard there was a little more work there. Some of them followed crops; they might work for a while harvesting, and then when they had enough money they would start drinking. Years ago, before I was down on Burnside, the men could usually find work; but in the years when I was on Skid Road a lot of that changed. You had a lot of immigrants coming in, and they would get on the buses ahead of the old-timers. They would work harder and were younger, and they would even push some of the old-timers out of the way when boarding the buses. I remember when someone said, "You can't even get on the buses anymore." The older men were getting really disturbed about this. There was also a time when people would leave the area because they would hear that they could get more out of welfare if they were an alcoholic in Washington State than in Portland. These are some of the reasons that were given at different times for why the men moved around a lot.

Some of the men who would hop the boxcars could be out in such very cold elements. I remember one of these men who came into my office once, whose feet had frozen during an incident involving the cold: while the train he was on was going through some cold weather his water jug broke, his feet got wet as a result, and he ended up having to have part of them amputated. People who used to ride the rails have told me that it's much more dangerous now [around 1987] than it used to be. Before, they knew each other and they had a law among themselves: they had what they called the "jungle" — a series of camp sites — and if newcomers made a camp someplace and the people before them had left some food for the next person to come along, and the newcomers ate it, then the newcomers in turn would leave something for those who would come after them. But, from what they've told me, it isn't like that anymore; it's more dangerous now. There are younger people who don't care, who are on drugs, and they will injure or steal or even kill. If an old guy comes along, for example, and somebody thinks he has money, the younger man will take it and possibly really hurt the older man in the process.

I think drugs are a big factor in this change. I believe drugs are why there are so many younger people on the streets of Skid Road now; the increase in violence now [1987] by younger people is in part because of the drugs. This is in contrast to the earlier years of my ministry down there, when the main substance of use was alcohol. It's just so much different than it used to be, whether on the streets, in the boxcars, or under the bridges. There's a lot of cruelty in the world, and it's hard to accept that. It's hard for me to know about it. This is where my faith comes in, in believing that in time there is going to be something good for these people who suffer and have suffered so much.

## FROM THE TIMES

### *In the Words of a Skid Row Resident*

*[From "Lyle Dent," an interview by Paul Lobell, in BCC Pipeline, July 1975. Interview presented here in its entirety, without the photo.]*

Q. What do you think about the new shops coming into the Burnside Area?

A. Now, do you mean do I like the new antique shops that are coming in? Well, I like them all right, BUT there's going to have to be something done, this street [around the Skid Road part of West Burnside Street] is going to have to be cleaned up. You see, there's a lot of people who won't come down here. There's too many wild guys around. So they got to move 'em out and then there'll probably be a whole bunch more shops. This'll be a famous antique center called Burnside.

Q. Do you think you'll still live here then?

A. Sure. I like to go look at those antique shops. Course, I can't buy nothin', you know. Oh, I can buy some little trinket to send my wife or somethin' like that. I might buy her a screech owl, maybe I can get a small one.

Q. How long have you lived down here?

A. Oh, about 14 years.

Q. Has it changed much?

A. Oh, yea. Colyer (a cop on the Burnside beat) changed it but something fierce, but the old time jack-rollers are still here. And then there's the guys you don't think are jack-rollers.

Q. How many times have you been jack-rolled [assaulted as part of an effort to rob]?

A. Oh, about four. \$16 in the Estate Hotel, first crack. And \$210. And then \$135. You see, he chased me up the stairs and caught me. Boy, he come up that stairway like a pack of wolves. So there went that dough. He grabbed me and I got this busted hip, you see, so I couldn't run. I heard 'em coming, so I said all right, take the money but leave the papers.

Q. Do you have a drinking problem?

A. Oh yea, it used to be awful bad, but I'm beginning to simmer down. There's just too much junk in it now [he may have been referring to various ingredients added to fortified wine in those times], and it's getting so it don't taste good no more. I take a drink once in a while. Oh, and then every once in a while I get a little too far. Sometimes I run into some guy that's loaded with loot that I know, and then off comes the top of Mt. Vesuvius, see. So when I get that bad I make a dead run for, what do you call it, De-to. I get in there before I get any worse, you see.

Q. Did you ever think about quitting drinking?

A. Well, you know once a man's a genuine alcoholic, I'd never say I'm going to quit completely.

Q. Would you consider yourself a genuine alcoholic?

A. Sure, a guy's a genuine alcoholic that's drank ever since 1938. I used to only drink beer, see. But then I got down here [on Skid Road]. I used to think it was a cardinal sin to drink wine. Now here I am drinking wine. You otta seen me about three years ago. Boy, you wouldn't know it was me.

Q. What did you used to do?

A. I used to be a log truck driver, I was a timber faller and a buckner and a catscaner and a welder.

Q. What made you quit?

A. Well, the wife and I busted up, so I... Well, I was working for a depot down there, and he just wouldn't pay. We had this new chain they called it a chipper chain; it's still in Oregon. He said I think I'll take this saw home and file it. Boy, did he file it. He cross-filed it, you see. So I come up to buck a log that was layin' in the landing, and I socked the hooks in and layed down and DZZZZZZZZ, and out comes a bunch of powder like talcum powder. But I bucked 'em anyway, but boy I had to fight 'em to do it. But when I got through with 'em I just stuck the power saw and the hooks in there, and just took off down the road with a California suitcase. I never been back.

Q. Would you take another logging job if one came along?

A. I can't with a busted hip. With this busted hip you'd be a crazy man to go out in those woods cuz sometimes a tree'll barber-chair if you know what that means, and you got to toss your saw in one direction and run the other way. I almost got hit a couple a times. I can't work in the woods no more.



## *Wandering Nun*

*[Excerpts from "Sister Kate, the 'Wandering Nun,'" an article and photo by Robert Gabriel, of the Sentinel staff, in Catholic Sentinel (official publication of the Archdiocese of Portland), February 19, 1982. Article and photo reprinted with permission.]*

"Jesus said he would love those who care for the least of his brethren. I can't think of anyone who's more 'least' than the people on Burnside, so that's who I'm going to care for." —Sister Kate St. Martin, SNJM

She's been a fixture on Portland's Skid Road for more than 12 years. Some of her best friends are people whom others, less well informed or sensitive, call "drunks."

She is acquainted firsthand with death and deprivation, poverty and pain, anxiety and depression. She numbers among her intimates people from the highest and lowest walks of Portland's society.

But Holy Names Sister Kathleen St. Martin — better known on the streets as "Sister Kate" — has given her heart to Skid Road and so long as she can walk and talk, she insists she'll continue to work among the people she loves.

Burnside, Portland's low-income, down-in-the-mouth, end-of-the-road neighborhood, wouldn't be the same without her.

Today, almost a year after the closure of her former office and clinic in the now-defunct Matt Talbot Center, Sister Kate, 60, calls herself a "wandering nun" as she flits in and out of the area's Skid Road hotels on her daily rounds.

[...] She's been in the neighborhood since 1970, when — fresh from school as a registered nurse — she stood with bag in hand at the Blanchet House searching for a way to help the lines of men who seemed so clearly to be beyond helping.

She found a way to use her skills by changing dressings, removing sutures, passing out vitamins to vitamin-starved alcoholics. But most of all, she passed out love and friendship.

Today, she works the neighborhood without an aide, protected only by the thousands of regulars she has helped in the past. They remember her for holding their hands through a bad case of DTs, for getting them off the streets during a freeze, or for the favor she did for a sick friend from whom everyone else had turned.

"Nobody out there would hurt a hair on this lady's head," a one-legged man confided from his stained and sparse hotel room. "They wouldn't dare — not if they wanted to go on living." [...]

"They're people too," she said [referring to the men who live on Burnside]. "They deserve to be treated with dignity, not like monsters. They get kicked around enough without that." [...]

After making a couple of stops to check on other men [...], Sister Kate paused briefly before one of the room doors

"This is Herb's room," she said.

Herb, Sister Kate explained, is a 62-year-old veteran of Burnside who has been losing a battle with his health. Years of abusing his body with alcohol, especially wine, have cost him one leg, and she said his good leg probably won't last much longer.

"He thinks if he goes to the hospital, they'll take it off, too" she said, "so he's avoiding the hospital like the plague."

Today, she said, she planned to change some dressings on Herb's arm. He had injured it a couple weeks earlier during a fall out of his wheelchair and asked Sister Kate to change the dressing so he wouldn't have to go to the hospital, she said.

She added that some of his friends from the hotel lobby reported he wasn't feeling too good today. Their assessment appeared accurate. After being roused from his nap, Herb's face looked greyish and he complained of pain in his abdominal area.

"I'm really hurting," he said.

Despite his pain, he struggled to a sitting position and extended his arm for Sister Kate's inspection. As she began her work, he smiled and asked if she was ready to play another game of cribbage.

"She's good," he said. "Did she tell you that? I can't even cheat on her anymore. She'll take me nine games out of 10."

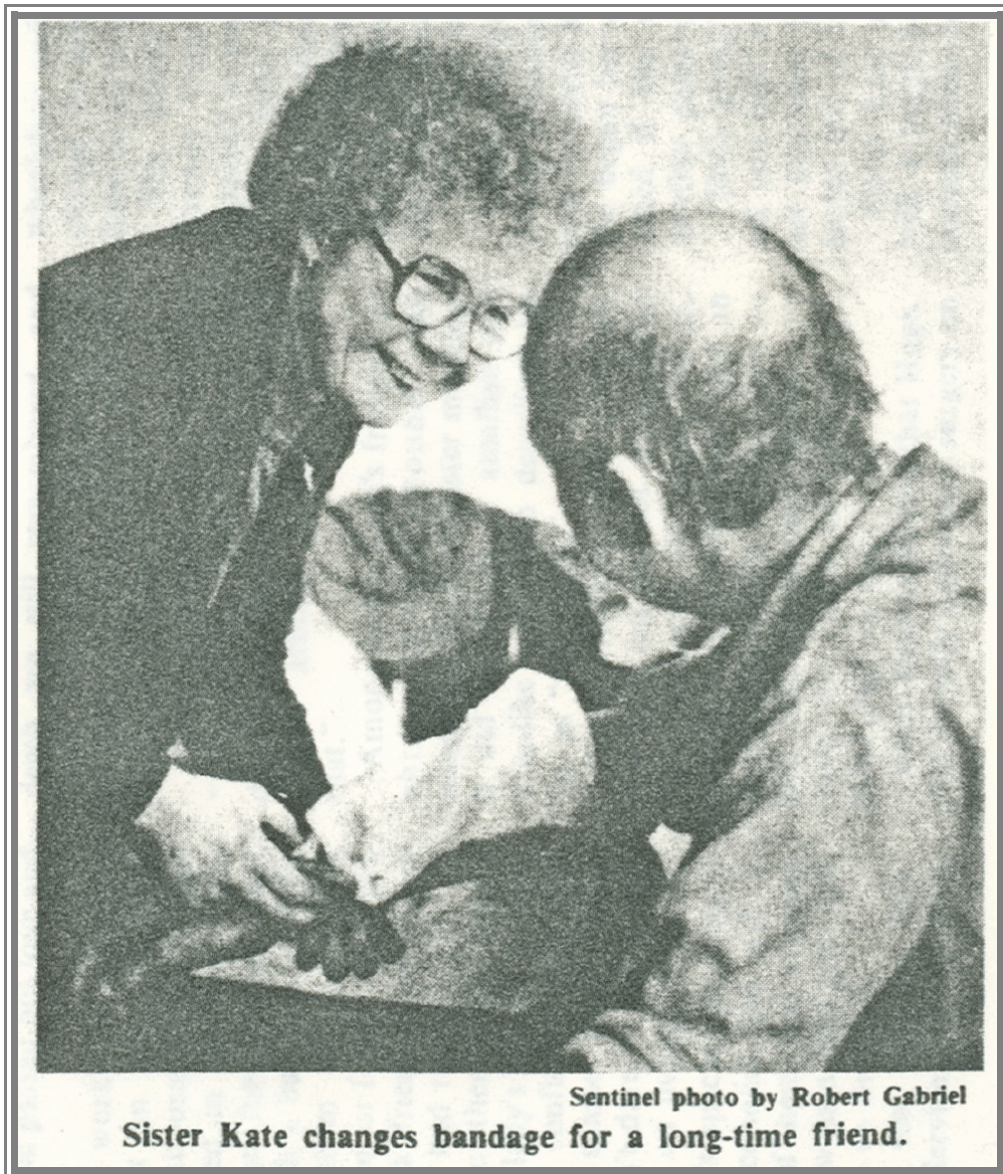
Sister Kate accepted the praise with a laugh before returning her concentration to the dressing. The stained gauze was adhering to the wound and she was concerned.

"Don't hurt me, Kate," Herb asked, tears coming quickly to his eyes. "I can't take pain anymore."

Sometimes, she said, long-term alcoholics who have gone a long time without a drink have a markedly low tolerance for pain.

She promised not to hurt him, and gently soaked the dressing off. [...]

"He was an alcoholic," Sister Kate said [referring to a man mentioned later in



Kate changing bandage for Herb. Photographer Robert Gabriel/Catholic Sentinel. Reprinted with permission. ©1982 Catholic Sentinel. Herb is "Frank" in the stories.

**FIRE IN THE DARK**

the article], "but he was a very good man. What more can you ask from someone than that?"



Herb and Kate playing cribbage at Foster Hotel. Photo from undeterminable source and not part of Robert Gabriel article above. Herb is "Frank" in the stories.

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FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS
Kate Overcoming Her Fear of the Dead

Ron: A couple of days ago [March 2001], you shared with me your fear of the dead as a young Sister. I found that story intriguing, particularly in its stark contrast to your experiences with the dead later in life, both those on Skid Road and especially those who have died from AIDS.

The meaning and the reality of "dead" in your experience seem to have taken an almost one hundred and eighty degree turn, from something you feared as a young person to something you have come to embrace as a friend, more or less, in this, your eightieth year.

Please share with me again, Kate, about that fear in your youth and how you gradually overcame it?

Kate: When I was in the second grade in Winnipeg [Manitoba, Canada], the father of one of my classmates died, and Sister took the class to the home, where the body was laid out. My memory is that the room was darkened, with maybe a dim lamp on and candles. We saw the casket and a man lying in it. He had to have been a young man, whatever he died of. He was so still and so white. I had previously had no expectations of what death was like; after this experience, I was afraid of seeing a deceased person.

Ron: And how old were you?

Kate: Seven, I guess.

When I entered the convent the second time, in 1940, I remember that Sister Willamina died. She was a dear, dear Sister and had been the second ranking member of the original founders of our Community. Sister was laid out in the parlor, which was the last place the body would be before the funeral. I didn't want to go into the room where the body lay. Some knew I was afraid of the dead, and I remember that Sister Margaret Ellen, one of my classmates and friends, said, "She won't hurt you." Then Margaret Ellen took my hand and put it on Willamina's hand in the coffin, and I felt this icy cold hand. I left as quickly as I could after this and went to the dining room.

Now this was on a Sunday, and Sunday dinners were always a little more special; I think we had meat loaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, and carrots that day. I had filled my plate with what I thought I wanted. I started to eat but I couldn't; I couldn't eat anything. I don't recall if I just sat there or if I left.

Later on, still during the first year of my novitiate, I remember going to the cemetery once. The novitiate had gone over there; I don't recall if we were going to water the plants around the graves or if we just took a little walk and recreation — you asked what we got to do for recreation... we got to walk over to the cemetery sometimes! Anyway, we crossed Tualatin Valley Highway, which I think was only two lanes at that time; it certainly wasn't the much traveled highway that it is now. Our novice mistress was with us. She was an older woman who had a hard time, I think, dealing with all twelve of us in one class — it was the second largest class they had ever had. This must have been after winter. Anyway, the ground was sunken at the ends of one of the graves, and I shuddered and turned away. My novice mistress scolded me and told me to go back to the convent. I remember saying, "By myself?!" (because we always had to have a companion). She said, "Yes." So I walked back to the convent alone.

The next day, the novice mistress said that, for my penance regarding what had

happened the day before, I was to go and stand by that grave and say some prayers for the Sister who was buried there. I did it, and then I thought, "Well, I'll try and overcome this." So I asked if the next time somebody died I could help in some way.

An occasion for this came when Sister Josephine died. She had been a very small, slightly built nun, probably in her early eighties. I was asked to help lift her from her bed to what I called "the dead board" — the board they first put the dead body on. She was brought to another room, and I don't remember if I had to help carry the board. But I *do* remember the feeling of my hands touching the lower part of her legs (I think the soft fleshy part), and it felt so different. That incident didn't really take away the fear.

On the last night before the funeral of a Sister who died, her body would lie in the casket in the chapel, up near the front, with candles, and we would be assigned different hours to get up from bed and go down to the chapel; I think one group would wake up the next group that was supposed to go down. I always stayed in the back of the chapel during these times; and, if I went up to check on the candles, I wouldn't look in the casket, which would be open. And I remember that if a Sister had died on the third floor or fourth floor and her body was still there, I would *run* past that flight when I was going up and down the stairs.

We slept in dorms. Each of our little cells (or alcoves) had a bed, a stand, probably a chair, and had curtains around it. And I remember praying there when a Sister died and saying, "Please don't come appear to me! I'll pray for you but *please* don't appear to me. Don't appear to me" — as though she *would*!

So I really did not feel comfortable with the dead up to this point.

I finally overcame that fear when I became a nurse. As a nurse at Maryville Nursing Home, I began to see people closer to death. For example, one of the twins (a Sister) was dying, and I remember going in and saying the rosary quietly beside her.

Another time, after Sister Columba suffered a stroke or a massive heart attack and was at St. Vincent's Hospital [then located on Northwest Westover Road in northwest Portland], I volunteered to go and stay with her. I think this was a beautiful custom [that the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon had], and we do the same in my Community now [Sisters of the Holy Names]. I sat there during the night with Sister Columba. I wasn't afraid to be with her at that point. And, over time, once I was with someone while they were dying, I wasn't really afraid to be with them after they were dead.

So that was the beginning of overcoming my fear of the dead. And, of course, I've had a lot of opportunity since then to be with people when they were dying.

[For more on Kate's experience and thoughts and feelings on dealing with the dying, see *From the Interview Sessions: Evolution of Ministry to Include Gay Men and Women, Including Those Living With HIV Disease and Dying From AIDS.*]



RANDOLPH THOMAS

Randolph Thomas I knew a *long* time ago. He was a pretty well-educated man. He was kind of a cute guy, nice looking, and he wasn't all that old. He was in the Holm Hotel — the Chicken Coop Flophouse — which is where I first used to see him. He'd call me in and we would talk and visit.

Randolph would drink with everybody else. It was just very convivial up there in the hotel! You'd go down the dark, little hallway, passing these little cubicle rooms. You'd stop at one of these and there'd be a cot, and there'd be three guys sitting on the edge of it, passing the bottle back and forth, smoking their cigarettes, and just having a good time! One or another of them might be kind of sacked out, but a lot of times they were all just sitting there, drinking enough to have a good time. And Randolph was one of them.

Then Randolph began to have some circulatory problems. He told me they were going to amputate his leg. He said he was going to tell them to amputate it above the knee because he had seen enough people who had had amputations below the knee, who then later had to have a second amputation *above* the knee. I had heard this from many of the men. But the doctor amputated below Randolph's knee; and sure enough, later, they had to amputate *above* the knee! I don't know why doctors won't listen to patients if they *ask* for something like that. So Randolph had to go through two amputations, after which he ended up in a nursing home.

I used to go see him there. He was in a wheelchair. There was a cute and personable young woman there who was slightly retarded, and they became very good friends. They had their little good times and he was happy. He didn't have any desire, really, to leave, and seemed perfectly content to stay.

RANDY SULLIVAN

When I was working at Harmony House, one of the men who came into the house was Randy Sullivan. Randy was an older man, I would say close to sixty at that time. He was balding and had white hair and twinkling blue eyes. He had a very nervous way about him, and he spoke very quickly. But he was fun and was a nice, enjoyable person in the house.

I never saw him drunk. I knew that he had come into the house because he had a drinking problem, but in time I found out that his was a dual problem: he was also a compulsive gambler. Usually what would happen was that he would be in the gambling casinos and would start to drink; he told me that the gambling was what led him into the drinking. Once he started drinking he couldn't seem to stop, and then he couldn't think clearly enough to gamble.

When he came into the house he did pretty well, aside from getting on some of the other men's nerves. He was very well educated and was an accountant. I think that because he was so well educated he was a little class above the majority of the people who came into Harmony House without as much education. There were some who had done quite well professionally, but Randy was better educated than many of them.

When he was ready to move out, he moved into an apartment. He stayed sober for a while, but then began drinking again. I went to his apartment once, when he was drinking, and I remember being *appalled* by the sight of it. You can't *believe* the terrible, terrible mess that someone who's drinking can get into, if you've never seen it. I'm not talking here about a little room in a one-room hotel; I'm talking about an entire apartment! He was drunk, as I said; but normally when he wasn't drinking he was a very clean, fastidious, meticulous person.

He came back into the house and stayed a much longer time than before. When he was ready to look for a job, eventually, he kept getting turned down. He would tell potential employers that he was a recovering alcoholic, because he thought that was the fair thing to say. And they wouldn't take him. It seems to me that his age was also a factor. So he came to me one day and said, "I don't know what to do. As soon as they hear of my age or the fact that I was alcoholic they won't hire me." I suggested, "Randy, don't volunteer information. Just go through the interview." He said, "What if I lied a little bit? I know my work, and I know if I got working they would be well-satisfied with me." I don't know what approach he ended up using, but he was a little less than honest at one of his interviews and he was hired; it was a small company, and he was good and was doing fine with the job.

Randy left the house eventually, and I didn't see him for a long time after. Then he came up to De Paul one time with his wife. He had married, was working, and was delightfully happy. I think he might have been retired, actually, but he was also working some. The two of them traveled and had a really enjoyable time. He was very much into his own personal program for continuing recovery. He told me that he had been going to Gamblers Anonymous and was also going to Alcoholics Anonymous. He was faithful to both programs and has successfully stayed sober and free from gambling.

RAYMOND

I don't remember this man's name, so I'm going to call him "Raymond." Raymond had been in Harmony House at one time, which was a halfway house for recovering alcoholics. He was in his early forties, and he had been married to a Rose Festival princess.

While he was in the halfway house for a stretch, he used to tell me, "You know, when I come to die, I could be very happy. I love the ocean, and if I could just sit and watch the water, the waves, the sunrise and sunset, and have a bottle of wine, I could be perfectly happy until I died." This was very interesting to me because while there was a beauty in part of what he was saying, there was also the anesthetizing of himself, of his loneliness, his sorrow, and the marriage that didn't work out.

One day, I had gone to the hospital to see Pete (I think it was) [see Pete's story], and someone said, "There's another man in here who knows you. Would you come and see him?"

So I went into the man's room, and here was Raymond whom I had known when he had been in pretty good health, but who now was suffering excruciating agony. His blood was clotting in his veins, which was extremely painful, and his skin was blotched and discolored.

His roommate told me that the doctor had said that if Raymond had some Port wine, it would stimulate his appetite and help his recovery. The roommate gave me ten dollars to get Raymond a bottle of Port, which, I was told, I could get only from a liquor store.

So I purchased the wine, and, as I walked out of the store, I saw someone dressed in black. I looked up and recognized Fr. Martin Senko. He said, "Ohhhh... so *this* is what you do!!" I was still in the habit, and this was the first time ever that I had purchased alcohol. I was too embarrassed to respond to his teasing, beyond saying, "No, it's not what it looks like!"

When Raymond was in such pain in the hospital, I asked him about his family. He gave me the name of a relative, whom I called, but the person didn't want anything to do with Raymond. I was told, "All he has ever done is hound us for money. I don't think I'm interested in seeing him." And I said, "But he is dying. He's not going to hound anybody now. Could I ask you, please, to notify at least the rest of his family, brothers and sisters?"

Well, the contacts were made, and each relative in turn came to see him. I suppose, in one way, they made a peace, perhaps because he was so sick; but it meant a lot to him to have them come.

Raymond died, and was buried in Willamette Falls Cemetery. I believe I attended his funeral.

REX

I first met Rex in the Matt Talbot Center. He was well educated, and he dressed well usually, but I didn't know very much about his background. I remember he used to come in with a bad case of psoriasis, on his hands mostly. His hands would be very mottled, red, and itchy. At times he would wear gloves to keep some kind of a medication on them.

And those were most of my contacts with him. Eventually he moved to the Foster Hotel.

Rex did a *lot* of drinking. When he'd drink, it would bring out the worst in him — in his mannerisms and in the way he'd talk. Sometimes he'd be nice, but other times there'd be something about him that was not as even-tempered. And he could be rude, which I never do appreciate in the men. His attitude would make me not want to do very much for him; but I did help him if he needed it, there's no doubt about that.

A few years later, I met Rex again in one of the hotels, and he told me that his hands were much better since the psoriasis was being treated with a different medication.

RICK

Rick was an Indian, a Native American, a tall and rather large man. When Rick was drunk around me, he would think he was Jesus and want to marry me. I would laugh this off, usually; I'd kind of squirm away from him and just laugh it off. But he was a good man when he wasn't drinking.

I had an office at the Matt Talbot Center at that time; it was just one of the bedrooms that had been converted into an office. This one day when Rick came in, there was no one in my office and he was drunk. I had a little desk over by the window on the Couch Street side. And I had a chair where people sat, and a stool which I used for people to rest their leg on if I was doing a dressing for a foot. When I realized that Rick was coming, I put that stool between his chair and my chair! At some point after he came in, all of a sudden he started in on talk about how he was God and he was going to marry me. Then he stood up and started to put his hands on me. I was scared really, also because he was a big man, he was drunk, and he was talking about this marrying business. Then, as I recall, he put his hand on my breast, and I was even more scared. I did what I had done before in a couple of similar moments with others: I put my hand on his shoulder, steered him out of the room and said, "Rick, that's all. We're finished. That's all I can do for you today!" So I managed to get him out the door.

After that, I had an understanding with Eric, the Jesuit Brother in the office next door, who was director and manager of the Matt Talbot Center. I said, "Eric, there has to be some communication line here so that when I need help I can call out some code word and somebody will come running in to help me. I felt really trapped there with this big man in this small room and no one else around." So we worked something up. In all my time on Burnside, there were only about three incidents like this, where I really had to get somebody away from me physically.

I didn't see Rick again for years and years. Then one day I saw him on the street, pushing a shopping cart full of the recyclables that many of the street people pick up, and I thought, "I think I know who he is; I sure hope he doesn't know who I am!" (I was much more easily recognized as a rule by these people, who didn't know that many nuns, than they were by me, because there were just too many of them for me to remember all of them.) Then Rick looked at me, and I knew that he recognized me. He made a comment that related back to the incident that had happened at Matt Talbot — something like, "You put me off." I wasn't really worried by then because I hadn't seen him until that encounter and I figured that by this time he was an older man and wouldn't hurt me.

But he wasn't Jesus, and he wasn't going to marry me!

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Evolution of Ministry to Include Gay Men and Women,  
Including Those Living with HIV Disease  
and Dying from AIDS*

**Ron:** By 1987 we had completed all but one of the taping sessions regarding your Skid Road ministry. It is now 2001, and since then your ministry focus has changed dramatically — from alcohol and drugs to AIDS. From dealing with those who are homeless and disadvantaged on Skid Road to dealing with gay men and women, especially those who are living with HIV disease and dying from AIDS. Although you still maintain your contacts with many of the individuals on Burnside with whom you were involved for so many years, your ministry has changed dramatically by now. How did this come about?

**first experiences encountering gay and lesbian individuals**

**Kate:** When I was probably still a student nurse at Maryville Nursing Home, one of the aids was Andrea Potter, and she and I became friends. She used to like to work on the same shift that I was working, and then when I began to go down on Burnside in 1970, on Tuesdays, she used to come with me sometimes, and quite often for a while. This continued for some months.

One day she wanted to talk to me, and she told me that she was a lesbian. She wanted to talk to a priest. She said she had lived with a couple of other women, and something happened there that resulted in the relationship breaking off. She wanted to be able to get back to the sacraments; apparently she didn't think she could do this when she was living with other lesbians.

I remember *this*: I didn't judge her. And I didn't know enough about any of it. She must have thought that living as a lesbian was very wrong as far as the Church was concerned. I certainly didn't know anything about that at the time, and I don't even recall thinking about that. I got in touch with a Jesuit priest and asked if he would talk with her if she called him, and he said yes.

So that was my first encounter with a lesbian. I didn't see her again after this.

Then, a year or so later, when Jerry Pratt was hosting Town Hall, Arlene Schnitzer had recruited me to be on the program and talk about homelessness. [Town Hall was, at that time, a weekly current events television program in Portland, and included a viewer call-in segment.] They were calling me Sister Kate. When it was time for people to call in, this woman called, gave her name, and said, "I wonder if this is the same Sister Kathleen that I used to go around with on Burnside." I said yes; and I always regretted that I didn't get her address at that time, because I didn't have any more contact with her after that program. She had been my first contact with lesbians and gays, as I mentioned earlier, and I liked her.

The next experience I had was when I worked at De Paul Center starting in 1982. There were gay and lesbian people there, staff as well as clients or residents. Again, I don't know what I thought about this [the subject of homosexuality] — I just never gave it much thought. People were people. I don't recall ever having any kind of prejudice at all.

I think there was a time in my life, though, when I guess I was sort of repulsed by the thought of homosexual activity. Then as time went on and I got to know gay and lesbian people and realize how wonderful and beautiful they were, the thought of homosexual activity was no longer something that I thought of as repulsive, or even gave a thought about any longer.

I remember Christopher Ambrose (whom I had taught in fifth grade) coming to De Paul and telling me that he was going to have a bike-a-thon for the benefit of people with AIDS. I thought he might be gay but I didn't have any assurance about this.

The people I knew from that time on who were gay I learned to love and admire and respect, but I still hadn't thought about the Church's views in this regard because I wasn't in a situation where anything came up about the Church and homosexuality.

### **first experiences dealing with HIV disease and AIDS**

At De Paul Center, in approximately 1985, we had our first HIV-positive client. Merle Olsen, the director, told me about it. He said, "I think you should know. You're the nurse." The client and I became very good friends. He said once, "It's going to be hard when I start to change." Even by this time he had started to do some transitioning to AIDS, because he found out he couldn't run anymore. Then gradually he couldn't even swim, his legs were getting so weak. Then I think he must have gone back down to California, because he quit working at Fred Meyer's where I used to see him after he left De Paul, and I haven't seen him since. [Update 2005: Kate reconnected in late 2004 with her friend, at Our House, where he was a resident and where, in early 2005, he succumbed to AIDS.]

Later, another client came to De Paul who was very sick and had AIDS. He told me he was Catholic. He was twenty-eight and very nice looking. He relapsed, left De Paul, used and drank again, and came back looking much worse. Then he left again, and drank and used until he died.

One or two other clients came to De Paul who had AIDS or were HIV-positive.

By this time, I was given the opportunity to attend a three-day seminar at Seaside, on AIDS and HIV disease, which I welcomed [Seaside is a city on the northern Oregon coast]. I learned a lot at that seminar — a *lot*! Many of the trainings were presented very graphically.

When I came back to De Paul, I said, "We have to have condoms for our people when they go home for a weekend or when they get a day pass or a four-hour pass." We knew that many of them were going to be sexually active at those times. I said this to the staff and they agreed, so I obtained condoms through the Westside Health Clinic downtown.

I had cut down to half time at De Paul in 1992, and I worked the other half time at another alcoholism treatment center, Laurelhurst Manor, which, like De Paul at that time, also served youth and adults. When I cut down to half time, De Paul hired an additional nurse, whose name was Ernestine, and when she heard about the availability of condoms, she said, "This is *wrong*! The Pope says this is wrong. We can't have this!"

And I said, "This is a *protection*! God doesn't want people to be getting this disease." The next day I came to work and my supervisor called me into his office and showed me the basket of condoms. He said, "Ernestine said she can't work with these condoms in her office because the Pope says this is wrong." I said, "Well, I think if Jesus were on the street in this day and age, he'd be handing them out to people!" Ernestine eventually quit, and we were able to restore supplying condoms in the nurse's office, both in De Paul's adolescent center (where I worked for a couple of months) and in the adult center.

### **changes in employment**

Laurelhurst Manor, where I had been working half time, closed in May. By June I had already been thinking of quitting De Paul, but I wanted a job and I wanted it to stay in the field of alcohol and drugs. Then that June, at the De Paul Ducky Derby Race, which was a fund-raising event, I ran into Duane Sherman, the director of Central City Concern. (Central City Concern is an umbrella agency that operates a detoxification center and low income housing like the Sally McCracken House, the Estate, the Foster and other hotels, and provides other services as well.) I asked Duane, "Could you use a nurse at Central City Concern?" and he said, "Yes. We just had a nurse die from an

overdose, so call and see." I had worked at the detox unit in the early seventies.

Because of this new job possibility and the fact that I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue at De Paul, I did not renew my contract with De Paul immediately when it expired in June.

Then, on July the sixth, a few days after my seventy-first birthday, my mother fell and broke her hip. Because I needed to start going regularly to Tacoma [Washington] Mondays through Fridays to care for her, I gave notice to De Paul. After this, I called Central City Concern, had an interview, and was hired to work Saturdays and Sundays at their Hooper Detoxification Center. At that time, nurses just worked from ten until two on Sundays, but I was willing to do more, so my hours eventually became from eight until four. This job allowed me both to remain employed and to remain in the field of alcohol and drugs, which had been one of my goals.

As I look back, I can see that the circumstances of my ministry were changing. You can't start something and then twenty-some years later have it be exactly the same as it was. The focus of my work was changing with the needs of the population. Also, many of the people on Skid Road developed AIDS or were HIV-positive, so that AIDS and HIV disease presented a need for medical, social, and psychological services. This included care for those already infected, education in the ways this disease is transmitted, and a strong focus on prevention.

### **Mass in Time of AIDS**

Because I couldn't go to Mass on Sundays once I was working at Hooper, I called up one day to find out how to get to the Mass in Time of AIDS, which was at six o'clock on Monday evenings. I had first gone to that Mass with you, Ron, when it was held at the Koinonia House [Campus Christian Ministry] at Portland State University. Mass in Time of AIDS was started by Father Floyd Pierson, and was a Mass that especially welcomed those who were HIV-positive or had AIDS. At a certain point this Mass stopped being held at the Koinonia House and was transferred to the HIV Day Center in southwest Portland.

I was given directions to get there, and I went and felt perfectly at home. It was a warm, little group. Fr. Floyd wasn't there that day so there wasn't a Mass, but a man named Miguel said, "Kate, tell us a little about yourself." I told them about my becoming a nun, how I became involved with Skid Road, and a few other things about myself.

So I began to go to that Mass on a regular basis. There was always someone new there each time, and I got to know several who were gay, HIV-positive, or had AIDS, and some of them I dearly loved.

### **Dignity Mass**

One of the women who went to the Mass in Time of AIDS knew that I had taught a man by the name of Christopher Ambrose in the fifth grade many, many years before, when I was a Sister of St. Mary. One time she said, "Why don't you come to Dignity Mass sometime. You'll have a chance to see Christopher." Besides Christopher, who was gay, his identical twin Everett, whom I got to see later, was also gay (Everett died of AIDS a couple of years ago). She told me the Mass was Saturday evenings at seven-thirty at St Stephen's Episcopal Church downtown.

Dignity Mass welcomed the gay Catholic community who did not feel comfortable in their own parishes. Some had been rejected and even physically pushed out. At one time this Mass was held at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in southeast Portland, but when I began to go it was held at St. Stephen's Episcopal church.

So I went to a Dignity Mass. I remember there was a large banner outside of the church, almost the length of the church, stating something like, "Thirty Years of Welcoming Everyone." When I went into the church there were about eighteen or twenty people. Christopher introduced me as his fifth grade teacher. I remember thinking to myself, "What am I doing in this group of gay men?!" I and the woman who

had invited me were the only women present. I didn't feel very comfortable.

A Jesuit priest was saying the Dignity Mass that evening. During the homily at these Masses, there was often an exchange of comments among the group, and I said, "I like the banner that states thirty years of welcoming everyone. I wish *our* Church did this." Father asked me what I meant and I responded, "We're *here*, aren't we?!"

I didn't go back to that Mass again for a while, for several reasons: I didn't like the time, which was at seven thirty on Saturday evenings; I wasn't sure I was comfortable with the fact that it was in an Episcopal church; I would get home late because they always had a little social after Mass; and I just felt more comfortable at Mass in Time of AIDS, which consisted of a small, warm, and close group of women and men, in a comfortably furnished room, where the altar was a coffee table and Father Floyd was the presider.

I eventually went to Dignity again, and then I began going more often. I got to know the people and began to love some of them. Finally, I began to go on a regular basis.

So at that point I was going to two Masses: Mass in Time of AIDS and the Dignity Mass.

### **Damian**

To return to that first day at Mass In Time of AIDS, I met a man there named Damian. He was from Our House of Portland, which is a care facility for individuals with late-stage AIDS. He had AIDS, and he sat quiet most of the time. He was very pleasant, and Miguel had him tell a little bit about himself and also about Bonnie Schweitzer, who had brought him. Bonnie was a PAL for Damian, from Cascade AIDS Project. A PAL basically is someone who visits, provides a supportive presence to, and sometimes transports someone living with AIDS. She was also someone I knew from a Faith and Sharing Retreat, and a very nice lady.

I had said one time to Bonnie, "If you ever can't pick Damian up, I would be happy to." The first time I picked him up I found out where Our House was, and I was impressed with it. At that time I felt I might like to be a volunteer there.

I took Damian a couple of times to Mass in Time of AIDS. When I realized that this resulted in his missing supper, I asked him if he would like to stop for a milk shake. So we went to the Carousel restaurant and had a shake, and he liked that. He couldn't eat, but he was really happy with the shake, which he could drink. He told his mother that he had a friend who got milk shakes for him.

### **Wilson Reed**

When I went to Our House once to take Damian to Mass, Sister Louise, a Good Shepherd nun who was a staff nurse there, said, "The mother is here of one of our residents, Wilson Reed, whom you used to know." Wilson and I had worked together at Laurelhurst Manor. He was a very nice looking and delightful person, always with a friendly greeting.

Sister Louise said Wilson was in the hospital, so I went to St. Vincent's to visit him. I waited in the hall until the nurses finished. Then he saw me and said, "Sister Kate!" and I came in. He was very emaciated, with sunken eyes. He was very sick. They had done all they could do for him, and he returned to Our House, where I visited him once again. He died soon after this.

### **volunteering at Our House of Portland**

Because I was no longer working full time, I began volunteering at Our House of Portland in 1994, soon after Wilson died, and that began what has been over seven years now of volunteering there [eleven years in 2005]. I normally volunteer on Friday evenings from five until nine. I've given baths, helped turn persons, helped change clothes, and I have often sat with someone when they're agitated. And I've told the staff, "Anytime you need someone to come and sit with a resident, call. I don't live that far

away and I'm retired. I can do this." And I really have had probably some of the most privileged moments I have ever had in my life being with someone as they died, being alone with them — the only one with them.

Once I started volunteering at Our House, I found that I wanted to spend more time with the residents because I found myself loving them very much. Sometimes I would read in the bios of some that they felt guilt about their sexuality, especially as they were coming to the end of their life, so I would talk to them about this and tell them that God loved them unconditionally.

As I look back at the different things that led to this change in my ministry, I believe it was, again, the Holy Spirit that was moving me.

### **Warren Hoffmann**

One time I was going with a friend of mine to visit somebody at Rocky Butte Jail, and I ended up at Rocky Butte Point, instead, which is the scenic lookout. I had been to the jail before, but it had been a long time before this, and somehow I got lost. I spotted a carful of young men and asked if they knew how I could get on the road that leads to the jail. One of them looked at me and asked, "Weren't you Sister Elphège?" [This was Kate's name when she was a Sister of St. Mary; it had been her father's first name.] I said, "Yes," and he said, "I'm Warren Hoffmann," and I said, "*Warren!*" He had been in the fifth grade, same as Christopher and Everett had been. He said he was a hairdresser. Then they led me to the road that would lead to the jail.

I didn't realize that day that Warren was gay, but later I saw his name on a list in a monthly publication that was distributed primarily to the gay community and produced by Father Pierson. The list indicated the names of people who had died in the past month from AIDS.

### **Alvin**

One young man at Our House — Alvin — was so sweet and funny and dear. When I knew that his partner was holding back affection [at Our House] because he knew that Alvin was Catholic and that the Church and Alvin's Latin background considered gay relationships and their love as wrong, I said to them both, "Your love for each other is a gift of God. It is special and beautiful." And I remember telling Alvin's partner, "*Love* him. Hold him."

Alvin was *very* Catholic. I had met his mother, who couldn't understand why her son was like he was and thought it was all wrong; this [attitude of hers] was a problem for him. Also, he said that he had heard some bad vibes from a Catholic church in Portland. When I found out from him which church, I said, "Well, no wonder [it was a very conservative church]!"

Sister Louise asked if I could get a rosary for Alvin, so I called Sister Sarah Vinson and asked her if she had any rosaries. When she said, "Yes," I said, "Let me come over for one." So I left to get a rosary for Alvin. When she saw the one I was looking at, she said, "That's pink!" and I said, "That's okay. He's gay."

I brought him the rosary, which he kissed and put around his neck immediately. In fact, he had it on when he died. I said, "Would you like me to say part of the rosary with you?" and he said, "Say it *all*." So, I stooped down close to him. (He was sleeping on a hide-away bed at the time so that his partner could lie down beside him when he visited him, and hug and hold him.) I prayed through the first decade, and after a few prayers I noticed that he was tired and I said, "Alvin, would you like me to stop now and finish it later?" and he said, "All right."

On another day, he went into a coma. I finished the rosary that I had started before, saying it softly. Then I said, "I finished the rosary for you, Alvin."

There was an incident that happened to Alvin that I felt terrible about. They had asked me to watch him because he was very agitated and restless, as was often the case when someone was close to death. He had a catheter, and, when he tried to get to the commode that was nearby, the catheter was pulled out. The balloon was about the size

of a golf ball. He bled for a long time into the commode, and the blood was a thick consistency. I cleaned it out afterwards, putting gloves on and taking the necessary precautions. They put an incontinence pad under him because they didn't want to put the catheter back in. The bleeding stopped eventually, but he was in pain that night. I felt so badly for Alvin about this.

### **Dario**

Dario was another man at Our House. He had brown eyes and dark hair. When I went in to introduce myself, he was sitting guru style on his bed. I said, "Hello, Dario. I'm Kate, a volunteer. Welcome to Our House." We spoke for a moment or two, and then one of the other volunteers came in, so I left his room. Before I left that evening, I went over and said, "Dario, I'm going to go now but I'll see you next Friday." He put his arm out, so I hugged him, and he hugged me. He said, "I love you," and I said, "I love you, too."

The next time I saw him, he was anything but "lovey." He was embarrassed and didn't like to have people do things for him, yet there were things he couldn't do for himself. This one night they asked me if I would check on him and maybe walk him to the bathroom. I said, "Dario, if you need to go to the restroom, I can help you up." "No. I'm fine," he said. Well, shortly after that, he was incontinent.

I helped him with his oral care one night; he let me do that. By this time, he couldn't walk without assistance anymore.

They asked if I would feed him one time, so I did. I would name everything I was giving to him. When I got to a tomato, he was hesitating, and I said, "Tomato. You don't like tomatoes?" He said, "No," so I said, "Fine"; he really didn't talk. He loved Popsicles, which he was given frequently because they felt good on this throat.

He didn't want to go back to his bed at a certain point, so they fixed up the daybed that was in his room, without opening it; it was lower, and so safer, in case he fell. He did fall off the daybed eventually, so they put him on the floor, on eggshell padding.

When I went the next Friday, he was in bed and he was active, which is a term used when a resident's condition changes to very quiet and sometimes comatose. I said, "Dario, I would like to stay with you but I have to work tomorrow, so I don't know how long I can stay." He kept watching me. I had somebody help me move the bed away from the wall so I could put the chair between the wall and the bed. I kept saying, "Dario, God loves you very much, unconditionally." He was always watching me, and I said prayers with him. His brother had been there the day before, but no one else had come since then. The nurse came in to pump morphine into him, after which his body started to twitch; I told her about this, so she tried to give him some Ativan to slow that down. His head was on the side, but he was *still* watching — he always had his eyes focused on me. I kept praying, and then I said, "You don't have to be afraid. God will make this crossing with you. People you love, who went ahead of you, are going to be there to greet you." I said the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, an Act of Contrition, the Serenity Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and then I said again, "God loves you." Then Dario died, still looking at me.

The nurse came by about then, and I said, "He's gone." He confirmed this, and then he sat there for a few minutes just holding Dario's hand. After this, they called Dario's brother.

When a resident dies at Our House, they put a clean sheet or gown on him and a patchwork quilt, and they pull the quilt up to his chin. Then they usually place a rose or other flower on the individual and light a vigil candle. They leave the body in the room for a couple of hours, giving family members or friends or volunteers an opportunity to visit. Then they call the mortuary.

The body is placed on a gurney, the quilt and flower are re-placed over the body, and the staff, volunteers, and any residents who wish follow the body in a procession to the hearse.



Usually within a week after the death of a resident, and at the convenience of the family, there is a gathering of relatives, friends, and some staff and volunteers, at a ritual called a "Circle." A small table contains pictures and memorabilia that had special meaning to the resident. The group has a chance to tell stories or anecdotes about their knowledge or experiences of the deceased. Sometimes there are tears and sometimes much laughter, but always expressions of love for the individual. The Circle ends with everyone standing, holding hands, and summing up in one word their perception of the loved one, each his or her own perception. This is a form of closure with our experiences with the one who has gone to a better place.

I went to Dario's Circle. There were very few present — his brother, his fourteen-year-old nephew, a couple, a single man, and a social worker who was doing a practicum there. His brother said that Dario had been in prison for seven years, and then he told different stories about him. The single man said, "I wonder what it was like for him when he crossed over." I said, "Let me tell you about my last time with him. I was with him when he died." So I told him and the others about our praying, about what I had said to Dario regarding God's love, and about Dario's intent look all the time, focused on me. Afterwards, the man said, "Oh, I feel so much better," and he put his arm around me. He said, "There's a warmth coming through me. I'm so glad, because he was feisty and I was worried." I said, "I think he died very peacefully knowing that he was loved. I think he heard for the first time in his life that God loved him unconditionally."

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And so, this work at Our House has been and continues to be a rich part of my life.

I really like to be with someone when they're dying, if they don't have anybody. Sometimes it's hard, and sometimes the individual doesn't really want you there. At times I can feel very comfortable with family members; other times I don't feel so comfortable.

### **dying with the men at Our House**

**Ron:** Several times you have gone to Our House in the middle of the night and stayed with a resident until he has died.

**Kate:** Yes. I think one day I was there over nine hours in one stretch. There's a spiritual beauty in experiencing this, though it's sad to see someone dying, especially if it's a struggle. One of the things that I do is to let them know that God loves them, which I say to them softly. They are usually conscious and their sunken eyes are open. Some can look so much as I would picture Jesus on the cross.

There was an incident one time at Our House that I won't ever forget. I came in on my shift, and this man had been brought in that day from the Justice Center downtown [Multnomah County Detention Center]. He was Native American or part Native American, a very nice-looking man, tall, no wasting away — at least he didn't *look* like he had wasted away. There were some women with him when I first got on, but they had left his room by the time that I went to visit him.

Without knowing anything about this man, I went into his room and said, "My name is Kate. I'm a volunteer here and I know you're pretty sick." I had my hand on his forehead, and he was facing the wall. I said, "I'm going to say a prayer that is pretty well known — the Lord's Prayer." I said the prayer, and then I told him that God loved him very much. When I stopped, he turned his head towards me a little bit, and I always had the feeling that he was saying thank you, that he was aware of what I had done. He died less than twenty-four hours later. If he hadn't come to Our House, he would have died in the Justice Center. At least he was able to die in a place where people cared about him; he wasn't just in a cell, by himself. I really was upset at the fact that they had waited until he was almost dead before doing this.

**Gay Pride**

**Ron:** You march in the Gay Pride Parade.

**Kate:** Yes, I do. I feel very supportive of the gay and lesbian community, and I do anything I can to support them. I was involved in Gay Pride Day last year. And I became part of the core team of the Welcoming Committee at St. Andrew Parish, which involved developing ways to be more welcoming to the gays and lesbians in the parish.

**World AIDS Day Mass of Healing**

**Ron:** Another thing you do is participate in the annual World AIDS Day Mass of Healing, in December.

**Kate:** Yes, and last year was the first time I actually participated in the service since I first went with you. This event is part of Father Bruce's AIDS ministry, which is sponsored by Catholic Charities; he coordinates the event for the Archdiocese of Portland. He asked if I wanted to take part in the activities during the day, before the evening service. When he asked what I would like to do, I said, "Any and everything — whatever you would like me to do."

On that day, which began at nine in the morning, I had the privilege of reading the names of those who had died during the previous year, and greeting and assisting visitors. The highlight of the day was the beautiful evening Mass presided at by Archbishop Vlasny [of the Archdiocese of Portland]. After that, those in attendance were invited to the parish hall to view [memorial] quilts that had been laid out on the floor and hung on the walls, and I assisted those who requested help in locating quilts.

**Bethany Center**

**Ron:** Don't you volunteer also at Bethany Center?

**Kate:** Yes. Bethany Center is a place for people with AIDS to come and receive free massages and sometimes haircuts. The center consists of two apartments that Providence Hospital [a Catholic medical center founded by the Sisters of Providence] provided to Father Bruce, just across the street from the hospital. Each apartment consists of living room, kitchen and bath, and two other rooms. The upstairs apartment is used for administrative offices, one for Father Bruce and one for Father Nicholas. Downstairs, which is Bethany Center proper, one room is the massage room, where volunteers give free one-hour massages to people with AIDS, and the other room is a small prayer room. The massages, in addition to being physically helpful, are also a way of providing physical contact; that means so much to the individuals. I remember one man saying that he hadn't been touched for a long time — I think he said it might even have been two years — and he just was looking forward to it so much. These massages provide a loving, gentle, restful, relaxing touch. After the massage, the individual sits down and seems so relaxed; then he or she leaves, after maybe signing up for another massage (an individual can only sign up once a month because of the large number of people who need massages).

Every other Sunday, many come to the CHAT group (CHAT is an acronym for "Christ Has AIDS Too"), which is a spiritual session, and on special holidays dinner is served.

**Ron:** And what do you do at Bethany Center?

**Kate:** I volunteer as a hospitality person. I help make whoever comes in feel welcome, and I offer them tea or coffee, or I sit and talk with them. Basically I'm there on the massage days, whenever I can be. This coming Friday, for example, I'll be there from nine until three-thirty, and then I'll go to Our House from five until nine.

**Ron:** And you'll be eighty this year?

**Kate:** Yes. I am reasonably healthy, and as long as I can help out I will. I take on what I think I want to do, and what I *can* do — and I drop out of something when I feel it's time. There are a couple of situations in my life right now that have been taking time but are about to end, and these will free up several more hours a week. Then I can spend more time trying to learn Spanish, I hope, and learn a little more about how to do many of the things that can be done on a computer!

**the privilege**

**Ron:** So this new ministry to gay men and women and to those living with HIV disease and dying from AIDS has actually brought out new things in you.

**Kate:** Yes, I think so.

**Ron:** You said you like to be with people when they die.

**Kate:** I used to be petrified with the dead, as a young Sister [see *From the Interview Sessions: Kate Overcoming Her Fear of the Dead*].

I found Arnold dead; I told you about that — he's the one I got the statue of the Blessed Virgin for [see Arnold's story]. I have been with some when they died. I saw others shortly *before* they died, in nursing homes or hospitals, and I spent time with them — Henry's story is an example of this [see Henry's story]. But I never was as aware of the wonderful privilege of being present as someone transitioned to Eternity as I became after volunteering at Our House.

**Ron:** It seems as though your experiences at Our House and your experiences generally with AIDS patients and the death that AIDS brings so mercilessly — that this all has given you one more experience of life, of the *whole* life process, in this case *death*, and has kind of normalized death for you.

**Kate:** Yes. I wouldn't feel the same way at the Care Center at Marylhurst, with the Sisters, for example, because *there* you have Sisters who have dedicated their whole life to God, and they're *ready* to die. They want to go and they're ready. And they know they have the sacraments and their Sisters to support them along the way.

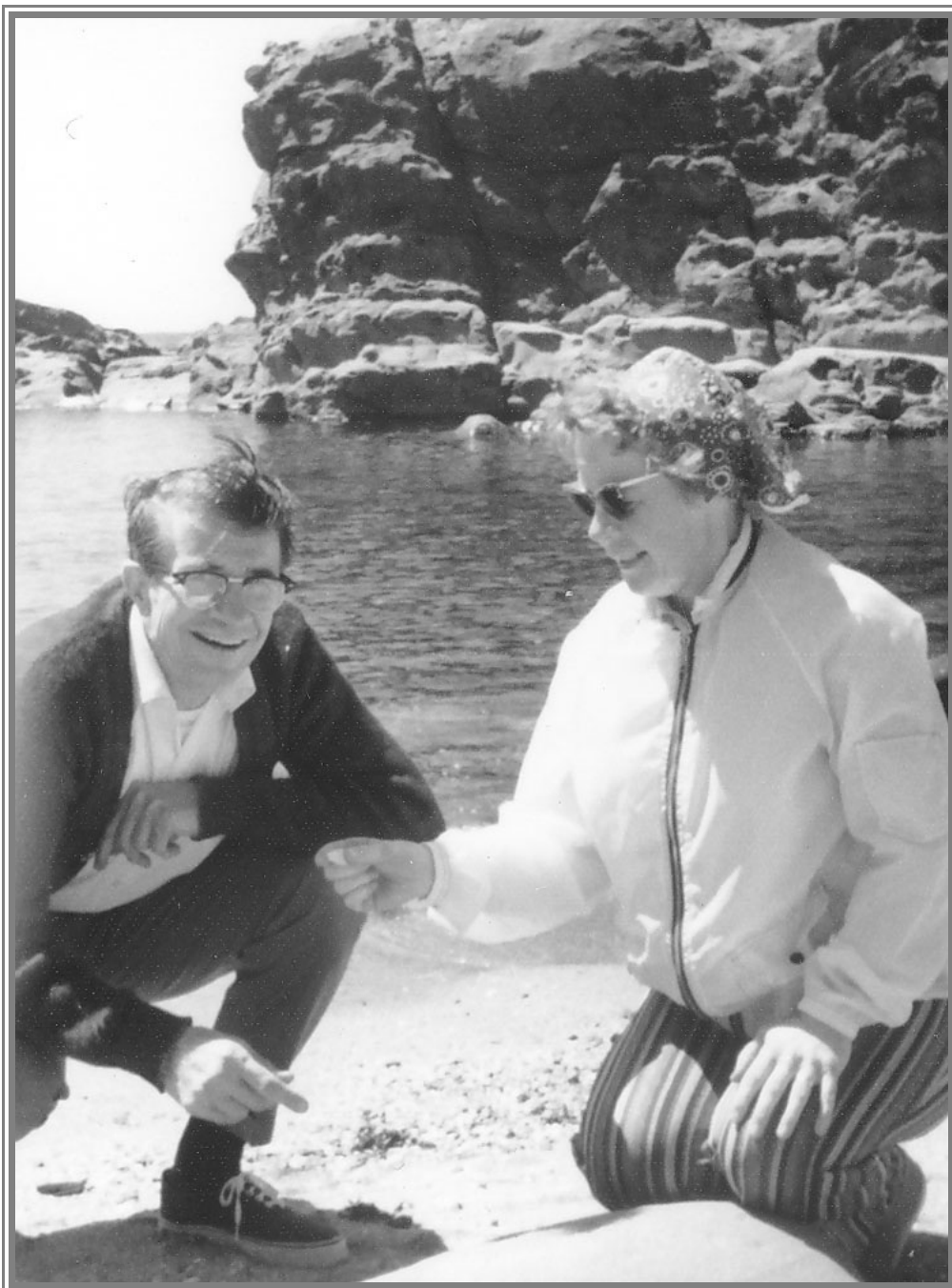
But with AIDS I'm dealing with individuals who have lived a lifestyle that they know has been disapproved by the Church in many instances, and, for many, disapproved by their families and by society. They've had to fight for any kind of rights that are just plain *equal* rights, not special rights. And so my heart goes out to them.

And then, at the time of death, to be able to let them know that God loves them unconditionally, *just* as they are. I think that that would have to be one of the most comforting things to hear if you were dying. And hopefully they *believe* it.

I might say to one, "*My* love for you is just a faint reflection of *God's* love for you," and then I'll stop and let them do their own processing. These have been very special moments for *me*, as well as, I believe, for the residents. And the nurses thank me. One said recently, "Oh, I'm *so* glad you were there. Thanks for being there." Not everyone, apparently, is comfortable with doing what I do.



## Photo Gallery V: The Skid Road Years - Part 2



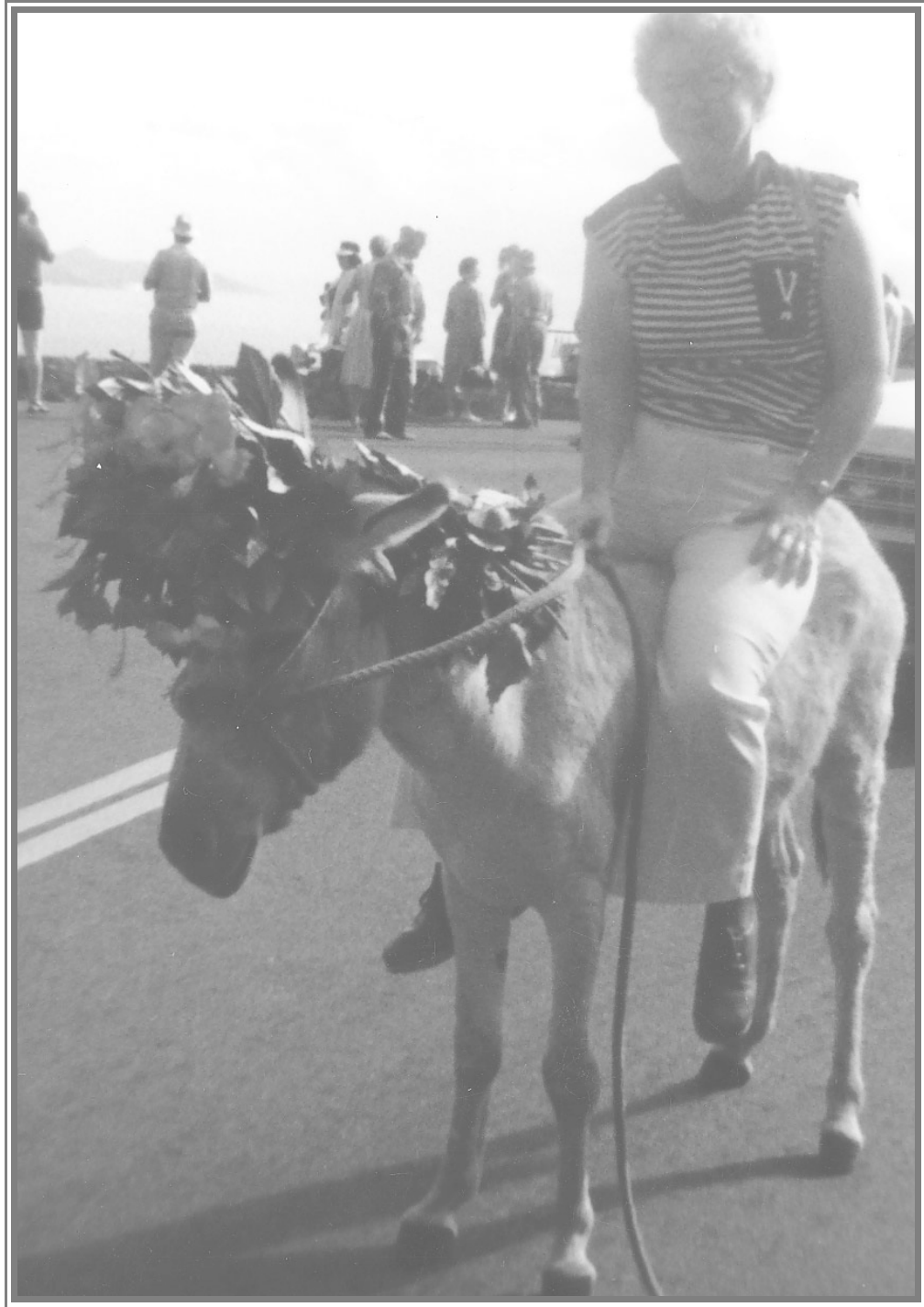
Kate and Scott at Oregon Coast with friends, circa 1974. Scott was one of Kate's recovery success stories from the Skid Road years.



In costume for Mardi Gras at St. Andrew Parish, 1975.



Visiting with two men in one of the Burnside hotels, circa 1976.



Mexico, circa 1978.



Two photos taped together of Kate assisting men in her office at Matt Talbot Center, circa 1978. On the bulletin board in the photo to the right, the full-length vertical card says, "Love isn't love until you give it away."



Kate and Herb, one of her Burnside men, visiting in the hospital, circa mid to late 1980s. Herb is "Frank" in the stories.





Life's simple joys, early 1980s.

## FROM THE TIMES

### Candle Memories

[Excerpts from "Remembering Our Friends: A Memorial Celebration," an article by Gary Vaughn, in *These Homeless Times: A Voice For The Homeless Community*, Summer 1986 (a newsletter produced by the Burnside Community Council). Kate has indicated elsewhere in the project that Gary Vaughn was the first director of Portland's Operation Nightwatch, a hospitality ministry.]

About one hundred of us gathered at the Downtown Chapel to celebrate the lives of friends who had died [friends primarily who had lived in the Burnside area]. We sang, we prayed — and in the darkened chapel nearly one hundred candles were lit to symbolize the light and lives of nearly one hundred friends who had died this past year.

A number of folk stood and recalled departed friends who had added joy and meaning to their lives. [...]

I have found these Memorial Services to be a time of affirmation and joy when all that seems to separate us — lifestyle, economics, power — is broken down and what remains is the only thing that really matters: our common humanity. And it's encouraging to know that we need not look to the people in high office or other high visibility people to find our "heroes." Rather, on the streets of Burnside there continues to walk "heroes" who embody dignity and care and grace for all who have "eyes to see."

### Remembering Our Friends A Memorial Celebration

by Gary Vaughn

About one hundred of us gathered at the Downtown Chapel to celebrate the lives of friends who had died. We sang, we prayed — and in the darkened chapel nearly one hundred candles were lit to symbolize the light and lives of nearly one hundred friends who had died this past year.

A number of folk stood and recalled departed friends who had added joy and meaning to their lives.

All of us were deeply moved by the inspired voice of Michelle Mariana as she sang "His Eye Is On The Sparrow," and when she and Jeff Brown sang "The Rose."

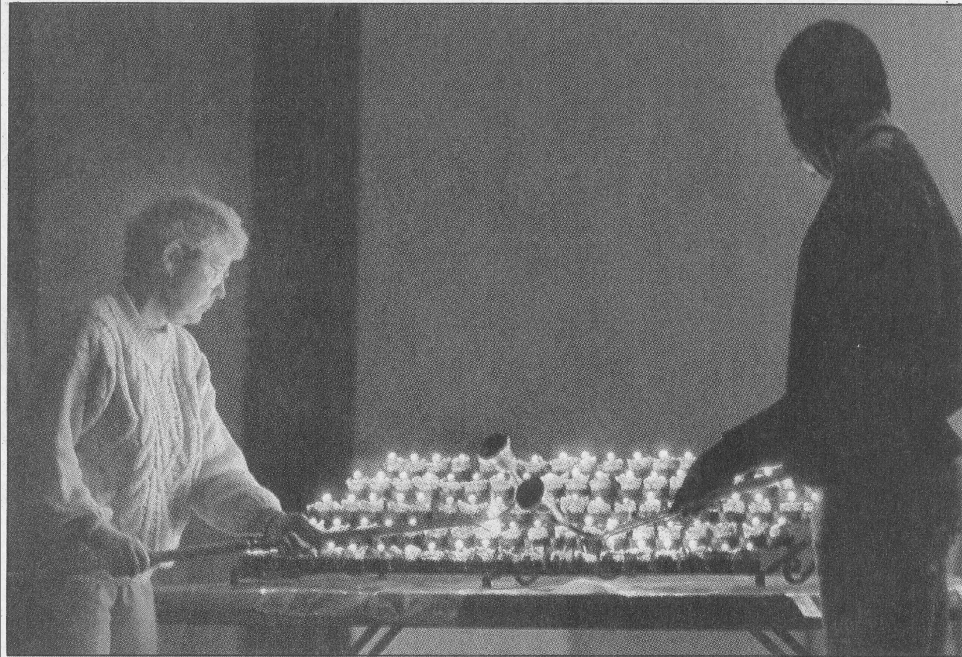
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### In Memoriam

|                  |                       |                      |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| William Storey   | Michael VanDaan       | Theodore Green       | John Clemons      |
| Leon Tilton      | Clarence Weaver       | Michele Lowe         | Beatrice Erickson |
| Tom Crane        | Benny Winner          | Raymond Saari        | Myrtle Kirkland   |
| Jerry Cronin     | Clair Young           | Jack Reseigh         | Frank Burchaz     |
| Jim Smith        | Bill Young            | James Hubbard        | Sarah Krieder     |
| Keith Albert     | Dorris Barkley        | Teddy Froom          | Irene Keating     |
| Ted Amyotte      | Orville Lewis         | Ronald Snider        | Marcus Green      |
| Gilbert Buena    | Joseph Schneider      | Bill Umbrazum        | Edith Graven      |
| Carla Bird       | Fredrick Dodge        | Eldon Dillion        | Daniel Spears     |
| Ernest Cloutier  | Donald Patterson      | Dutch James*         | Gladys Hart       |
| George Fisher    | Ralph Payne           | Austin Ruddy         | Elsie Bentley     |
| Donald Flynn     | Gilberto Briones      | Raymond Davis        | Dennis Buchanan   |
| William Gant     | Eino Virta            | Preston Proctor      | Joe Eaglehorse    |
| Marion Grow      | Bill Pierce           | Ann Pope             | Lila Gaylor       |
| Harold Julian    | John Stanley          | Frank Jones          | Mabel Shinn       |
| Barbara Lundeen  | Ken Rossiter          | Charles Lee Stevens  | Albert Purser     |
| Lucian Mitchell  | Carl Huck             | Ye Nashwood Billy    | Robert Williams   |
| Theron Mosely    | Emma Clayton          | James Hart           | Robert C. Smith   |
| Fred Quintana    | Ray Chasteen          | Michael Flowers      | Cecelia Fisher    |
| Donald Robertson | Myran Dunigan         | Harlan "Bud" Verrier | Adan Gonzalez     |
| Robert Rose      | Arthur "Pappy" Elmore | Sylvia Johnson       | Harry Hoadley     |
| Warren Savior    | Cliff Perry*          | Jack Blount          | Paul Orick        |
| Paul Scheuer     | Dutch James*          | Warren Savior        | Louis Belgarde    |
| Larry Schutte    | Joe Eaglehorse        |                      | Richard Grant     |
| Alvin Thompson   | George Fisher         |                      | Arlene Mackro     |

Article by Gary Vaughn in *These Homeless Times: A Voice For The Homeless Community*, 1986.

[See next page for photo from *The Oregonian* newspaper regarding same annual event but different year.]



The Oregonian/MARV BONDAROWICZ  
 As part of an annual service held in the Downtown Chapel, Wednesday in memory of more than 100 downtown Portland  
 Sister Kate St. Martin and Terry Washington light candles residents who had died during the year. Story on Page E10.

Caption in photo reads: "As part of an annual service held in the Downtown Chapel, Sister Kate St. Martin and Terry Washington light candles Wednesday in memory of more than 100 downtown Portland residents who had died during the year. Story on Page E10." [Given that Kate had written "Oregonian - 3/23/89" on her copy of the photo, the annual service described would have been at least the fourth. Photo is from The Oregonian newspaper, 1989, but the article is from These Homeless Times, 1986. Photo used with permission. Photographer Marv Bondarowicz/The Oregonian.]

## ***Rub-a-dub***

*[Excerpts from "Rub-A-Dub," an article by Lynn Ball, R.N., in BCC Pipeline, November 1975.]*

It has come to our attention that some of the men prefer to drink Isopropyl Alcohol or rub-a-dub, as it is affectionately known by the in-crowd. I'm sure many have been warned about rub-a-dub's ill effects but I would like to review them with you.

Rub-a-dub is twice as strong as wine; in fact, an 8-oz. glass of rub-a-dub can kill you if drunk in a short period of time.

### **Liver Damage**

Rub-a-dub causes liver damage just like wine does. It burns the cell tissue. When the damage heals it forms a scar, decreasing the amount of working tissue in the liver. The liver protects the body by changing poisons so they cannot hurt your body. When the liver is damaged, it can't do the job properly and poisons in the body increase. Yellow jaundice is one of the most common results of a damaged liver. It is a poison that builds up in your body and you need to see a doctor.

### **Kidney Damage**

Rub-a-dub also burns the kidney and causes scars. The function of the kidney is to discharge poisons from your body in water. The yellow of your piss [sic] is caused by uric acid... If your kidneys do not function, one of the poisons that builds up in your body is uric acid. When you drink rub-a-dub your piss smells strong — this is acetone. When your body digests rub-a-dub it breaks the alcohol into water and acetone. The water is used by the body and the acetone is discharged by your kidneys.

If your piss is very dark and concentrated you most likely have liver and/or kidney damage. You need to see a doctor.

### **Stomach Damage**

Wine causes diarrhea and vomiting as I'm sure most of you know; so does rub-a-dub but it's more severe. Since rub-a-dub is twice as potent as wine, the diarrhea and vomiting are twice as much — even more in sensitive people. Rub-a-dub also causes vomiting of blood. This is because it burns the lining of the stomach and causes it to bleed. This damage causes pain and you need to see a doctor.

So if you are drinking rub-a-dub or buying rub-a-dub for a friend, please consider what you are doing.

## RON

This is going to be a very different and interesting type of story, sad in many ways. Ron was part Mexican-Indian. He was not a tall man. He had graying, curly hair, and very deep, serious, lovely brown eyes. He was a very gentle and soft-spoken person. I saw him on and off when he would come in to Matt Talbot Center.

If I haven't mentioned it before, the Matt Talbot had opened as a result of the fact that the Western Hotel had closed. The Matt Talbot had been a hotel before but had undergone some remodeling between the time the Western closed and I started working there as a volunteer. The entrance from the street led to my office, on the second floor, and some rooms, and the third floor was rooms only. Individuals would come to me for medication or for a wound to be drained — sometimes even for help in getting clean clothes or rent for a room, or just to talk.

This one time Ron came and was crying. I don't know if he was drunk at the time, but I think he was. He said, "No one will cut my hair. No one will cut my hair because I have a sore on my head." And I said, "Let me see it." And, you know, it was ugly. It was like a staff infection, really bad, all at the base of his head. I knew when I saw it that it was infected and probably going to need antibiotics. The best way for obtaining antibiotics at that time was to take him up to the County Hospital where I knew that he would be seen and receive whatever help he needed. It was very important to him to have his hair cut, so I told him I'd take him up to the hospital. He said, "Could you wait till tomorrow, till I get cleaned up?" and I said, "Sure." I made arrangements to meet him in front of the Matt Talbot Center at eight or nine. It was usually risky for me to do something *later* with some of the men because, many times, they wouldn't follow through. "Tomorrow never comes" for some of these people. In the first few years of my work down there, if some of the men said they were going to do something I assumed and took it for granted that they were going to. But then I would find out that they *weren't* going to, necessarily — not because they didn't want to, but because their drinking got in their way.

Anyway, when I arrived to pick up Ron, he was standing there. He was bleeding from his forehead. I stopped and said, "Ron, what happened?" and he said, "Somebody asked me for a quarter and I didn't have any and he hit me with a wine bottle." So I ran up to Matt Talbot and got a towel and ice for a pressure bandage and then took him up to the hospital. Then we went through Emergency with *two* problems: his skin problem and the laceration.

On another occasion, Ron was quite drunk and rather disheveled (usually he was very neat). He started to cry and said, "I want to talk to you." So we sat right there by my office in Matt Talbot, on the steps that went up to the third floor. Ron started to cry and said, "I'm a homosexual." His concern was feeling that he couldn't be a good Catholic because he was a homosexual. All I recall saying was something about how God loved him very much. But, as I said, he was quite drunk, and he still was crying some, so all I could do was reassure him at that time. Then he left, and I didn't see him again for some time.

The next time I saw Ron was in a very different situation. I had a bench in the hall at Matt Talbot, where people used to come and sit; I would take care of somebody while the others who needed help would be waiting in the hall. If some of them were rather drunk, it would be quite a problem sometimes, and usually [Brother] Eric Hobbs, who was in charge of Matt Talbot, would send them away or send a volunteer to help keep control, which could be difficult. Anyway, Ron came up to the office later in the afternoon and said, "The doctor says I have another person inside me." I knew this was going to take more time, and I had a whole line of people to see who needed medical help, so I said, "Ron, I'm going to have you talk to Jane Boardman if that's okay with you." She was a counselor in the next room. I called her and told her what Ron said the doctor told him, and asked if she would talk to him.

Afterwards, Jane told me that Ron had gone through several changes in person. Two of these were Ron and Elmer. When he was Ron he was the person I knew, the soft gentle one. She said, "Then all of a sudden he would put his head down and then look up, and you saw a totally different face, expression, different way of talking... and it was Elmer." Elmer was ugly and mean. She had had enough psychology to recognize what was happening after a few episodes: he seemed to have a multiple personality. She got to the point where she would say, "I don't want to talk to you, Elmer; get Ron back." She said that at first there would be a hesitation, but then pretty soon his head would go down, and then you would see Ron and a soft expression in the eyes. I remember saying, "Oh, why didn't you call me?" She said, "I wanted to but there were so many people out there waiting for you." So I never saw the transfer of personalities that day.

Then I saw a clipping in a newspaper. It said that Ron had killed his lover under the bridge, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh!" He was given five years.

Five years later, Ron was out of prison. I hadn't seen him during this period. Then one day I had a call from Lucy, the nurse from detox. She said, "Do you know Ron?" and she stated his last name. I said, "Yes. I haven't seen him for a while, but, yes, I do, I know him quite well." She said, "Is he diabetic?" and I said, "He never was, Lucy, to my knowledge" (usually I was aware if the people I saw were diabetics). And she said, "Well, he said he's diabetic and he needs sugar or insulin. He's acting very strangely. Very strangely. Very aggressive." And I said, "That doesn't sound like Ron." And she said, "Well, he's just very aggressive and demanding." And I said, "Wait a minute, Lucy! Let me tell you what I do know about him." I recounted the different episodes that I just told you, and how Jane handled him, and she said, "That explains it. I'll call you back." Ron was so combative that the ambulance took him in restraints to the psych ward at the University of Oregon Hospital [part of Oregon Health Sciences University, and separate from the County Hospital where the men from Skid Road usually ended up]. Lucy said that, when Ron had been in her office at detox, he literally took his head by his hair and banged it against the wall. She said, "It looked like somebody else was doing it to him, trying to hurt him." She went with him to the hospital, and when I told her that Jane had said, "I don't want to talk to *you*; I want Ron," she said she used the same tactic, and she would get Ron to respond then. But she said, "This other person was seemingly out to kill Ron."

When he was in the hospital, Lucy and I went to see him. We talked to the psychiatrist who had been treating him. He said that there were several personalities inside of Ron and that some of the them were harmless. There was an Indian personality, there was a personality that never talked, there was an ugly personality, and there was the gentle Ron. There were at least four at that time, I think. It had not been Ron taking his hair and smashing his head against the wall; it had been one of the other personalities, the mean and destructive one. Apparently one thing that would happen is that when Ron would drink, one of the other personalities would do the drinking actually, and then he would make Ron take the consequences and suffer the penalties of the drinking and whatever else was going on.

The psychiatrist asked us to tell Ron about the multiple personalities. I said, "I don't feel like I should, I'm not a counselor, I'm not a psychologist, and I won't know how to handle this. *You're* the professional," and he said, "No, I think you could do it."

So we went into Ron's room. He was in bed and seemed very glad to see me. He had seen Lucy, but he hadn't seen me for quite a while. He recognized me. "You know," he said, "they tell me I killed my friend under the bridge. I don't remember doing something like this, but if they tell me I did it, I guess I did." He couldn't understand it, and he had absolutely no recollection of having done this. We said to him, "Ron, one time, when you told us that there was another person inside you, you were two people. You have what they call a 'multiple personality' and you will change your behavior and a different person will come out with a different name." We told him that what had happened under the bridge was not Ron's personality — the Ron that we knew — but one of the other personalities. He expressed a lot of fear of what would happen when

his personality changed again. He said, "I could kill somebody again. I don't want to." Apparently, also, one of the personalities was very jealous of Ron and of the man Ron killed.

There would be a very strong conflict within Ron when one of the other personalities would surface. Ron himself was meticulously neat, but we found out that when he was one of these other people, he dressed very differently and sometimes sloppily. In fact, in the hospital he said, "Those aren't my clothes. I wouldn't wear clothes like that." So he had come into detox and then gone from there to the hospital not as Ron, but as one of the other personalities, the one that was trying to injure him.

Ron told me in the hospital that he had come from (I think it was) Texas or one of the other states that borders Mexico. He said that his family had all been very successful and well-educated. One was a doctor and one was a lawyer. When we asked him if he had a family to go to, he said no, that he was the outcast of the family. He said that the other members of the family were professionals and, because of his alcoholism, he felt he was not wanted.

My next contact with Ron was when Lucy and I went to see him at the hotel where he was living. He was Ron when we came in. We talked and visited for a while, and he seemed to be doing all right. Ron's landlady told me that *before*, sometimes Ron would be so nice and sometimes he would be so different — mean. I remember that Lucy and I explained to her what had happened to him. I think she understood. Also, when he was mean and she was afraid of him, we suggested she just tell him she wanted to talk to Ron.

That visit was the last time I ever talked to Ron. I did pass him in the street once, but I instinctively did not want to talk to him because I had a feeling it wasn't "Ron," and I wasn't sure if the other personality would recognize me or not. It was rather a funny feeling that time because, if I *had* approached him and he hadn't seemed to recognize me, I wasn't prepared to say, "I want to talk to Ron!" If I ever saw him again and felt in a safe enough environment, though, I *would* do that.

He still does drinking, and, of course, that's where he runs into a problem.

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### **RAPPROCHEMENT III**

Pray for me. In no small way pray for me. And if you pause for a moment to think of me pray for me. And pray for a prophet. And pray for that world. That silent world of things. That world of things that each of us carries within. Deep within. In the silent crannies of the heart. A world restrained from without by some intangible faceless fear, yet clinging from within to the distant hope for freedom's flight.

Yes, and pray we don't wait till the end of our days to see we all had the very same fears, the very same needs. The same arms stretched out in silent plea for the drawing near that didn't come because we never quite understood that what we held back from the others for dread of being so shockingly different was what made us so incredibly alike all along.

1973



## RUBEN VAUGHN.

Ruben Vaughn was a French man whom I saw quite a bit of for many years. He was younger, and, like so many of the men in those days, he used to work in the berry fields and other fields when the crops were in season. The rest of the time he would be rather hard up because there wasn't any work for him and he didn't qualify for assistance. Many times when I saw him he was quite drunk. He was an extremely courteous person, and he'd be very happy if I'd stop to talk with him. He had a nickname — Frenchie — which fit, because he was of French descent.

One time, when Ruben apparently was drunk, he broke a leg and was hospitalized for quite a long time. Then I saw him again on the streets with a cast, and I remember he had been drinking again.

In later times he would take a shopping cart from a store and gather up bottles and cans and recycle them for money. This made him a little more independent, inasmuch as he was contributing some to his own income; he was at least able to supply his own wine. I have a lot of respect for those who tried to earn some money this way.

Ruben was not somebody I would have ever thought of as a jack-roller or a violent person; he was probably more the victim. I remember seeing him once when he had a black eye and quite a bit of his face had been battered and bruised because he had been hit.

It's a while since I've seen Ruben, but the last few times I saw him he was still pushing a shopping cart.

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## RUSSELL

Russell was a man who came into the program at Harmony House, which is where I met him. He was an educated, good-looking, and very nice man. He had been in the grocery business, but through his drinking he had lost his job and lost the opportunity to return to it.

He took an active part in the house. He was in there at the same time Tim was [see Tim's story]. Tim and Russell and Scott in particular [see Scott's story] were people who worked at developing the Harmony House philosophy and policies. Russell made a good contribution to Harmony House and was a support to those in the program. I might add here that, at that time, early on in the history of Harmony House, there wasn't a board of directors that was actively involved with the program, nor were there all the demands made by the State.

Russell would do quite well; then he would have to leave because of drinking problems, and then he would return to the house. He was in the house at three different times, at least, with periods of time in between when he would do okay.

He had a wife, and I had been over to their home a couple of times. She was a very nice person, but at some point she had had it with his on-and-off drinking, and the marriage ended in divorce. Later there was another woman we used to kind of kid about and say looked like his mother. She was older, and her name was Janice; she was a nice woman, and Russell seemed happy with her. Janice would not put up with his drinking at all, so I think he knew that if he was going to be able to keep this relationship he was going to have to stop drinking.

I did run into Russell one time and he seemed to be doing fine; he was back in the grocery business. He's somebody I knew very well and saw a lot of up to a certain point; but he, like a lot of people who came into my life, was later gone. Other people, on the other hand, I have known for a long time, and they have remained an ongoing part of my ministry because I see them frequently.

As kind of an amusing aside here, I remember that many years ago Dan told me [see Dan's story] that you could always recognize the alcoholic because he would have a good head of hair. Well Russell didn't; he was balding, and I used to wonder how he fit into Dan's comment. Even so, it was kind of strange, but, when I looked around at the men I knew in Matt Talbot and at Harmony House, so help me they *did* all have a head of hair, which is unusual, because when you see a group of men together you often see a lot of them who have lost or are losing their hair. Well, Russell had lost his, and so I wondered whether he was really alcoholic!

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## SAM

Sam had come into Harmony House when I was working there. He was a young person, very likeable, very personable. He had a job (he was always able to get a job dishwashing).

Sam was a periodic drinker, and, when he would go on a drunk, he would get very, very sick and be in a hotel room. I was asked to come and see him one time. It was probably one of the first times I saw the condition of somebody who had been drinking heavily for several weeks — the condition of the room, the bed, the person. It was quite a shock to me at first to see this change in Sam. At that point, he wasn't usually willing to quit drinking long enough to go into detox, and this was the case later as well — he would be very sick and unable to eat, but still not ready to quit drinking. When he would get to the stage where he couldn't hold the alcohol down any longer, however, he *would* be willing to go into the detox center. Then he would be sober again for several months, not touching anything. But for as many years as I knew him, Sam still would relapse; he'd go back on a binge of drinking. I honestly never had the feeling that he was that sincere about a long-term recovery.

I would see him off and on, and he would always be very pleasant. I would see him on the streets and we'd wave to each other or we'd stop and talk for a few minutes. But his drinking pattern would be still pretty much the same as it had been before.

Sam developed cancer, and I visited him several times, bringing Gatorade when he was very dehydrated. He was older at that point, and I was hoping that someday he would have had his last drunk. But he continued to relapse. Then, at one point he was evicted from the Foster Hotel, and I didn't see Sam again.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

### *Influence of Fr. Bert Griffin on Kate's Ministry*

*[The Reverend Bertram F. Griffin was a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon for forty-three years. He was a nationally recognized authority on church law and community organizing. Fr. Griffin passed away in July of 2000 at the age of sixty-eight.]*

**Ron:** Tell me about the influence of Father Bert Griffin on your ministry. I met him for the first time at St. Michael's Church [St. Michael The Archangel Church, Portland] shortly before he died, so I really didn't know him. But I remember you said at that time that he is the reason you are like you are. Since this never came up in any of our previous taping sessions, tell me more about his influence on you.

**Kate:** When I began ministry on Burnside, it was 1970. In 1973 I moved from St. Mary of the Valley [convent in Beaverton] to St. Andrew's [parish in Portland], in residence, where Fr. Bert Griffin was the pastor. He was a theologian and had been vice-president, and later president, of the Canon Law Society of America. We all deeply respected this man. His homilies were beautiful, excellent, sometimes full of wit, very theologically correct.

**Ron:** Liberal?

**Kate:** I don't know about the liberal aspect. I would say he was *very*, very much into peace and justice — particularly justice; and he began many different related activities in the parish that still exist, like a clothes closet for the poor, legal aid for the poor, and a health center. He didn't begin all these, but they began in his parish by people who began to *see* the needs and the justice issues involved. I had already begun working on Burnside by the time I started hearing a lot about these issues, and it was later that I began to see more clearly the justice issues involved in my work. As I continued to live at St. Andrew's, I think I became somebody who was and has continued to be highly concerned about justice issues, whether it's the death penalty, whether it's fairness and justice in prisons, or whether it's homelessness (which was certainly one of the first areas that I was involved with).

Bert was aware of my Skid Road ministry, and when I went to talk to him about transferring religious communities because I was no longer feeling support by my Community for the type of work I was doing, I felt very supported and very affirmed by him. He told me what was involved with a transfer to the Holy Names Sisters and helped me through the process.

**Ron:** You *really* admired him.

**Kate:** Very, very much. And it hit me even more so when I heard his tapes at the memorial service at St. Andrew's and read the article that appeared about him in the paper before he died. And when I went to the Cathedral for his funeral, I realized how very *widely* known and loved he was by the priests in the diocese.

He had such a sweet smile, and he died young — sixty-eight. He will live on, though, and I will always feel that he was an influence on my ministry, particularly in his affirming and supporting me in my efforts. I will always be grateful to him for

having been in the parish where he was and for the kind of leadership that he showed.

**Ron:** Without Bert Griffin's support, do you believe you might not have transferred religious communities and so might not have remained in your ministry on Burnside?

**Kate:** No, I think I would have stayed there anyway. I think, Ron, that what has always helped me to continue doing what I'm doing is to know that someone whom I think is important affirms it. And I meet that, and have met that, in many of the Sisters, as far as what I'm doing now and what I have done. I don't think, though, that I would have had the courage to do everything I did while continuing to meet with the negativity, in a sense, or the lack of support, that I was experiencing at St. Mary's before I transferred. The Sisters of the Holy Names, by contrast, who were in the convent at St. Andrew's during that period, already were affirming.

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*[Following is a sample of some of Fr. Griffin's statements that had an influence on Kate. These are words Kate valued particularly and highlighted for Ron in a publication that was issued shortly after Father's death: Bertram Francis Griffin, 1932-2000, A Life and Ministry / Recollections.]*

*"... Vatican II began to emphasize the fact that the world itself has autonomous values that are worth working with."*

*"... this is about the affirmation of the world as a place of authentic value, with the kingdom being in the world as well as in the church. It is about the openness of the church to the world."*

*"I saw the value of ecumenism. I saw the church as communal rather than as hierarchical authority."*

*"I try to preach out of my studies, plus the newspapers, plus what's going on in the congregation and in the world around me. I preach a lot about the unconditional love of God. I preach a lot of positive affirmation about how good the congregation is and how well they're doing, and how proud I am to serve a parish that's so active."*

*"... the Good News that God loves us absolutely and irrevocably, completely and totally, the Good News that God looks at this room full of people and smiles and says 'I made every one of you, You're my children and I love you.'"*

*"Every time the poor are fed, the imprisoned are visited, and the sick are healed, the naked are clothed, then the Kingdom emerges a little more."*

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### **Postscript**

On June 24, 2004, I invited Kate to accompany me to Mt. Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Portland to visit both my father's grave on his birthday and the grave of Father Griffin. This would mark the first time she had been to Father's burial site, and my invitation was eagerly accepted.

When we arrived at the grave, Kate stood silent and still for several minutes looking down at the sunlit tombstone. This kind of silence and stillness was uncharacteristic of her. Then slowly she kissed the fingertips of one hand and blew a kiss downward in the direction of her friend's grave. -Ron

## FROM THE TIMES

### *Working the Crops*

*[Excerpts from "Working the Crops," an article by Marc Mahle, in BCC Pipeline, June 1975.]*

It has been a cold Spring so far, and there hasn't been much farm work available. Strawberry hoeing never really got started, even the weeds were slowed down by the cold.

Just how soon the buses roll into Burnside [Skid Road] and how many start running will depend on the demand for labor and how much competition there is for jobs. As usual, those workers with private transportation, "drive outs" are getting nearly all the early season jobs. As crops ripen and demand for labor grows, farmers begin to run their own buses or pay labor contractors to provide workers. In June, when work does start picking up, the labor supply is swelled by the school kids. Their numbers have been increased by the efforts of two state employees who travel from school to school recruiting children to work during summer vacation. This year, however, the pressure from this group will be less than usual due to federal law prohibiting the 12 and unders from working.

When buses do start going out, and a worker wants to get paid fairly, his chances are better with a farm-owned bus than with a labor contractor. Contractors are required by law to put up a \$5,000 surety bond. This is supposed to keep the "fly by night" operators out of the business and insure that workers will receive wages due.... On one occasion, the Casual Labor Office tried to get in touch with the Burnside area labor contractors and the effort turned up some vacant lots and non-existent addresses.

If anyone has trouble getting paid for their work, contact the Burnside Workers' Cooperative for help.

## ***Housing VI***

*[Excerpts from "Athens Hotel — A Liveable Place Once Again," an article by Mary Medved, in Hobo News Quarterly, Autumn 1984.]*

On March 1, 1984 Burnside Projects assumed the management of the Athens Hotel, a 101-room facility in the Old Town [Skid Road] area. The Athens Hotel [located at 230 NW Sixth] houses very low income people, ranging in age from young children to frail elderly. Burnside Projects took on the job of managing the Athens Hotel in order to prevent it from closing down. The agency staff believed that immediate closure of the hotel would leave its tenants with few housing options.

As reported in the local media, the previous management had let the hotel deteriorate to the point the major code and safety violations were rampant. During the months of December and January, heating was sporadic in the hotel. Many of the rooms lacked adequate locks, smoke detectors, working plumbing, and window glass.

During the past six months, Burnside Projects has recruited almost 300 volunteers to assist with cleaning, painting, plumbing and other basic repair work at the Athens Hotel. Other individuals and businesses donated paint, carpeting, cleaning supplies, locks and tools toward the clean-up effort.... Though there are still numerous cleaning and repair projects left to be done at the Athens, all major code and safety violations in the hotel have now been corrected, thanks to many volunteers.

# HOBONews

QUARTERLY

AUTUMN 1984

BURNSIDE

COMMUNITY

COUNCIL



VIRGINIA DAVIS

CONDUCTS FREE

POETRY

WORKSHOPS

9TH ST. EXIT

16TH AND E. BURNSIDE

Thursdays 7:30-9PM

BUSES: #19 GLISSAN &

#20 BURNSIDE

PAGE 10

HOBOPARADEPHOTOS

PAGE 6-7

COVER PHOTOS: FREDERICK WHITE

Above: KING & QUEEN of the HOBOS

Below: MERLYN the GORILLA & FRIEND

Cover of issue of Hobo News Quarterly in which article on previous page appeared.



## SCOTT

As I have said elsewhere [see story *Beginnings*], I first started volunteering down on Burnside in August of 1970, after meeting with Jim Lambert, who was a Catholic priest who was managing the Burnside Hotel. I began to go to that hotel every time I came into town from Beaverton, just to say hello to the people that I was beginning to get to know. This hotel was a kind of a base where I felt a little bit more comfortable because I wasn't just on the street with a lot of people I didn't know.

In about September of that year, I was introduced to Scott, who was at times cooking at the hotel for the people; I remember that he would vie in a playful way with a man named Jerome as to who was the better cook. I guess Scott must have taken a liking to me for some reason, because he always used to visit with me when I was there. I remember one time he said, "I want to show you my room. Come look at my room." So I went in. He had a pretty neat room. I was still wearing the veil at this time and the modified habit, and when I noticed a magazine that was something like a magazine for men, Scott said, "Oh, I didn't mean for you to see that," and he flipped it over. I said, "This is *your* room, Scott!" meaning that he could have whatever he wanted in it. Anyway, at that time I didn't really pay any more attention to Scott than I did to anybody else in the hotel.

The next episode that I recall regarding Scott was about six months later. Jim Lambert had opened a little restaurant called The Cardinal Café, on Burnside between Fourth and Fifth, that he was using as a resource for the men to work in. The men would wait tables, cook and clean up, develop a sense of responsibility, get some job experiences, and earn some money. Scott was cooking there. Apparently, that was Scott's first venture onto the streets since he had been at the Burnside Hotel, which was probably close to about five months by now. His job at The Cardinal seemed to be working out all right, I guess, but I'm not so sure that it might not have been the beginning of some trouble later.

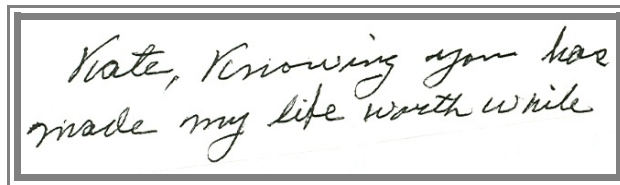
Below the Burnside Hotel, and part of the same building, was a Drop-in Center. The center consisted of a small, narrow room that was used as a place for men to drop in at certain hours of the day, and to sleep at night for those who were homeless. It was staffed by the Burnside Hotel. I guess Scott and others had had a drinking party — a wine party — down there, and quite a few of the men from the hotel were in on it. Now the hotel wasn't a treatment center, but staying sober was a pre-requisite for coming to the hotel and being allowed to remain there, and since Scott had started to drink he had to leave. I remember that Vince Fleming [see Vince Fleming's story] (a young ex-seminarian who became one of Scott's best friends) said that Scott would probably feel very badly that he let down two people whom he loved — Vince and me. So Scott ended up down in the drop-in center at this point.

In those days, Scott used to wear a hat, and he had a handlebar moustache, and I remember that when I went into the Drop-in Center the day he had to leave the hotel, he had on a blue shirt with a kind of raspberry-colored stain, a wine stain, on the shirt, and great big crocodile tears were coming down his cheeks. He said he was going to go to Seattle. I didn't know a lot about alcoholism at this point, so I wasn't aware that when the alcoholic would start to drink again, or relapse, he would be off and running for a while and he wasn't going to just quit the next day. When Scott said that he was going to leave and go to Seattle, I said, "Well, at least stay here long enough until I can talk to you tomorrow," hoping that he might change his mind. He did stay, but when I came the next day he was still convinced he was going to Seattle. He asked me if I would give him some cigarettes; in later years, he told me that I said yes and gave him only two cigarettes to see him all the way to Seattle! He would throw that back at me playfully through the years. "You gave other people everything," he'd say, "but you gave me just two cigarettes." And I'd say, "Well I probably didn't have many, and I didn't have much money to buy any more."

Scott was gone for about a year. Then one day I was going up and down the soup line outside Blanchet House giving out mixed vitamins — all colors, shapes, and sizes — and this man came up to me in a clean white shirt and said, "Hello, Sister Kathleen." I said, "Hello." And he said, "You don't recognize me, do you?," and I said, "Well, yes, I recognize your face," but I couldn't remember his name (he had shaved his moustache, and he didn't have the hat on). I guess I turned and went back into Blanchet at that point. Scott was kind of embarrassed, apparently, in the soup line, because he had told people, "Just wait till Sister Kathleen sees me." Well, Sister Kathleen couldn't remember who he was at the time! So then when I came out again he said, "You don't remember old Scott, do you!" and I said, "Scott! Well, yes, I do recognize you now!" I used to often wonder what had happened to him. The few times I was in Seattle, I'd wonder where Scott was, or even if he was still in the Seattle area.

I asked Scott how things were and where he was staying, and he said, "Well, if I had a place, I wouldn't be here in the soup line!" I said, "Oh, do you think you'd be interested in going into a program that I'm connected with called Harmony House?" which I then told him a little bit about. I think he wasn't too interested at first, but then he said, "Well, yes, I think I would be interested." I put him in contact with Donald Pittman and Milton Winchell who were part of Harmony House and who had opened the original Harmony House that Alan had had me come and see some weeks before [see Alan's story].

Harmony House was a grass-roots alcoholism recovery program. Initially, it was only loosely organized. It began when Donald Pittman, Milton Winchell, and (I think it was) Terry Morgan received a grant to get a halfway house started for recovering alcoholics. The program in those early years consisted of house meetings, staying sober, and looking for paid employment. Also, the person thought to be the most capable in the group would be chosen as house manager. It was a very unpretentious program. As the years passed, Harmony House became involved with federal funding, which resulted in the inevitable paperwork and more accountability. As more board members were added in time to Harmony House, I too became one, in addition to being a counselor and general support person. Donations used to come once in a while, but we tried to encourage the men to find a job as a means of supporting themselves and the program. They didn't have to pay very much in rent (I think it might have been twenty or thirty dollars a week); it was very little at first, and then as times got better or the men were earning a little more they would be asked to pay a little bit more.



From a Christmas card Scott gave to Kate.

So Scott went into Harmony House. He started as a client and then cooked for them. I think he was in the house on Kirby Street rather than the one on Taylor Street. Emanuel Hospital owned the property that the Kirby Street house was on, and that house was going to have to close because it and other residential homes in the area were going to be leveled in order to make room for the expansion of the hospital. This left a feeling of insecurity in the men because they didn't have any place to go. And if you're sober and clean and you haven't got a job or the money to get a place to stay, there's not much choice left except to do what you did before — drink — because at least drinking blotted into oblivion what was going on with you. I guess everybody except the manager started to drink at some point and had to leave — six or seven people, including Scott. I had heard about it because I think that, by that time, either I was a Harmony House

board member or I was going into the house often enough (bringing food or cigarettes or whatever was needed) to know about this sort of thing.

Then one day I was at the soup line again at Blanchet, and along came Scott, very, very sick — just drunk-sick. He walked up to me and I said, "Scott, you're pretty sick. Do you want to go to detox?" "No. No. I'll be all right," and he turned and walked away. I'm amazed actually that I offered him that choice; I think I played the enabler a lot of times in my earlier years.

The next day he came again, and he looked worse, just really in terrible shape. He had been drinking for quite a while at this point, at least long enough to get very sick and not be able to eat or hold anything down. I looked at him again and I said, "Are you ready to go to detox now, Scott?" and he said, "I have no other choice." I don't recall whether I took him there myself or whether I called for the detox wagon. I really hadn't known this man drunk except for that one short episode before he went to Seattle. I knew that a lot of the men were very different when they were drunk from the way they were when they were sober, and I wasn't too sure how to deal with their change in behavior; the same was true with Scott.

So he went to detox, which hadn't been open all that long and was on Southwest Pine Street; this would have been in about 1972. I remember I didn't go see Scott because I didn't have time during that period; I would only come into town for a few hours before heading back out to Beaverton. In those days they kept drunks in the detox just three days, but Scott had had the d.t.'s so badly that they kept him quite a long time after the regular three days — maybe up to as many as nine days. He hallucinated during the d.t.'s, claiming to see a bomber come into his room, fly around the room, and then go out through the wall. He said to me later, "You know, before I left detox, I went back to that room, I was so sure there would be a big hole there."

Scott returned to Harmony House around late 1972, and that was his last drunk. From being the cook and then the house manager, he gradually worked up into what I'll call the director of the program. He was basically uneducated, without formal education, but he was a bright person. I used to think he was just making things up when I'd ask a question of some kind, but he had a lot of facts and information at his fingertips. He was the son of an Indian [Native American] mother and an Italian father. He had grown up on a sheep ranch and apparently used to herd sheep as a youngster. He had gone to a Catholic school, eight grades in one room, with what he described as a hellion of a



Logo, taken from a thank-you note written on Harmony House stationery by Kate in May of 1978. The stationery lists the board of directors, shows "S. Kate St. Martin, Secretary," and lists Scott as director.

teacher. She probably *had* to be that way in order to be able to teach in such an environment!

A secretary for Harmony House was eventually hired. There were three board members who could sign the checks, and there had to be two signatures on each check. Board members who could sign would stop in occasionally, and this secretary would

have one of them put his signature on maybe eight or ten blank checks. The second signer should have signed *after* the check was written, but everyone seemed to trust everyone else, and she began getting two signatures on blank checks. She'd say, "Oh, Kate, are you leaving? Would you sign a couple of checks?" and I would sign blank ones. I remember one day signing nine of them. With two signatures, the checks could be written for anything. This went on for a while.

Then she claimed she had a job offer in California. We hired a replacement, who received some but not enough training from the secretary who was leaving. After the first secretary left for California, I helped with balancing the books. When the checks would come, I'd reconcile them according to the check book and see that the amounts matched. At one point, I noticed that a check had been made out to some studio and thought, "What's this? Well, maybe she had some pictures taken and ran it through the books." I tried to find information about the studio. I looked in our phone book but couldn't find the name. I called the operator but there was no such listing. The operator suggested I look on the back of the check to determine what city it was cashed in. When I did this, I found that the check had been cashed in Philadelphia. So I went through the operator again and said, "I'm trying to get the number of such and such studio in Philadelphia." She checked it out and said, "It's a women's clothing store." That first secretary had spent an amount between \$500 and \$800 at this clothing studio, and, after the auditors came, we found out that she evidently had embezzled probably close to \$10,000. Also, many of the men paid the weekly rents with their little pittances, their twenty dollars or whatever they were paying, so money could have been creamed off that too. Scott was very good about getting the rents from the people, giving them the receipt, and having that all on record, but how much of it ever was banked we weren't too sure of after that. She denied any knowledge of the missing funds, so two of the board members went down to California to see what they could do, but they were unsuccessful in doing anything about it.

In the end, the board said that Scott had to go.

I had gone to Hawaii with my mom, so I didn't know anything about what happened to Scott until I returned. When I got back, there was a message from the woman who had replaced the first secretary, saying to call right away. She told me, "Kate, Scott was fired. They just called him in, said he had to go." They gave him some amount of severance pay, two weeks' or a month's pay. They said he should have known, as the main person in charge. Scott had told them, "I didn't do the books. Jerry was treasurer." And I thought afterwards, "How come Jerry didn't pick up on this?" This situation hadn't been for just a week or two; it had happened probably over a three- or four-month period, or maybe longer (I don't remember exactly). Jerry should have recognized that the amounts in question were not the utility bills, the payment to the city, and other regular bills. There were too many charges that had absolutely nothing to do with Harmony House.

This was a real hurting part of my ministry. Scott had moved into an apartment on Division Street, in southeast Portland. I went to see him there, and everything was dark. All the curtains were closed, and here's this man, a broken man, sitting there, head down. Why he never started to drink again I will never know, because his world had fallen apart. He had a strong sense of what was right and just. If it was black it was black, if it was white it was white; there was no in-between for Scott. I talked to him for a long time that day. He really was defeated. He didn't do anything for a long time because he was in a very deep state of depression.

I went before the board, addressing especially one member, and said, "Why did you do this when I was gone? As soon as the day I left? Why couldn't you have waited, so that Scott would have had at least *some* support instead of none?" It was a hard time for me. It really was. I couldn't talk to them without my voice breaking.

As time went on, Scott finally looked for work and got a job at Jesuit High School [a Catholic school in Portland, run by the Jesuits].

They eventually made Dennis Powell the director of Harmony House [see

Dennis Powell's story]. Dennis had been in the House for some time. I loved Dennis. He was a very nice man, but it was not a good position for him at all, because he wasn't adept at handling the men. Scott had been rough and brusque but was liked because people knew where they stood with him. Dennis, on the other hand, was very different from this. For one thing, he fired Sally, the secretary who worked in the Twentieth and Taylor house; she hadn't had all the experience that her predecessor had, but she was very personable with the clients, honest, sincere, and loyal. And Dennis fired Carl, too, who was manager of the Thirty-ninth Street house [see Carl's story].

So then I went before the board again and said, "You know, you did this before to Scott, and now you're letting it happen again to Sally and Carl, and without real justification." I broke down there, and from then on I had little to do with the board of directors.

That April I had bilateral foot surgery, after which I took a three-month leave from Harmony House to heal from the surgery. I was in a wheelchair for two weeks and then in casts on both feet for the next seven weeks. After that I went down to Los Gatos, California and made a thirty-day retreat. When I returned to Portland, I wanted to get more counseling experience, so I went to De Paul [Center for Alcoholism Treatment] and asked if I could participate in one of the group therapy sessions for a month or so. The director said yes and that he'd be glad to have me. Well, I was only there a few days and I thought, "I would like to work here!" So I asked the director if they might have a position for me (I knew there was not a nurse there). He said, "Yes, but we haven't any place in the budget for you yet. We will eventually, but if you're willing to start out with what we can give you —" and I was. I gave two weeks' notice to Harmony House and began work at De Paul.

So that's the story of my severance with Harmony House. I had been with them since 1970 in one way or another — twelve years. It was hard to let go.

After Scott's job at Jesuit High, he was hired as a cook by the Christian Brothers de la Salle, who staffed La Salle High School. Many years before I met Scott, he had worked in California for these same Christian Brothers, who operated a winery there.

Scott eventually retired, at age seventy-one. He had lied about his age way back when he was in his forties, putting himself ten years younger in order to have an easier time getting jobs when he gave his age. So then when he was old enough for Social Security he was in trouble! He was already seventy when he decided he'd better get this cleared up. He always claimed that he had tried to get records before from his birthplace and was unsuccessful. I said, "Scott, I found out that if nothing else they can get school records and Census Bureau information." Well, they *did*. They got school records and his dishonorable discharge from the Marines! They went by the school record because that was the oldest, and since that nun I mentioned earlier had listed him a year younger than he was actually, he had to wait another year. He had to work for the Brothers another year till he was seventy-one before he finally retired.

Scott developed high blood pressure and had some sort of blackout experiences. I think part of this was the stress of trying to manage on a low, fixed income. His insurance on his car, for example, was heavy; he cut down on that, but he had been paying close to a thousand dollars a year because he had good coverage and he had bought a new car. He no longer could live according to the style he had been enjoying before retirement, which, while it hadn't been all that great, *had* allowed him to take little trips and have a little in the bank. He watched gradually diminish what little money that he had when he went into retirement.

Scott had no family and he was never married. After his retirement, I was frequently in touch with him, sharing a cup of coffee or just visiting. He continued to work for the Brothers for a while because it allowed him to earn a few thousand dollars extra, which, along with his Social Security income, gave him a little bit of a nest egg, something there that he could fall back on or do something else with. He later shared a Housing Authority of Portland apartment with a friend he had met, which gave him the closest thing to a home that he had ever had. After a few years his health worsened, and

he was diagnosed with cancer of the lungs. He received hospice care, and I did some respite care so that the woman he was living with could have some breaks. Scott was eventually transferred to a nursing home. He died in 1998.

So that's the story of Scott. He was an irascible kind of character, but probably one of my closest Burnside friends. We had been friends a long, long time, and Scott was one of my greatest success stories.

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**Postscript**

A year or two before his death, Scott invited Kate and me for dinner in the apartment referred to above. -Ron

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## SIMON & MICKEY ELLIS

I knew Simon Ellis off and on. He used to come into Matt Talbot Center. One day he came and he had a man with him. He said, "Sister, this is my twin brother, Mickey. I can make it on the streets or under the bridge, but... he can't. Would you be able to help him?" I looked at the man. He was frail-looking and somebody who, unlike Simon, apparently didn't drink, or drank very little. Mickey was kind of quiet and shy — like Simon, actually.

For some reason, Mickey's need sounded more long-term, so I thought of Blanchet House. I called Mel, who was manager there [see Mel's story], and said, "I have a man here who's willing to work for his room and board. Would you have room for him? He's a twin, whose brother brought him and asked if I could help him."

Blanchet took him in. I guess Mickey had charge of cleaning the hall upstairs and the area where the men used to sit and watch TV. He cleaned meticulously, and they said he had it spotless up there. He stayed at Blanchet for several years, and Simon would go and see him periodically.

Then one day, two very well-dressed men came into Matt Talbot Center wanting to see me. They introduced themselves. One was the nephew of Simon and Mickey, and the other one was related also (I think he was their brother). They said, "We heard that you knew them and that you had helped Mickey. What we want to do is take them back to Minnesota, to the family. The family has often wondered where the two of them are and how they are. We want to thank you for what you did for them." As I recall, they gave me a twenty-five dollar donation. They said the family would be very happy, and I think they also said that Mickey and Simon's whereabouts hadn't been known for almost twenty years.

So the men took the twins to Minnesota. I received a letter from the family, thanking me again for what I had done for Mickey.

Later I ran into Simon, who had returned to Portland. He was about sixty-five and was living at the Foster Hotel. He was doing pretty much what many of them do when they get on a fixed income: they're lonely, no longer working, and they drink. They drink until maybe something will stop them, like poor health.

I'd see Simon every so often. He was short and kind of chubby, and he'd stop and put his arms around me and say, "I love you." I'd ask him if he had heard from Mickey and he'd say yes — it didn't appear that Mickey was very well, though.

At one point I received a message from someone at the Foster Hotel that Simon had suffered a stroke. He apparently had been sent to the hospital and later was placed in a foster home in northeast Portland.

When I found out where he was, I called and then went to visit him. He was living in an attractive, large home that could take in up to five people for foster care. The home was owned and managed by a black woman, who was very kind to the residents and attentive to their needs.

Several times, at Simon's request, I took him to Newberry's [a department store] at the Lloyd Center [a shopping mall in Portland]. He would shop a little, and we would have coffee and visit. He would tell me of letters he had received and share news of his family.

The last time I saw Simon he seemed quite confused. We visited, but I had the feeling that he wasn't too sure of who I was.

## STANLEY

Stanley was a thorn in my side, the bane of my life. He was an intelligent man who came from a good family in Texas. He was definitely alcoholic, a chronic alcoholic, and when he drank his personality change was very difficult to work with, to deal with. When drinking, he was extremely obnoxious, very loud, very rude, very much of a show-off and in need of attention. Normally he would be quite a gentleman, but when he was drunk he would yell at me down the street — "S'ter Kathleen, Kate, Kate, Kate, wait, wait a minute" — he'd just scream out and draw a lot of attention from any passers-by.

I knew Stanley from the streets. He came into Harmony House and he did all right for a little while. Then he applied for his veteran's pension; he received a fair amount of money, but he was running into so many problems with it that they made someone (or an agency) responsible for him. That arrangement wasn't working out too well for him, so he asked if I would take on this responsibility. In a moment of weakness, I said yes, so we went through the paperwork to accomplish this. I had accepted his request, but I later regretted this responsibility. His checks came to *me*. He could not sign them; I signed them. I paid his bills, kept his money in the bank, and gave him whatever he asked for.

Several times in the period of a year or two, Stanley would want to go visit his family in Texas, where his mother, who was not well, was still living. (I'm not sure if his father was alive at the time of these trips, but it seems to me that he *was* in the beginning, when I first knew Stanley.) Sometimes Stanley took the bus for these trips, and once or twice I took him to the airport to take the plane. I still didn't know that much about alcoholism at that point. If he looked reasonably sober, I assumed he was going to be all right. And I remember that he had this rather gaudy, colorful, checked jacket and yellow shirt and other articles that he had picked up in the Clean-up Center or in one of the missions (like Salvation Army, for example), but he would look reasonably dressed.

On these trips, Stanley usually would start to drink and his behavior would become very inappropriate — loud, demanding, and disturbing to other passengers. On one of his bus trips, they dropped him off someplace in L.A. and wouldn't let him continue. At times like this he would be on the streets with no money and would call me collect and ask me to wire money to whatever town he was in. Other times he would claim to be sick, or he *was* sick and would be in the hospital. He used to call collect a lot. "Kaaaaate, Kaaaaate," he'd say when he was drunk, "I need help. Can you send some money? I'm so sick." So I'd have to go down to Western Union and wire some money to him. This type of behavior continued off and on.

He told me that when he was in Texas one time, he'd get drunk and his relatives wouldn't want him to see his mother because they knew it would upset her. Of course, he cried about that, and he felt very hurt about it. He had a lot of family friends and he'd go to them; these were very successful business people, and, when his behavior was inappropriate, they didn't want him around.

Then Stanley went down to White City for a while. This is a domiciliary for veterans, outside of Medford [in southern Oregon]. They can stay there a long time, even indefinitely, as long as they stay sober. A lot of the men there think it's very much like the army, with a lot of strict rules — your bed has to be very neat as well as your locker and possessions. They have a detox there, now. White City will take them back after they relapse, and detoxify them, but if they keep doing this they have to leave. So Stanley would be sober, then he'd come back to Portland. Many a time I would buy the ticket for him to get to White City; then he'd get off someplace and start drinking and call for more money to be wired.

When he was in White City, he would do a lot of occupational therapy. He would make tools and some leather items. He learned to knit, or use some kind of a



loom, and make knit hats. When he came back, he gave me a number of these hats, which were very attractive. Then he did a hooked rug with my name "Kate" in big letters in the middle of it. He was very dear and a sweet person when sober. "I love you Kate, I love you," he'd always say. "I love you too, Stanley."

Stanley's health was declining. It would be winter here — cold and wet — and he'd have no place to go (he wasn't wanted in the hotels because he was so loud or he would pick fights or would otherwise get himself in trouble). He would get pneumonia and be in the hospital. Then he'd come back and say, "I was so sick," but he'd start drinking again and be exposed out in the elements again.

Getting back to the different times when Stanley would leave Portland, after going through this pattern of getting drunk and calling me for money for probably a year and a half or so, I would often just say, "Stanley, I'm not going to send any money until you go to Salvation Army and sober up." Then he would try to argue, and I would say, "No, that's it. Go to Salvation Army. When you're sober, let me know and I'll wire money so you can get back." So he would be forced to do this.

Finally, during one of his trips to Texas, I had had it with managing his money, and I said, "Stanley, I cannot continue doing this. I don't want this responsibility; I'd like to turn it over to you. It's too hard to do it, and I think it's better if somebody down there does it because you go there often." He said, "My son'll do it, my son'll do it." So I called his son. And that more or less kept him down there. He came up once or twice, but he went back. Margaret Ellen helped him here for a while (she's a Franciscan nun who worked out of the Estate Hotel), but he didn't like the arrangement because he only got three dollars at a time, and he couldn't do too much drinking on that.

I haven't seen Stanley now for probably almost two years [1986]. I don't know how he is doing, but I know that the drinking years have taken their toll on his health.

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FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Involvement in Funerals and Memorial Services
for Skid Road Individuals*

Ron: You sometimes arranged for, participated in, or even conducted funerals or memorial services for Skid Road individuals who died. How often and to what extent did you do this, Kate?

Kate: I did this for those who had no family who could be there, or who didn't have any family that I had ever been aware of. These people, as a rule, were people with whom I had had a lot more contact than they had had with their families. They were closer to me in a way, and our lives had interacted more than their just coming to me for some medication or to get some clothing or to have some other short-term need met. Those were the reasons I did it.

When I stop to think of those I did this for, some of the times it involved trying to arrange for a priest to preside (as I did for Charlie); other times I conducted the service myself (as I did for Henry) [see Charlie's and Henry's stories]. In other words, sometimes I would arrange for a priest to say a Mass, if the person was Catholic; otherwise, I would conduct a simple memorial service, and get maybe a couple of people who may have known the deceased individual to say something. I might select a reading, and I certainly would give the opportunity for people to speak and tell of their memories or contacts with the individual. Sometimes these memories were humorous, and sometimes they showed that there was a deep friendship or that the speaker really deeply respected the deceased. It was a way of giving dignity to the person who had died. I probably did this for a couple dozen people, more or less.

Now every year in the spring — and this started some years ago — there is a memorial service in the Downtown Chapel for all those on Skid Road who have died during the past year: those who have died after leaving Hooper Detox, those who have died on the streets, those who have died of overdose, or for any other reason. The names of all these people are read as two other individuals are lighting a hundred vigil lights on a stand in the chapel. Then there is an inter-denominational, ethnic part of the service where Indians [Native Americans] participate with an Indian prayer and with songs. Part of a chorus group from the University of Portland has come the last few years and sung songs during the service. Usually the service is led by Mort Lincoln, who is a minister and is involved with Operation Nightwatch. So the people who have died are remembered in that way, too. [See also *From the Times: Candle Memories* for more on this event.]

I mentioned in one of the stories that when an individual died who was indigent or had very few funds, if any, some of the funeral homes would rotate responsibility for taking care of and paying for a simple service. Indigents used to be buried in what (in the old days) was called a "pauper's field"; when cremation became more prevalent, it was used as a less expensive method.

I remember reading in the newspaper one time that a person I knew had died, so I went to the service. I was the only person who was in attendance. The only person. One of the staff persons there said a couple of prayers. Then he asked me what I knew about the man, and I mentioned a few things.

Ron: That must have been a pretty lonely experience, when I think of the value of that person's life and yet no one was there to affirm it but you, or to affirm your own support of him.

Kate: Yes, that's true; and yet I think a lot of people on Skid Road were buried in that way.

STEVE

I first met Steve when he came to Harmony House. He kind of reminded me of Colonel Sanders: he had a white beard, blue eyes, and white thinning hair. He was a well-educated and quite intelligent man.

We didn't know a lot about his background, but he was capable of cooking, so he usually found himself cooking as his job in the house. Steve would have his periodic relapses and would have to leave the house; then he would re-apply to the manager to get back in, and he was always taken back, because he never really caused any problems.

He was doing very well for quite a long time. Then the manager left for vacation or for some other reason. When a manager left like this, a board member would take turns coming to Harmony House for dinner. One night Steve, who was managing the house in the manager's absence, had cooked dinner, and he was drunk, really quite drunk. I don't think anybody put him out that evening because nobody with the authority to do this was there, and the board member didn't think she could either. But Steve did have to leave the program later (and then later he came back in).

At a certain point, Steve was living in the Harmony House on Southeast Twentieth and Taylor, which by this time was serving as our office instead of the Twentieth and Hawthorne house because it couldn't meet the safety codes for a residential care facility. We kept all our records, files, and equipment there. We used the back room as the manager's office, the dining room as an administrative office with our records and files, and the living room for meetings and counseling sessions. And upstairs lived Steve; he was the only one holding that place down, and he was there so that the house wouldn't be open to vandalism.

In about 1978 we had a very serious silver thaw. Sandra had taken in a black woman [Sandra was one of Kate's Sisters who lived with her and other Sisters in the convent of The Madeleine parish]. The woman's name was Jenny; she had been beaten, and she had come with her four children to stay in the convent. Now Sandra and I had been invited to stay in the house on Twentieth & Taylor because the electricity was out at the convent, due to the silver thaw. Because of this, and also because it was hard on the older Sisters with all these children running around, Sandra and I, and Jenny and her four girls, moved into the Taylor Street house on a temporary basis. I remember one time, after Jenny and Sandra and I went to work [Sandra did not work for Harmony House], Steve decided that he would entertain the children, making chocolate chip cookies; he was very good with them and they enjoyed him. [Kate told Ron in a conversation in 2004 that after a few days or a very short period at any rate, she and Sandra moved back to the convent temporarily, without Jenny and her children.]

When a cook was needed at our [Harmony House's] Clackamas house in Oregon City [southeast of Portland], next to Willamette Falls Hospital, Steve was asked if he would go out there to stay, and he did.

Since the house still needed somebody to look after it, and since Sandra wanted to start a house of hospitality for homeless women and their children, we talked the matter over and then asked for and received an okay [both from their religious order and from Harmony House] to stay there. We [moved back and] were allowed to stay rent-free and became kind of caretakers of it then. [Kate and Sandra stayed at the house for maybe a year and a half.]

Steve was doing pretty well. He was always encouraging people to be the best of whatever they could be. He was well-read and used to encourage them to read. He liked to play cribbage too, and he was good at it; he'd play cribbage with any cribbage lover, including myself. But he did get teased a lot by the younger people who were at the house. Our clientele overall at Harmony House was beginning to change; we were getting younger people, and some from the Corrections Division.

Then all of a sudden we began to notice a change in Steve's behavior. He was saying very odd things to the clients, making odd comments. I, in particular, saw the

personality change because I had known him many years.

One day, Steve went into Portland and apparently started to drink. The manager of his house called and said that he had been picked up by the police. They had found him sitting on the curb, confused and disoriented, and so had taken him into protective custody. The manager went and brought him back to the house. We talked quite a bit about his condition and decided that he probably needed to leave Harmony House and get into some kind of situation where he could be treated for his condition. We got in touch with the Veterans Hospital, and he was hospitalized in their psychiatric ward for a while. I remember visiting him there and playing a game of cribbage. From that point on, he never seemed to have any drive or initiative, and his attitude would be "whatever." "Whatever, whatever" would be his response; he didn't care if he stayed there forever or if he left tomorrow. His behavior was so different from what I had known.

Finally, the Veterans Hospital placed him in a nursing home south of Milwaukie [a town south of Portland]. He seemed very happy there; but, again, he didn't have any initiative. I think he got to the state where he was just glad he didn't have to be responsible for taking care of himself anymore. To look at him, you would think he could survive and get along well in a Housing Authority living situation or something similar, but I don't think he had the drive or initiative or whatever else it might have taken — his alcoholism had maybe taken a toll.

I never knew the circumstances of the end of Steve's life. One little incident that I do recall just now, however, is that when he first came to Harmony House I washed — or rather, scoured — his special coffee mug which had become very brown from coffee stains. Steve was irritated about this and said that his coffee never tasted the same afterwards. I never scrubbed his mug again!



TED

Ted was a very different, very beautiful type of person. He had kind of a shaggy mane; his hair was bushy and grey. His beard, too, was shaggy.

He was highly educated. He had a kind of inbred sense of humor, which he would turn against himself by putting himself down. Even when he wasn't trying to be humorous, he had a way of putting himself down for his drinking and for the condition that he was in; I remember one occasion when we were talking about his drinking and lack of housing, and he said, "I know better. I've been well educated, but I've been a fool." He was referring to his present lifestyle and the fact that he could have had a much better life.

Ted used to pick flowers — take any he could find — and try to sell them for some change for drinking. One evening, on my way home from Harmony House, I saw him standing with a bouquet of flowers. I asked the friend I was with to drive around the block. We stopped where Ted was, and I bought the flowers so he'd have some change.

Another time, I was walking to Blanchet House (I guess to give out vitamins in the soup line), and I ran into Ted, who was coming from the opposite direction. He had a mop, an apron, a flower, and a magazine or something. We both stopped and talked for a moment. At one point he said, "Do you want anything, Sister?" "Yes. I'll take the flower," I said, "but I don't want people to see me giving you money." I gave him fifty cents. He thanked me, and we proceeded in opposite directions. Pretty soon I heard, "Sister Kathleen, Sister Kathleen!" I turned around, and he said, "Thank you, 'dahling,' thank you, dahling," as he blew me a kiss and bowed.

A lot of people used to come around, and they'd ask for a lot — they'd demand a lot. But Ted never did; he didn't ask for much. He would instead offer you something in exchange for money. He was someone I just never turned down.

I remember he said once, "I would give my body to science, to do with what they want, if they'd just give me a bottle of wine. They could have my body."

I used to see Ted sitting on the sidewalk, leaning against the Estate Hotel, across the street from Matt Talbot Center where I worked. Ted was someone who never hurt anybody, and I never saw anyone hurt Ted. He didn't get into fights; other people on the street left him alone — they didn't bother him, and he didn't bother them.

One time I was at Blanchet House, and George Dawson, the director of Blanchet, was there as well. Ted had come in, and I told George, "Ted is somebody I never turn down; he's one of the few on the street that I never turn down — I do give him change." And George said, "I do the same. I do the same! I give him money." I gave Ted money because he was such a gentle person and had so little going for him on the streets. He really was somebody that I just think God loved very, very much because he was a very gentle person. Even in his lifestyle he was gentle, which, of course, made him very vulnerable.

By this time in my relationship with Ted, I knew that he was old enough to be getting a fixed income — SSI — so I was curious why he didn't have permanent housing. One time I just asked him about this. "Ted," I said, "why don't you have a place to sleep?" And he said, "*They* don't want me. I wet the bed; I don't have bladder control." I don't know if this was a medical condition or a result of his drinking; I think it probably happened when he was drinking, which was the case often with many of the men on Skid Road. Then he repeated, "They don't want me." And that really hurt me, because I would have happily found a place for him to stay. This was probably the only time he ever said anything that wasn't just self-scorn; it was simply a fact, and he knew it and seemed to accept it.

I don't know the circumstances of Ted's death, but he probably died in the hospital. He is someone who was very dear and someone I have never forgotten.

More tortuous than all else
is the human heart,
beyond remedy;
who can understand it?
Jeremiah
7th & 6th Centuries B.C.

CLAY HARMON

[See note at start of Troy Westman's story.]

Clay Harmon, like Troy Westman [see Troy Westman's story], is another young man who became a very important part of my life during the years from 1994 to 1996. I first met him back in 1986 when he was a client at De Paul. I don't remember anything significant from that period, other than that I saw him off and on. Some years later, probably around 1992 or 1993, I saw him again, at Hooper Detox, where he was a patient. We hugged when we recalled that we had known each other in the past. He seemed to be doing very well at that time.

I didn't see Clay again until June of 1994, when I began to work as a volunteer at Our House of Portland. One day, there was Clay! We really were delighted to see each other. During that period, I was helping out in any capacity that was needed — helping set the table, helping get people to the table, helping with dishes, helping with the laundry — and Clay was doing the same. At some point during our shift, I asked him where he was staying and if he had a way home. It turned out he was staying with someone I had known as a clerk in a couple of the hotels (a really nice person), and I ended up taking him home.

That was the beginning of our deepening friendship. Sometimes I would pick him up and drive him someplace he needed to go, and other times he would help *me*.

After a while, he was asked to assist the manager of the Danmoore Hotel, so he moved there and began working as assistant. He seemed to like it and seemed to be doing all right.

Clay was *very* personable, a very outgoing person, and he kidded people a lot. People liked him, and he met many people who really thought a lot of him and felt they were friends. I don't think he ever passed anyone without saying something friendly to them.

Sometime later he told me, "The manager is going to move over to the Henry Building, and he thought maybe I could manage the Danmoore." I said, "I think that's too much, Clay, because your health isn't that good." I had known early in our friendship that Clay was gay and that he was ten years HIV positive. I said, "Managing could take quite a toll. There's nothing easy about that hotel, and there are a lot of people who drink and use drugs there." He was a very intelligent person, and he said, "Well, I think I can handle the paperwork and the rest. Anyway, I'm on trial for a month, and if I can't do it, I'll let them know."

During that month, I would pick him up periodically and take him to Troy's place, or he would stop in there on his own, and I would also take him to Our House and back. Towards the end of the month, he said, "You know, I don't think I'm going to be able to manage the hotel, but the manager of the Henry Building said I could move in." So he moved into the Henry Building.

Clay also had a janitorial job for a while at Central City Concern, taking wax off floors and doing other janitorial tasks, but that was pretty hard for him physically. He could do a lot of things, but he didn't have long-term stamina or strength when it came to very hard work. His previous jobs had mostly been as a waiter, in good restaurants.

Clay wasn't in the Henry Building too long because he relapsed and had to leave. He asked me if he could store his really nice set of luggage in the basement of my apartment building, and I said he could.

When he moved into the Transition Projects shelter, on Fifth and Glisan, he said, "I'm where I need to be. This is good for me. I'm tying in with some therapy and Twelve Step meetings, and I'm seeing the doctor. They're watching my medication. I'm getting acupuncture and I'm taking different herbs." He was getting medication for HIV

disease and trying to maintain his health as well as he could.

It was around that time that I began to see a lot of Clay. He would come over to my apartment to visit, and he'd maybe do some work there and at Sophie's place, too — things we didn't always have time to do — and Sophie would pay him out of some funds that she had been given for this purpose. [Sophie is one of Kate's long-time friends and also a Holy Names Sister.] He would do basic housekeeping and any moving that needed to be done. This job for him had come about when the cleaning woman who had been helping Sophie and me wasn't working out too well. Sophie asked me if I knew of anybody to replace her, and I said, "Clay might be willing." So I asked him, and he was willing. He did a very good and thorough job, and this gave him some money (he didn't have another job at that time). Periodically, he would also get jobs helping people move.

He used to go to shows with his friends, and sometimes, when he had a little money, he'd go out with them to do other things. Sometimes, too, he and I would eat together someplace; I took him to the Cadillac Café, which is a gay-friendly restaurant, and it became his favorite place. And sometimes he would introduce *me* to places.

I could *never* walk anyplace with Clay — downtown or wherever — that he didn't run into people he knew. On some occasions he felt embarrassed because he no longer dressed the way that he used to. He told me that at one time he dressed very well and had a lot of clothes. He said, "I could have changed three times a day, every day of the week, into something different. I took a lot of pride in dressing well." He had lost a lot of that through the years because of his drinking and use of drugs.

At times he would get pretty sick with a heavy cold. He would try not to smoke during those times because the smoke would bother him. The smoke of others in the shelter would be hard on him as well, so they put him over in a corner where it was less smokey, more quiet, and where he wasn't as disturbed by people. They really liked Clay in the shelter because he was good, he was pleasant, and he was helpful — but it still was the shelter.

Meals at the shelter were served by different churches at different times in the evening; so, if we had been doing something together earlier, I would drop him off in time for him to eat there. Clay would help serve the meals. He was always an extremely helpful person in any situation.

One day when he was still at the shelter, he called me and sounded kind of desperate. He said, "I need two hundred dollars. My baby brother committed suicide. My parents are away. My sister came and she wants me to help pitch in for the funeral arrangements."

He had been drinking, so I went to a neutral place with him to talk. We went to a Starbuck's [a coffee house], and we sat and had our coffee inside. When we went outside, he still was pretty desperate, wanting the money, and I said, "You know, Clay, it seems to me your parents have a right to make some decisions about the funeral arrangements for your brother. How did your sister know where you were?" and he said, "Oh, they have ways of finding out." I said, "I don't have that kind of money, Clay. I just don't have it."

He sounded *very* desperate. He said something like, "What *good* am I? What use am I in this world? I'm HIV positive, I'm gay, I'm alcoholic. I may as well just —" I had the impression that he was pretty depressed. A lot of anger and hurt came out about different things, which wasn't like him. I knew he had a lot of pent-up anger, and I was beginning to wonder if there might be a relationship between his expressions of anger and his drinking.

Anyway, I said, "Well, I could give you a little bit." He said, "Even a little bit would probably make her feel like I'm making some effort." So, I happened to have a twenty, and I said, "I'm going to give you this." I kept talking to him. I said, "I want to see you tomorrow, Clay," because I continued to have the feeling that he was really very depressed. Finally he said, "Yes," and I said, "Fine. I'll call you, or you can call me."

The next day, I saw him, and he was in good shape. He was okay, and he hadn't

been drinking. I said, "Did your sister come?"

"Yes. She was satisfied that I made an effort."

"Are you going to the funeral?"

"Oh, no... no... I don't think I want to go." Then I drove him back to the shelter and dropped him off.

On another occasion, I received a call from a chaplain at Providence Hospital [in Portland] asking me if I knew a Brad Lang [see Brad Lang's story]. When I said yes (he had been in Harmony House at one time), she told me that he was in a convalescent center and had mentioned that he knew me; I guess they had been asking him if he had any relatives or friends, and he mentioned my name. I said I'd be happy to go see him. So I got the address and asked Clay if he would go with me, because it was way out on Powell Boulevard and I have difficulty locating some areas on the far east side. Clay said, "Sure." So we went and visited with Brad, and I told him I would come to see him again. I took Clay back to the shelter afterwards, and I really was grateful that he had gone with me.

Clay developed a very severe chest cold and a terrible deep cough at some point after this. I have a guest room, so I invited him to stay at my place until that cleared up. He moved some things in, and the situation worked out fine. He was a wonderful house guest. He was very quiet and would always clean up after himself. He showed me how to cut up a chicken and make soup (which I had never made from scratch), insisting that I do it all myself. He was so very appreciative of everything. He stayed at my place three nights before he got well enough to return to the shelter.

THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH A DEAR
FRIEND, I AM TRULY GRATEFUL. YOU ARE
IN MY THOUGHTS MUCH OF THE TIME EVEN -
MORE SO WITH THE PASSING OF YOUR DEAR
MOTHER, MY PRAYERS ARE FOR YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY. SOMETIMES ITS HARD FOR ME TO EXPRESS
HOW I FEEL (SURPRISE!) BUT PLEASE KNOW
I LOVE YOU AND TRY EVERY DAY TO BE A BETTER
FRIEND. I THINK OF YOU AS FRIEND, SISTER AND
MOTHER - THANK YOU!

LOVE

From a sympathy card to Kate from Clay sent four months before his death. Clay signed the card but his signature is not included here.

Clay was trying to get out of the shelter and into the next transitional level, which would have been a hotel room. He was hoping to eventually get his own apartment in either the Sally McCracken Building (on Northwest Everett between Fifth and Sixth) or the Hatfield Building (on West Burnside between Seventh and Eighth). Both are two of the better places to stay and could become permanent housing as long as a tenant stayed clean and sober. Payment could be on a sliding scale, which getting on SSI would help accomplish. And because of Clay's HIV status and the fact that he could no longer work full time and support himself, getting on SSI was a real possibility.

One day Clay called me to get together and said, "I'll be outside the shelter at Transition Projects." I picked him up, and then he told me that he had been moved into the Stewart Hotel, which was on Broadway Street, one block south of Burnside. He said, "It's pretty nice. It beats the shelter." The hotel had a pay phone where I could call him,

and which he would use to call me when he had quarters. There was also a notice board nearby, where he could indicate whether he was in or out.

When I was about to go again to visit Brad, I asked Clay if he would go with me, and he said yes. I thought I smelled alcohol on his breath, and, again, he was expressing a lot of anger — this time about people who would bring their parents or relatives into a place like the convalescent center where Brad was and just *leave* them. I didn't say anything at that point about how differently he was behaving, but this was another time when I made an association between his drinking and his anger.

A couple of days later, I said, "Clay, I want to say something. The other day when we went to see Brad, I thought I smelled alcohol on your breath, and I suspected you had possibly been drinking. And the other thing that makes me think you may have been drinking is that I'm beginning to realize that when you are drinking you express a lot of anger. That time your brother died is an example," and he said, "Well, that was a bad time." I said, "That's right. But I'm picking up on the fact that this comes out when you're drinking. I don't want you to tell me yes or no; I don't want to know. But I do want you to know that I'm beginning to see a different pattern in your behavior when you drink." There was silence, and then I just resumed talking about ordinary things, and he did too.

Clay did have a short relapse. He told the hotel about it, and they said, "We can't let you stay." He said, "I won't make it on the streets," and so they put him into the Estate Hotel, on Couch between Second and Third. He was on the third floor, which was an alcohol- and drug-free floor. I had been in the Estate before; the rooms were very, very small — a cot, a chair, a little chest of drawers, and a wash basin.

We continued to do things together.

I had been looking for a place to do my laundry, since I didn't like the laundry facilities at my apartment complex because I never felt comfortable there. I was talking to Clay about this, and he suggested that there was a Laundromat on Southeast Division Street, near St. Philip Neri church. I said, "Why don't you get your things, and we can do our laundry together?" We did this. I could do three different loads there at the same time, which meant saving two-thirds of the time it would have taken at my place. And the dryers were only twenty-five cents for ten minutes, which worked out to be cheaper than it was to use the dryers where I lived. So it was cheaper to use the Laundromat and far more pleasant — there was a food service area, for one thing, where we could buy soft-frozen yogurt, coffee, bagels and so on.

That began a pattern for Clay and me of doing our laundry together every Tuesday. In addition, periodically we would have breakfast at the Cadillac Café or someplace else, and he introduced me to the Torrefazione coffee bar near where I live, where we would have coffee now and then, and talk.

I took Clay to Mass in Time of AIDS one time when my niece had come to visit. He was always comfortable in a gay community, and he liked the Mass. My niece took one picture in particular of Clay and me that I treasure very much; we were looking at each other, and he really came across as the loving, caring person that he was. I brought him to a Dignity Mass as well one time, and when people didn't see him the next time I went, they asked about him — "How's Clay doing? Where is Clay?"

The Sisters who met him where I lived liked him, too. Once, I remember that one Sister was carrying something heavy, and he immediately went and took it out of her arms. Clay couldn't pass a child or an older person without stopping to talk; he couldn't walk by a dog or a cat without stooping to pet it. One time he said something to a woman when we were in the car, and I said, "You really talk to *everybody*, don't you!" and he said, "I just thought it would make her happy to have somebody say something kind of nice to her." There was a warmth to this man that was very beautiful.

At Thanksgiving and at Christmas I invited Clay to stay at my place and house-sit for me while I went to Washington [State] to spend the holidays with my family. He agreed to do this. Now he was an excellent cook, and at Thanksgiving he helped cook at Our House of Portland. Then at Christmas he was going to help at Our

House again, and he was going to contact my friend, Ron Talarico, and get together with him. He had met Ron and liked him, though he had had some problems earlier when they first met at some kind of meetings they both went to for a while — he didn't think that Ron could really understand what it was like to be HIV positive or to have AIDS.

That Christmas, when I was at my friend's the last night before I was going to return to Portland, I called my number to let Clay know that I'd be back the next day. I said, "I'll see you then." He said, "Well, I won't be here. I have to do something," and I said, "Okay. I'll get in touch."

When I got home, there were three new bottles of wine on the kitchen counter and a note saying, "Dear Kate, I'm very sorry that I drank your wine. You trusted me and I failed you. Again, I'm very sorry. Clay." At first I was very angry about the incident and thought, "How could he *do* this?" But then the anger was turned against myself because I *knew* this man was alcoholic, and yet I had left wine in the refrigerator. I had left one opened bottle there, which never seemed to bother him in any way before I went away, and two unopened bottles in the bottom tray. I felt very, very sorry that I had left temptation there for him.

The year before this, someone had given me a wooden carved angel. It was a feminine looking angel, with wings, a narrow little waist, and a gown flowing to the floor. I had put it on the TV as one of my Christmas decorations. Clay liked it very much, so before I left for Washington I gift-wrapped it and a couple of other things and put them in a spot by the tree. I said, "Clay, you have a few things there you might want to open at Christmas." When I came back, they were gone, and everything was neat and orderly.

Next thing I knew, somebody said they thought I was home from my trip sooner than before I actually was, because they had noticed that my car was gone. I said, "Ohhh? No, I wasn't here. I just got home *now*." I *had* noticed that there was something a little different about my car when I returned — the seat was back more than usual, and the mirror had been adjusted — but I hadn't thought any more about it until this time. And then I thought, "Clay drove my car." I really was upset about that because my insurance didn't cover him. He was a good driver, and I used to let him drive my car sometimes when we'd be downtown together, but I did mention to him once, "You know, I probably shouldn't have you drive."

After a couple of days, he called and said, "Kate, it's Clay Harmon."

"Clay, we need to talk."

"I know."

"Why don't I pick you up?"

So I went to pick him up. He was standing outside, waiting for me. I didn't know where to go to talk because I didn't know what he had to say; so, when he got in the car, I just parked on the street, and we talked in the car. I told him that at first I had been angry at him, and that then I had become angry at myself instead. I said, "I really feel very badly that I put you in that temptation. What really happened?"

"Well, you know I've never been able to cry. On Christmas, I was watching a Christmas program of some kind, and I cried. I cried a lot. And I was feeling sorry for myself."

"Did you see Ron?"

"No."

"Did you go to Our House?"

"No."

He had just kind of hibernated, I guess. Christmas is a difficult time for many people; I've heard that a lot. We talked some more and I said, "You used my car, too."

"Well, yes. I wanted to replace the things I had eaten."

"You know you never had to replace the food. You replaced the wine, and thank you, but..." — at any rate, everything went on even keel for us from then on. We continued as before, even doing our laundry together.

One Wednesday in late January the weather was icy, and Clay went with me to

Gresham to get a replacement part for my hearing aid. Afterwards he said, "Could I stay at your place tonight?"

"Yes. Of course. If you want, we can stop by and pick up a change of clothing."

So I dropped him off at his place, and he came back to the car with a little plastic bag of his things. "Why don't we make this Clay's day out?" I said. You choose what you'd like to eat and where you'd like to go."

"What about that Mexican place up near the Lloyd Center [a shopping mall in Portland]?"

"Fine."

So we went to the restaurant and had a good meal. Then we went to my place and talked a little bit.

The next morning at breakfast time, I put out crumpets and honey, which he always enjoyed, and fruit or fruit juice, and I said, "The breakfast bar is in the kitchen. We can help ourselves to whatever we want." So we did that and then put things away.

I had to go to Gresham again — this time alone, because Clay needed to go to the SSI office. We left my apartment at about ten to ten. When I dropped him off downtown before going to my appointment, he leaned over and put his arm around me. Then he kissed me.

"I love you very much," he said.

"I love you too." (We usually didn't part like that.)

"I'll call. They may want me to see their psychiatrist."

"I have a nurses' meeting when I get back from Gresham," I said to him before he left the car, "so I probably won't be home until about four." Then I went on my way to Gresham.

When I got home, there was a message on the recorder, "This is Clay Harmon. They do want me to see their psychiatrist. It'll probably take a couple of hours. I love you very, very much." I don't remember if he added, "I will see you," or "I will call" or exactly what his words were at that point. I just knew he *would* make contact; he always *did*.

When I didn't hear from him that evening, I figured that he was probably really tired after going through all the hassle of dealing with the social security office and the psychiatrist. I figured that he had fallen asleep and that it had been too late for him to call me when he woke up.

The next morning, I had slept a little later than usual. I was ready to take a shower, when the phone rang. It was about eight o'clock. The voice said, "This is the medical examiner. We found a body in the Estate." My heart just dropped.

"And the name?"

"Clay Harmon."

"Oh, no... How?" He said it had been apparently an overdose. He asked me if I knew any of the family members, and I said, "I know *of* them but I don't know them. I will try to check places that might have a record of Clay, and I'll call you back."

So I called Hooper Detox, and De Paul (where I mentioned earlier that Clay had been at one time, but without success). Then I called the HIV Clinic at the Gill Building [426 S.W. Stark Street, Portland) and spoke with a woman. After a bit, she came back to the phone and said, "I found a very old record that has the name of his mother and a phone number." I copied down the information, called the medical examiner, and left it in his hands. Next I called the Estate and talked to the manager of the alcohol- and drug-free floor. I said, "Is it okay if I come down?" He told me it was, so I went to the hotel.

The manager brought me up to the room. The bed was made with a set of daisy-flowered sheets that I had given Clay because he had liked them so much and I had extras; he had not slept in it. The angel was on his TV. A rosary was on the bed. The book *Care of the Soul* was there (which I will be talking about), as was a little spiral notebook I had given him to write in. And there was a set of dishes that Sophie had given me for Clay because she didn't need them anymore. I collected some of these

items before leaving the room.

Clay, at the end, had apparently been sitting on the edge of his bed. There was a chair right by the bed, on which I guess he had used a candle to melt down the drug that he was going to draw into the syringe. The medical examiner told me they had found an empty syringe and a full syringe — he evidently had a back-up in case the first one didn't work. After the first syringe, he apparently slumped over onto the chair where the burning candle was. The candle was knocked over in the process and burned a hole about four inches wide in the chair cover and in the padding underneath. He was partially burned on the side of his face as a result, and part of his hair and left hand and arm were burned as well. The incident had set off the smoke alarm, and when they tracked down the room the signal was coming from they entered it. One of the assistants at the hotel tried to give Clay CPR, but he didn't respond.

I was able to contact several people, and one of these, who had known Clay very well, called a lot of the people whom Clay had known, to tell them about him. Some were surprised; some weren't.

That was a very difficult day. It was a Friday, and, thankfully, I didn't have to work that day. After I returned home from the hotel, a friend of mine asked if I needed her to come over, just to be with me. I told her, "No. I've got a lot of calls to make yet." But after I made the calls, I thought, "I *do* want her to come," so I called her, and she came over.

Later in the day, I got a call from Clay's sister, Audrey. She was angry. She said, "*Why* in the hell didn't he call us? He *knew* our number. He could have called us." I didn't have an answer to that — I couldn't say that he had felt estranged from his family. She calmed down a little bit but still was pretty upset.

Later in the evening, I was going to call Audrey about something, but I only had her mother's number. When I called, Clay's mother answered. She told me that Audrey and others had gone to get things from his room. The mother was kind of crying and saying how guilty she felt, and I said, "You don't need to carry guilt around with you." She was obviously very drunk and said, "Oh, my baby," and then she said, "Would you sit with us at the funeral on Wednesday?" I said yes, but I said it reluctantly because I didn't know any of them. We talked, and pretty soon she started yelling at her husband, telling him she was on the phone. It was a harsh way of speaking to her husband, and I remembered afterwards that Clay had made the comment not too long before he died that he wished he could just once sit down and have a normal conversation with his family.

Audrey had saved a couple of Clay's things that she thought I might like; she didn't know that I was the one who had given them to him. One of these was a little heart-shaped box with a rosary in it. He had asked me for a rosary once, and I had given him one in that little box. The rosary had broken, and he had gone out and bought a replacement, which he wore around his neck. After Audrey gave me the rosary, I then wore it around *my* neck for a while.

She said she had found a letter of refusal from SSI. He *had been* getting General Assistance [welfare], but it was a small amount, like a hundred and thirty-five dollars a month.

Funeral arrangements were made at a mortuary. I felt badly that the funeral was going to be on Wednesday, at the same time that a memorial service for Clay was going to be held at the Estate Hotel. I knew that I would know more people at the Estate, and I would have been more interested in going to that service; but, since I had made the commitment to Clay's family, I couldn't attend.

I located pictures that I had of Clay, and I had six sets of them copied at the printer's; I gave a set to his brother, his sisters, and the mother. Clay's mother gave me a picture taken of him after he had been at De Paul the second time (a stay I hadn't known about); he appeared well-dressed in the picture, but I thought he looked sad.

I wanted to view the body, and one of Clay's friends — Dorene — did too, but I did *not* want to go when the family members were there. This was a Sunday morning,

and it was icy outside. I called the funeral parlor and was told that the family wasn't coming because of the ice. Dorene's husband said he would drive us there, so we went that morning.

I thought Audrey had said something about Clay's looking very nice, but the reaction of the man who was going to bring us into the room was, "Well...", and he didn't say anymore. When I went in, he said, "He's on a table."

There was a sheet that left only the front part of Clay's hair and face exposed, and there was a blanket that went up to his shoulders. The sheet was like a towel around his head because of the burns I mentioned earlier that were on one side of his head and on his arm and hand. I thought his face looked so different... so blotchy. Around his nostrils was a bright red. His lips were dry and parched with a little bit of skin off. And his mouth was slightly open.

flashback

Now there is an area of Clay's life that I didn't talk about, but this is a good time to bring it up.

Earlier, I mentioned finding the book *Care of the Soul* and a spiral notebook/journal when I went to Clay's room. While Clay was going through the therapy groups and the acupuncture, he was also getting help for what had happened to him as a young boy.

He told me at one time that he had been sexually abused as a child, and that the abuse had been by his stepfather, his step-grandfather, and by another relative who was later identified in this notebook as a step-cousin. This situation went on for a while, apparently; I think it may have started when he was about nine. At any rate, he said that his mother and aunt and uncle had sat him down at the table one day, opened the Bible, and quoted some things to him, saying afterward, "This is *wrong*. This is all *bad*" (they apparently didn't say anything to the perpetrators of this abuse).

So Clay had the feeling that he was dirty and that he had just been used.

He told me that he had found the book that was being used as part of his therapy — *Abused Boys* — very difficult. He said, "I find it so hard to answer the questions." One of the questions was about when he first knew his sexuality or that he was a homosexual, and he had written, "I think it was established very early, when people called me 'pussy,' 'wimp,' 'cocksucker,' 'mamma's boy'." And I thought about the hurt that he must have gone through to have had those words tossed at him, because he was such a very sensitive person. In the journal, he said that the book and the therapy were bringing back memories. He had told *me, too*, that some memories were coming back to him but that there was a lot that he had forgotten — or probably had tried to forget — about what had happened. There was a period of time when he seemed to be going through a lot of stress with this.

Another question that he had had to answer from the book was what he thought of incest. He wrote, "I think incest is when it's done by your father or brother, by an immediate relative, and it's violent. This was neither. It wasn't my relative; it was a step-grandfather, step-father, and step-cousin. And it wasn't violent; part of it was exciting. But my step-grandfather wanted me to do something that I wouldn't do." This was at the beginning of the sex abuse.

And that's as much as I know about that part of Clay's life.

Then one day he came to me, and he had a book in his hand called *Care of the Soul*, by Thomas Moore, an ex-priest. He said, "This is *so* good!" He carried it wherever he went, and he would take time to read it.

On October the twenty-fifth he had made an entry: "Today I went to Grand Central Bakery [Southeast Twenty-Third and Hawthorne Boulevard, Portland] with Kate, and Jed walked in, who used to be in my Thursday group. He was well-dressed, clean, kind, well-educated, and I felt overwhelmed by grief, overwhelmed by shame. I felt so dirty, all over. He was everything I wanted to be." When I read that, it came back to me how many times I had sensed or felt low self-esteem in Clay, or he had expressed

something that seemed to show it. And I would say, "Clay, you are wonderful. You have all these good qualities. You are a *beautiful* person. I wish you could see yourself through the eyes of those who have met you and known you and loved you." I remember he said once, "Well, I could say the same for *you*," which I didn't go into, because I never ever thought in terms of that.

As I read part of *Care of the Soul*, I could see why it was meaning a lot more to him. His therapist told me that Clay's attitude changed a lot after he started to read the book; it gave him a much better concept of himself. I remember that one day at my apartment, sometime before this, he had said in anger, "I'm *really* angry at God for making me the way I am — gay, alcoholic, homeless, HIV positive." Of course, he knew that part of his situation was partly due to the consequences of some of the choices he had made. But after he had begun his journal, and I would say about three weeks before he died, he said, "You know, I think I'm the way I'm supposed to be. I'm the way I'm made." And I remember thinking how *big* a step that was for him and how much better his self-concept was at that point. The book was really helping him a lot in his self-esteem, and he read it often.

After reading the books and the notebook, I understood quite a bit more about Clay.

end of flashback

At the memorial service, there was a picture I had taken of Clay talking to Father Floyd Pierson at the HIV Day Center, when we had gone there for Mass in Time of AIDS. Clay had liked that picture, so his family had it framed and put by the guest book.

The chapel was filled. I sat behind the mother, who was sitting beside one of Clay's brothers (Jason) and his wife. His sister, Audrey, and another woman were both beside me on the left, and two of my friends were on my right. The mother's sister and the sister's husband were there, also.

The service was very nice. The minister read good selections, made positive statements, and then offered to let people talk about any memories they had of Clay. A couple of people or so got up to speak, and then I did. I said what a wonderful person he had been and that he would do anything for anybody. I mentioned that one of the things Clay had done was reorganize my kitchen, and the whole room laughed; apparently he had reorganized a *lot* of people's kitchens! I told them that he was one of the most special people I had ever met.

After a couple of more comments, an older woman came up with a younger woman who was maybe in her twenties — her daughter — and the younger woman was crying. The older woman said, "Jessica wants to read a poem. She has a poem she feels she has to read, that she wrote at some time, but before she does this I want to read something." The mother read a very nice selection.

Then Jessica got up. She was half-crying at this point. Because of this she was speaking very low, and I couldn't hear. When she finished, Clay's mother's head just went down — way, way down. Each time before, when someone had said something, she had stood up and hugged the person. But after the younger woman spoke, her head just went *down*, and I wondered what had been said.

I asked my friend afterwards what the girl had said, and she told me that she had read a poem that she said she had written back in 1990 or 1991, about Clay's having been abused and nobody in his family being there to help him. And I thought, "*What* a thing to decide you had to say at a funeral, in front of the mother and the family." I was glad that I hadn't heard it, because I don't know how I would have reacted. It was such poor taste to have done that.

After the funeral, I talked with the mother a little bit and other family members. Then I made a comment to one of Clay's sisters, "It must have been very hard on his mother to have lost two sons that way." She said, "What do you mean? Nobody else has died." And I said, "Oh..." I don't remember if I went into any more detail, but

apparently Clay had made up that whole story to get some money. Apparently, too, he had borrowed money before from Dorene and others and never paid it back, and so had sort of cut off connections with some people, or felt embarrassed at least when he would see them.

That same day, there was an incident that I think of as a miracle. My new hearing aid had been making a terrific squealing noise, so I had taken it out at some point; the noise was bothering me and, I thought, everybody else probably. Later that day, after I was home, I thought, "I need to put my hearing aid in," but I couldn't find it. I was desperate because that piece had cost a thousand dollars! I looked in the apartment but couldn't find it. I wondered if it had fallen on the parking lot after getting out of the car when Doreen and her husband had dropped me off, but by then it was too dark to go back outside, and too cold and dangerous because of the icy conditions. So I didn't do anything more about it that evening. I thought I'd wait and go down first thing in the morning. I prayed to Clay, "I *have* to find it, Clay!"

The next morning I went down to the parking lot twice to look, but I didn't see the hearing aid. The ice had started to melt during the day, and I thought, "It's going to be ruined in the water!" Then, Julie Meade, two doors down from me, came over for some reason, and I told her about it. (She had met Clay, as quite a few people in the apartment complex had.) She looked in my apartment; then she said she would go downstairs to the lot. I told her, "I've been down there twice and couldn't find it," but she left to look for it anyway. After she went, I said, "Clay, put it where I can find it, *please*! You know where it is; I don't." When Julie went back to her apartment door, she opened her screen door, and right by the edge of the building was the hearing aid! She brought it to me, and I said, "You found it!" And I thought, "I saw the plant by her door, I saw the newspaper when I walked downstairs both times to look for the aid, but I didn't see the hearing aid. If it was *there* during the night, how come it didn't blow away, because we had such a strong, strong wind and the hearing aid is very light plastic? It's a miracle!" *I feel* it's a miracle. I believe it was cared for until it was put there to be found. I honestly believe in small miracles, and to me that was a *big* one.

Clay has played such a very, very important part in my life. I still have a tendency to look at that last Wednesday and think, "Clay, you asked to stay with me, and thank God I said yes." I recognize in retrospect his need at that time to be with someone who loved him, and I am convinced now that he was pretty sure on that Wednesday of what was going to happen. And then on Thursday when he said goodbye in my car — the particularly loving way that he said goodbye was not his usual way. And also on Thursday, when he left the message on my message recorder that ended with, "I love you very, very much," I now think that he knew he was going to go out (or he had already gone out) to purchase what he needed in order to do what he did. At the time, I didn't sense anything, but in retrospect I'm sure of these things.

After I read things that Clay had written, I realized that there was a lot about this man that I hadn't known or suspected, especially when he wrote about how he felt. It had been difficult to see his painful side because he displayed such jovial outward behaviors (which I do think were sincere). Yet there *were* times when I would look at his face, and it was as though, all of a sudden, his mind was totally someplace else and a mask had been lowered. Then he would come back to being his friendly usual self again.

Clay would have liked to have been what he would have called "successful." He would have liked to have been well-dressed and have had a good job again, for example. And he had been in six different living situations in the time that I knew him — six places! And then... to eternity.

Clay spoke rather quickly and softly all the time, and I didn't always understand him as a result. Sometimes I'd ask him to repeat what he had said, telling him that he was talking too fast or not quite loud enough. "Remember, I'm deaf!" I'd say.

And he was so *funny*! He said once, "It's odd you don't have any more plastic [grocery] bags, Kate," yet I had a couple of plastic bags *full* of plastic bags! And often he would kid me and then say, "Just kidding! Just kidding!" I began to kid *him* back,

and say, "Just kidding, Clay. Just kidding!"

I remember saying to him once, "Here I am, a seventy-four-year-old woman, and you, a thirty-four-year-old man, and yet we have so much fun together," and he said, "I *know* we do. We really *do* have fun together!"

Clay has a special place in the hearts of all of us who knew and loved him. There was so much in him that was gentle and caring, thoughtful and considerate and generous. His name will be inscribed on the quilt at Our House, with the names of people who were HIV-positive or who died of AIDS.

I would ask myself now and then, "Was there anything else I could have done? Was there *anything* else I could have done or said that might have changed what happened?" But I don't think so, because actually I think I did all that I could have done.

Clay had begun a spiritual journey. He was *searching*, and, in the final analysis, God found him and took him. The way that Clay died was, at that time, the only way he knew how to cope with his situation. I feel that he just couldn't face things anymore. He loved God, and he knew that where he was about to go was a better place.

I had given him a booklet on Our Lady of Guadalupe, which he read. He had bought two pictures of the Blessed Virgin — one of Our Lady of Grace and one of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I had told him that when I said my prayers while driving my car I always asked Our Lady of Guadalupe to be a mother to my two sisters, my brother, and myself — and to him, whose experience with his own mother had not been a happy one. I still ask her to give him a special token of love or a special heavenly hug, however they do it.

So I have two angels now: Clay and Troy. And I tie those two and my mom and dad together very much in my thoughts and in my prayers, because I lost mom, Troy, and Clay within about a seven-month period.

Clay has continued to do a lot for me; he is answering a lot of my prayers. After he died — I think it was that same day — I said, "Clay, don't you *miss* me?!" as I was crying. And all of a sudden it felt like he was answering me, "I'm there with you, Kate, and I'm going to help you do all the things you want my help with. I'm with you." I really, really *do* feel his presence so much. I'm sure that in time I will think of him less often, yet I don't know how I could.

I will end this story by saying to Clay his last words to me: "I love you very, very much."



RAPPROCHEMENT IV

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FROM THE TIMES

Women on Skid Road

[Excerpts from a Matt Talbot Center newsletter published somewhere between 1971-1981. Author not indicated in original source.]

What brings the man to the Road but keeps the woman away?

...When a man drinks he says, "The hell with it. Nothing comes before my drinking," and that is just what happens. He will sell car, watch, wife, house and eventually even his normal humanity to support his avenue of escape. A woman, on the other hand, has... an instinctive nature that says, "I must have a roof over my head first, then booze." It is that same instinctive nature that enables a woman to be protective and maternal in a home; a nature that is an operative constancy throughout all her life. What she must sacrifice, however, in order to possess this slow death ranges all the way from being used as a sex object to being used as a whipping dog for her counterpart's self-hatred. She will use both herself and her circumstantial mate to continue her path to self-annihilation. In the end both drinking humans, man & woman, become less than human as their self-destructive trip leads them both closer to making their living death a reality. I have no stories this month because my experience of women as drunks on Skid Road is extremely limited. I will say one thing about the women that do end up here: They practically disintegrate before your eyes, for they have two problems, booze and their use as sex objects. If they last through these ordeals, they become so rough, foul and hard that there is virtually no trace of any quality we admire and love in a woman.

Blanchet House of Hospitality: II

[Excerpts from "Blanchet's director honored," an article by Geri Ethen, in Catholic Sentinel, March 27, 1992. Reprinted with permission]²⁷

[...] Blanchet House, named after Francis N. Blanchet, the first archbishop of Portland, came about because of a University of Portland fraternity and several visionary priests.

Sigma Pi Epsilon, founded in 1938, existed primarily for socializing [...].

The group of men always had a chaplain. The first one was Holy Cross Father Maurice ("Doc") Rigley, a professor of English who established a close relationship with the members and their friends.

After a hiatus during World War II, the group invited Father Francis Kennard [...] to be the chaplain. The fraternity became a study group called the Blanchet Club.

Father Kennard [...] challenged the students to "find God in the streets."

He urged the men to institute a House of Hospitality, along the lines of the philosophy of Dorothy Day and the *Catholic Worker*. [Dorothy Day was a journalist and social activist, and a founder of the Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s, advocating hospitality for the poor and disempowered, and embracing nonviolence.]

[...]

After a two-year search, the group located a three-story building at N.W. Glisan and 4th Avenue which had been long vacant. Its most recent use had been as a speakeasy with rooms upstairs "for other things." The kitchen even had buzzers on the walls to warn of raids by the police.

The first month's rent of \$35 was paid by Father Kennard out of his pocket. [...]

Then began the scrubbing and cleaning. Gambling tables were washed and converted into dining tables.

The first meal of beans, bread, butter and coffee was served on Feb. 25, 1952. The group of committed Catholics, assisted by men who lived in the area, served 227 men at the first meal.

And the group has continued, with the assistance of volunteers from among those served, to prepare two meals a day each day of the year during its 40 years of existence [fourteen years ago as of 2006].

The Board

An inbred sense of social responsibility and deep spirituality has allowed a small group of men to run a program serving the poorest of the poor without any handouts from the federal government.

"Our involvement has always centered around the Mass," said Dan Christianson, one of the founders who still remains on the board 40 years later. The board meets weekly on Saturday morning for 8 a.m. Mass, and follows it with their meeting. [...]

²⁷ This article reported on the fortieth anniversary celebration of Blanchet House and the honoring of its then current director for many years, Al Riley. The excerpts provided herein were chosen primarily for the historical perspectives they offer about Blanchet — especially concerning its founding, philosophy, and operations — and do not include other aspects of that celebration, including the special award Mr. Riley received. Al Riley is "George Dawson" in the stories.

Al Riley²⁸

[...] After meandering around the country, he [Al Riley, director of Blanchet at the time of this article] arrived in Portland in 1960 and saw an ad in the [*Catholic Sentinel*], which read "Apostolic work. Director needed for Blanchet House 7 days a week, 17 hours a day. No pay."

[...] Riley agreed to try it [the job] for a year. He has lived and worked at Blanchet House ever since. [Al Riley passed away at some point between the publication of this article in 1992, and now, 2006.] He has never received a salary, only living expenses.

[...] Riley has done every job at the center, from helping men complete résumés in their search for a job to organizing the once-a-year request for contributions which goes out between Thanksgiving and Christmas. [...]

The Future

The Old Town area [referred to as Skid Road in the project], in which Blanchet House is located, is undergoing much change. Loft housing is being developed, art galleries are opening, and Union Station [the train station only blocks away from Blanchet] is scheduled for renovation.

Blanchet House operates out of its own building, purchased for \$16,000 and paid off in 1959.

However, it depends totally on contributions to continue its operation. Its monthly budget has gone from several hundred dollars in the 1950s to more than \$16,000 currently.

The money goes to serve anywhere from 400 to 1,000 meals a day, with larger numbers coming usually from the middle to the end of the month.

The clientele has changed over the years. [...]

Currently, the loss of space at Dammasch [State] Hospital [which closed in 1995] and other facilities assisting the mentally ill has impacted the Old Town area. The board is in discussion with Holy Cross Father Richard Berg, [...] pastor of the Downtown Chapel, about instituting a program to assist these people.

Riley [...] commented about the increase in number of young people and women going to Blanchet House, and the fact that drugs are a problem for many people.

But change is not new for this program. In the early 1960s Blanchet House purchased a 60-acre farm near Newberg [a town near Portland], to grow food and provide a source of income for interested men from Old Town. [...]

28 In "Blanchet House," one of the stories of the present project, Kate says, "My life on the streets of Burnside started at Blanchet, where I first got involved in 1970. Al Riley was director at that time. Al would pay for my gas initially; and, after the first car that I drove had a serious problem, he gave me \$1300 for another car. Blanchet House, its director and board were very supportive of what I was doing, which made my ministry so much easier."

FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Remaining Catholic While Maintaining Viewpoints That Conflict with Official Church Teaching

Ron: The Roman Catholic Church does not allow the ordination of women to the priesthood, as you well know. This concerns you deeply.

The Church does not allow priests to marry, yet it permits already married Episcopalian priests who convert to Catholicism — [Ron begins to laugh in response to Kate's facial expression at this point]... see, I can see your anger rising right now! The Church permits those already married Episcopalian priests who convert to Catholicism and want to function as married Catholic priests to do so, as long as they never marry again. And this concerns you deeply.

The Church strongly affirms the dignity and value of all individuals, including homosexuals, and says that being gay or lesbian is not a sin in and of itself. Yet the Church forbids committed, monogamous, homosexual couples to express carnal love toward each other. And this concerns you deeply.

You, Kate, believe that bishops who had knowledge of sex abuse by the priests of their dioceses did not or have not admitted squarely and in a timely manner their own guilt regarding cover-up. And this concerns you deeply.

You believe the Church often attempts to silence clergy who dissent from its position on various topics — (and you're nodding your head). And this concerns you deeply.

And more than once during the course of this almost twenty-year project and even longer friendship you have started out saying, "I feel such anger..." or "I'm so angry..." when describing your feelings toward the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and their policies regarding these and other controversial matters.

After this admittedly lengthy but I believe necessary prelude, I ask: Why then, Kate, are you still a Roman Catholic? Why have you not left the Roman Catholic Church for another Christian tradition — like Episcopalian — where these issues do not exist or are dealt with in a manner that is much more in keeping with your convictions concerning them? Why have you stayed, given all these things that bother you so much about the Church? I think people would wonder.

Why?

Kate: The answers that I have I think are correct *for me*. Number one: I've read over and over again and heard in Call to Action conferences and in my own parish that *WE* are the church. *We* are the church. The Pope and the cardinals and all the hierarchy — they may *think* they're the church, but *we* are the church; the people are the church. That's one of my convictions.

I think, in spite of how I feel and the anger that I have and feel... I know that I am an optimistic person, and I know that I have hope. There's faith, hope, and charity. I do have faith; I believe. I believe in the teachings of the Church.

Ron: You just grimaced a little bit.

Kate: Yes.

Ron: What are you grimacing about?

Kate: I don't want to go into that.

I was baptized into the Church. I've loved the Church. It's been good to me. And even though the Church has made a lot of terrible mistakes, I have a lot of hope. And I have an abundance of love.

I may not live long enough to see some of the changes that I really had hoped to see twenty years ago.

Ron: Like...

Kate: Married clergy. Ordination of women. And I would feel so much better in tune with the Church if the Pope didn't wear the little pointed hats, and the cardinals all the rich red robes, and live in these elegant, palatial homes, and came down to earth — like priests do: maybe some sign that they're a priest, like a Roman collar; but to be a human being among the rest of their flock, to be the shepherd among the flock, which — I don't see them as being shepherds among the flock. I don't see them being the compassionate shepherd/pastors that Jesus intended and asked of his own apostles. I would like to add, however, that there have been and are some very pastoral and beautiful bishops in our Church — Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, and Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, for example.

Ron: You see them leading, but not in the way that you think, in many respects, that Jesus would like.

Kate: When you say *leading*, I think a lot of times there's even a "do this or else" in regard to people who speak out in the Church — people who have done a tremendous amount of study and are probably far more educated and prayerful than the hierarchy, and are then told they can't deliver an address at a Catholic university or can't teach.

I just don't think the Church has all the answers. They don't listen to the people. They don't see the signs of the times. They don't see the differences.

When you stop to look, even in my own lifetime, where drinking even a sip of water before Mass you weren't supposed to do before receiving Communion; then that changed. Then it was only an hour's fasting before receiving Communion; then that changed. So many, many changes came about as a result of Vatican II; then all of a sudden there's a rigidity and a stalling of further understanding and moving forward along with the needs of the people, of the sheep that the hierarchy of the Church are supposedly leading and pastoring and nurturing and loving.

Ron: But, again, why didn't you become, for example, Episcopalian? They have women priests. They have married clergy. They're very close to Catholics in liturgy. They are far more welcoming to gays. Why wouldn't you say, you know, "Just forget this! That's a Christian church, too, and—"

Kate: I know you're right on that.

But if I remain in the Church and remain a religious, remain a Catholic, and keep working — I mean, I've gone to Call to Action, I've gone to demonstrations...

I believe in justice and peace above all, and I guess too, I have stayed in the Church because I have hope that maybe just being a part of it I will be part of the change eventually.

Ron: So you, in other words, would rather stay and help "fix" it—

Kate: Yes.

Ron: Change it—

Kate: Or pray for the change.

Ron: Rather than leave it.

Kate: Yes.

Ron: Because you love the Church.

Kate: Yes.

I would be probably very comfortable as an Episcopalian or a Muslim. Mohammed was a prophet, and their Koran is very much in tune with the teachings of peace and justice and love. They don't always practice it; and neither do we.

Ron: Well I didn't intend to go where I'm going now, but, I mean — what *is* it about the Catholic Church that attracts you so?

Kate: I think the fact that it was apostolically founded [founded by the apostles of Jesus]. Jesus was in the midst of people. The gospels are so beautiful with the teaching — regardless of whether they were manipulated in the writing... There is the possibility that in the early days of the Church, they were trying to make things look a certain way, because of the different people that they were dealing with. So, I don't swallow *everything* that I hear as necessarily "This is it."

I don't know. My own feeling is that, if I'm on the wrong track, I'm doing the best I can and it will get straightened out when I see God in the final end.

So, I think I've stayed Catholic because I love our Church, I love our liturgy, and — I've told you this before — I've found a very happy existence in the Church, at St. Andrew's [church]. I always say the NCR [National Catholic Reporter newspaper] and St. Andrew is what probably keeps me a Catholic. Because the people at St. Andrew are so hopeful and so attune to peace and justice and works of mercy and trying their best to accept things as they are, but to go on and move to maybe have some things changed.



TIM

Tim was a dark-haired man with blue eyes, clean looking, nice appearing, and very articulate. He came to me at Matt Talbot Center and told me he wanted some help for his drinking and wanted to get into a halfway house. I called Harmony House to talk to the manager about him; they met with him and then accepted him into the program.

Tim was Catholic and Polish. He was a strong person and liked to be in control. Tim, Scott, Russell [see stories of Scott and Russell], and maybe a couple of others at Harmony House worked to put together the philosophy of Harmony House in a format that could be given to the other men. They developed several pages of what the philosophy and regulations were, what the expectations were, and so on. And of course, with his command of language, Tim did a good job expressing himself.

One day, I'm not sure what was happening to him, but he called and told me that he had either posed for some nude pictures or had taken some. He was concerned about possibly being in mortal sin. I remember kind of shrugging it off and saying, "No, you don't have to worry about anything like that." But he had some hang-ups, I think, as a Catholic.

His story reminds me that at different times some of the Catholic men on Burnside seemed to feel that because of their drinking and lifestyle they wouldn't be welcome in the Church, or that because of changes resulting from Vatican II they wouldn't feel comfortable.

Then Tim moved on from the house. When he moved out, he either lived with someone or married her.

He came back to Harmony House at one point and wanted to set up an appointment to see if he could work at the house as a counselor. The manager at that time presented his request to the board of directors, and they said no. Tim would have been good because he knew the people; he could tell, for example, when they would be in denial about their drinking — "It takes one to know one" sort of thing.

Just the other day [1987] I got a call from somebody, who used to be in Harmony House, to tell me that Tim had died very suddenly. Apparently he was in the bathroom, when his wife heard a thud. She went in and Tim was on the floor, and she couldn't rouse him. It took about a half hour before the paramedics got there, but by then Tim was dead. They tried to resuscitate him but weren't successful. He died of a heart attack on the thirty-first of July of this summer. He would have been probably someplace in his fifties, so he died at a rather early age.

It was a shock to me to hear of Tim's death because he had pretty much stopped drinking, which had made a lot of things better about his life. He was a good person, but I think he was concerned sometimes about the fact that he was Catholic and wasn't practicing his religion. He was buried at Willamette National Cemetery.

Tim had been in Harmony House quite a few years and had given a lot to the program. He had found somebody who loved him, and that marriage seemed to be working. At any rate, hopefully Tim is now taking care of the people he left behind. I keep telling him this in my prayers; he's got to do that now.

TODD

Todd was a man who, when he wasn't drinking, could be a very delightful, courteous, and pleasant person to be with. He was somebody I met on the streets many years back. He'd come to the office at Matt Talbot and maybe want a little help or medicine for something. When he would drink, his whole personality would change, and he would *not* be a pleasant person to have around; you just didn't want very much to do with him when he was in that state.

Todd was a veteran and used to periodically go down to White City, which is a veteran's domiciliary about eight miles from Medford [a city in southwestern Oregon, close to the California border]. A lot of the men from the street used to go down there during the winter months because they could have a bed and meals and it would be better than the streets. The domiciliary was like an old soldier's home; I mean, this is the way the men used to refer to it. It was like a nursing home or a retirement home, where a veteran could go for help and rehabilitation; and, in those days, if a room was available, he could stay. I don't think there were requirements other than that the individual wanted to be there and he wouldn't drink. They later put in a detox unit and an alcoholism treatment program of some kind, encouraging the men to go to AA and do related activities; but before this, if a person started drinking, they would ask him to leave and give him a ticket back to wherever he had come from. Also, the VA used to pay for a man's ticket to go if he wanted to go but didn't have the funds, which was the case a lot of times if he wasn't yet drawing a pension or disability. I believe that those who received a Veteran's income gave up part of it while they were there, because they were getting their room and board free. I don't know what the capacity was exactly, but I think they could accommodate quite a few hundred men. They had almost every activity for these people: crafts, games, films, entertainment, even a golf course. The men slept in kind of alcoves — areas partitioned off, but not up to the ceiling. They had a bed, a stand, and a chair. They had to have army neatness — you went through the facility and everything was just in very good order. They had a hospital for those who were ill. A lot of people there were in wheelchairs, were disabled, and a lot of them were older.

At that time, there weren't nearly as many shelter beds in Portland as there are now [1987], and there was a much smaller Drop-in Center. Also, during the winter months there wasn't field work (as there was during the summertime), which would have allowed the men to earn enough money to maybe have a bed for a few nights in one of the Skid Road hotels that offered rent by the night. So this all made White City even more appealing.

I went down and visited Todd at White City two different times when he was there, and I also saw some other people there that I knew. He did very well when he was at White City. They had social workers, and it was just a good place for the men. Many of them thought it was too much like the army, and they didn't like the routine, but I think you probably *have* to have schedule and routine in a place like that. They got good care, and, if they needed hospitalization or surgery, I think they were sent at that time to the Veterans Hospital in Roseburg [also a city in southwestern Oregon, north of Medford].

Todd would be in and out of White City. Finally, he came back to town, and he began going downhill with his drinking. It took a *terrific* toll on him. He would get so shaggy and bloated and sick. The last I knew of him, his money was being managed for him, which was probably the best thing in the world, because he was a small and older man, which certainly made him a good candidate for being jack-rolled. Also, when he would be drinking, he would be just so very obnoxious, demanding, and angry. A lot of his anger would come out while drinking, and he would take it out on anybody; he would display angry behavior even toward Sister Margaret Ellen (who was working down there), or with me. I don't know how much brain damage may have gone on with

him, though he was an intelligent man, nor do I know if he would have recognized me later.

Kate responds to Ron's request during a work session to share a little about night shelters and drop-in centers on Skid Road

During the 1970s there were several night shelters that existed in the Burnside area. They served as a place to sleep. In the beginning the people slept on the floor; later on, they slept on small cots that were low to the floor. And there were times, during the approach of cold weather, when new sleeping bags would be distributed to people to use and keep.

These shelters had some requirements such as when people could come and when they would have to leave. In the earlier days they didn't necessarily have to be sober, but they *did* have to take responsibility for their behavior; if their behavior was disruptive, for example, they would be asked to leave.

Some of these shelters also provided refuge from the elements during certain hours of the day, and sometimes there were staff people who provided information and referral services.

In addition to the night shelters, there were drop-in centers, which operated only during the day. These, too, provided refuge from the elements, and information and referral, but people couldn't spend the night there. Early on, when the shelters would be full and the weather very cold, Blanchet House would accept men by moving some of its tables and making room for the men to sleep on the floor.

Some of these night shelters and drop-in centers (which did not all exist at the same time) included the following:

- There was a drop-in center in about 1970 on Northwest Couch Street between Second and Third, which I believe was started by Father Jim Lambert.
- Later there was a night shelter, between Northwest Fourth and Fifth on either Davis or Everett Street, as I recall.
- There was a night shelter on Northwest Glisan Street between Fourth and Fifth, which was run by Burnside Projects at that time. This is still in existence today [2001] and developed into Transition Projects, which helps people being released from detox to get involved in the first steps of a recovery program. Many social services are provided — such as referrals for jobs, housing, and health care — and a support system.
- There was Baloney Joe's, which is closed now, at the northeast end of the Burnside Bridge.
- Operation Nightwatch, on Southwest Thirteenth, between Washington and Alder, provided hospitality and some outreach in the evenings, and is still in operation [2001].
- And there were also (and still are) missions that would take people in at night and feed them, after a prayer service. Those included Harbor Light, run by Salvation Army, on Southwest Second and Burnside; Union Gospel [Mission], on Northwest Third and Burnside; and Portland Rescue Mission, at the west end of the Burnside Bridge.

TROY WESTMAN

Note:

This story and the story of Clay Harmon were recorded seven years after Kate and Ron completed the original series of recording sessions that form the foundation of this project. And they took place quite by chance.

Troy and Clay were particularly special to Kate, and her accounts of their stories are particularly intimate, immediate, and touching.

The stories of Troy and Clay introduced new dimension to the project. These two men were not the typical Skid Road residents whose stories the bulk of the material in this project recounts. Troy and Clay were gay, not straight like most of the other men in this project. They were quite young, not older. Their addictions included the use of dangerous illicit drugs like cocaine and were not limited primarily to alcohol from a bottle. In addition, these two stories provide ample testimony that any so-called generation gap between young and old is not (and probably never has been) due to chronological age as much as to attitude. For Kate has truly an unusual and natural ability to transcend time in her relationships, which comes through in a special way in these two stories. Though in age, for example, she is old enough to have been Clay's grandmother, yet in reality she is his confidant and best friend and the one person with whom he chooses to spend his last days.

Troy and Clay came into Kate's life after her ministry had taken on yet one more direction: serving gay men and women, especially men living with HIV disease and dying from AIDS.

She lost both of these friends — one to AIDS, the other to suicide. It was a sting she feels even today. She speaks of them often, keeps photos of them close by, misses them yet, prays to them still.

One day, not long after Clay died, Kate came to my home to visit. The deaths of Clay and Troy were still fresh and heavy on her mind and heart, and she wanted to talk. On that day in my living room, a short way into a simple conversation about these two men, it became clear to me that we needed to record their stories then and there and that I would incorporate them into the project. So I set up the tape recorder, and Kate began:

I first met Troy Westman at Our House of Portland when I was just beginning to volunteer there in 1994. Our House is a care facility for individuals with late-stage AIDS, and Troy was a new resident. He was standing in the hall, and I introduced myself and said, "Hi, I'm Kate. Welcome to Our House."

We were talking for a bit and, when it came out that I had worked down on Burnside, he said, "I was down there a lot." And when he found out that I worked at Hooper Detox, he said, "I've been in Hooper Detox." So I felt that we had a special bonding, and before I left we hugged. The next week I saw him again, and we continued our conversation.

The third week when I went, Troy wasn't there, and they told me that they had had to ask him to leave because he had used cocaine for two Fridays in a row after being at Our House. He was used to receiving fifty dollars each Friday from Maxine, his money manager, who ran the Tacoma Café; he usually spent this money on beer and some cocaine.

I didn't see Troy again for a few months. Then one evening, when I had gone to Operation Nightwatch to volunteer at the hospitality center, a man asked if I would sit down and talk to him. So I did. He took my hand and cried a little bit and said that he had AIDS and that he drank to ease the pain and the loneliness that he felt. We were talking quite a while when, all of a sudden, I said, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" He looked at me and said, "Our House?" and I said, "That's it." It was

Troy. I asked for his address and said, "You'll hear from me." I wrote him a note shortly after that and told him I'd like to come and see him. Then I went for a visit.

He lived on the fourth floor of the Joyce Hotel, which is on Southwest Eleventh, a few blocks from Burnside. The elevator didn't work there, so I had to walk up three flights in this rather dingy hotel to arrive at his floor. I knocked at the door but got no response (I had had no way of letting him know exactly when I would be coming). When I went back downstairs, they said he was out — they usually knew. The clerks there were very good, and very friendly after they got to know me.

I tried more than once to see him. The first couple of tries he didn't answer the door, though I knew he was inside. Finally, on one of these visits, Troy opened the door and let me in.

His room was very dingy. It had a window that overlooked the top of another building. He had a wide bed and a chest of drawers, and there wasn't much room to walk between the two. There was a little wash basin over in one corner, and an area where he hung clothes. He had some interesting posters around his room that he had collected. He was a pretty heavy smoker and drank a fair amount of coffee.

I began to visit Troy on a regular basis. He was always very honest and up front with me about what he did; he told me, for example, about the fifty dollars I mentioned earlier, and that on Fridays he would drink and use some cocaine. He said, "I hate myself after I do it." He said he didn't feel well usually on Sundays, and that Mondays were not good days either, so I agreed to start coming to see him on Tuesdays. He said that was okay.

After a couple of Tuesdays, he told me that his circle of friends was getting wider. He said he received visits from Father Kim Hyatt — a Jesuit who worked at the MacDonald Center part-time — and from Sandy Jaeger who was director of the center. And there were two other young people who used to visit him at times. So usually once a week somebody or other from that group would come and visit him.

He told me that he suffered a lot of stomach pains and wasn't able to eat very much. He said, "I've lost so much weight." I asked him if there was anything I could bring, and he suggested Ensure. I found out what kind he liked and started bringing it to him. He kept it cool on the window ledge; then, as the weather got warmer, in the spring, someone from MacDonald Center got him a small refrigerator so he could keep juices and the Ensure in there.

I remember he had a pair of slippers that looked like he had slipped his hand underneath a bear's head when he put them on. They were brown, great big animal-type slippers that he liked and that he had rescued when someone was throwing them away. And he had had a bathrobe that was just more rags than it was bathrobe; someone in the hotel gave him a better one at some point, and he was pretty proud of it.

There was a beautiful dignity to Troy, which was very evident in this very emaciated man, who was often dressed in rather tattered but clean clothing.

Then Troy got sick and was hospitalized. There were at least two different times that I know of when he was in the hospital, and I remember seeing him a couple of times while he was there. His stays usually would be after pretty heavy drinking and use of cocaine, and he wouldn't be able to eat. They would try to get him back on track with his medication.

On one of the occasions when I came to see him at the hotel, he said that he was very disappointed and depressed because nobody had come to see him for four days and he was getting pretty sick. I said, "Troy, I will try to see you every day that I'm in town. I go to Tacoma every Tuesday and I come back on Thursday; I'll see you Tuesday mornings before I leave, and I'll stop in and see you Thursdays when I get back into Portland. And on the days that I work (Saturday and Sunday), I'll come after work." The days were beginning to get longer, which meant that it stayed light later and helped me feel comfortable doing this. So I started to see him more often, and he would tell some of the others from MacDonald Center, "Kate's going to be here today. Kate will be here."

Troy really loved Father Kim Hyatt very, very much, and last year Kim and others who worked at the MacDonald Center took him to the beach, to Nestucca Retreat House, which is between Tillamook and Lincoln City [on the Oregon coast]. He enjoyed feeding the deer. He said, "We're going to go again this year and I'd like you to go, too," and I said, "I would love to." The date was finally set for May the sixteenth, but Troy's health was failing more and more, and when that date came he wasn't able to go — he just didn't feel well enough at all. He knew what he could do and what he couldn't do.

He would go to the Old Town Clinic, on Burnside between Second and Third. He said to me once, "I keep telling the doctor I have this sore on my bottom, but he doesn't even look at it." I said, "Well, I'm a nurse; I can check it for you." So he turned over, and he had a little fissure there, and the area around it was inflamed. I told him about that, and I said, "I'll bring you one of those rubber doughnuts to sit on," which I did. He used it at first a little bit, but he was really getting more sensitive and tender in the area.

One day, towards summer, he said, "I'd like to get a present for Father Kim." He had a special store where he wanted to go, so I said, "You let me know when, and I'll take you." We made plans to go there on one of my days off. I found a parking place that was close to the store because Troy didn't have much strength at all; in fact, we stopped to rest several times while walking there from the car. He couldn't find anything in the store that he really wanted to give Father Kim. Then we saw a store across the street called the Jelly Bean, and I said, "Oh, I've heard of that," and he said, "Well, let's go over, and maybe I can find some cards." So we went. I picked up a card, and he picked up a couple of cards. By then he was getting very tired. But despite how tired he was, he spotted a Baskin-Robbins on the way back to the car and said, "Maybe I could eat a little ice cream." So we went in. I was going to pay for it, but he said, "No, I want to do this." We each ordered an ice cream. He took one bite of his and said, "I can't do it" — he probably had thrush in his mouth, which is a fungus, a hair-like growth that must be very uncomfortable and makes eating very difficult. On the way home, I offered to take him to Fred Meyer's if he felt up to it. We went there, but he couldn't walk very far once we arrived, and he didn't see anything that he wanted. Then I said, "This is pretty close to where I live."

"I'd like to see your apartment."

"Since you can handle three flights of stairs to your floor, I think you can handle the one flight to mine!" So we set off for my place.

Troy really liked my apartment. The weather had been hot that day, and he had said earlier something about how good a beer would taste. In spite of the fact that I knew he was alcoholic, I said, "Troy, would you like to split a beer?" He said yes, so I put a couple of beer glasses and some Cheetos on a little table outside the door of the apartment, and then I split a can of beer. Up to this point that day, he hadn't really been able to eat *anything* that he wanted, but he was eating the Cheetos and enjoying them, and he drank the beer. Later, he told his friends from MacDonald Center that he never thought he'd be sitting drinking beer with a nun.

Another time, I stopped to see him on a Sunday after I was finished working at Hooper Detox, and he said, "You know, I think I feel strong enough that I'd really like to go to the Rose Gardens [International Rose Test Gardens at Washington Park]." He *loved* flowers. I said, "Fine. I don't have anything scheduled. Let's go — but you'll have to help me with the directions because I'm not sure I remember how to get there." He said, "I've walked there, so I think I can do that." As we got on the final stretch that leads to the gardens, he saw some wild sweet peas and said, "Stop the car!" He got out and was going to pick the flowers, and I said, "If anybody comes along and stops you, I don't know you!" He picked a handful of sweet peas, put them in the car, and we proceeded on our way.

Troy really loved that trip to the gardens. We were walking hand in hand, up and down some of the rows of roses, and he was admiring them and enjoying himself. Then he became very tired, which he usually did at some point, so we sat on a bench and

he smoked a cigarette. Then he said, "We really are best friends," and I said, "Yes, we are."

He still hadn't found a gift for Kim. I knew that Troy loved birds as well as flowers, because he told me once of an incident that had happened when he was still living at home, involving a baby bird that he had found. His mother had said he should probably let it go, but he wanted to keep it a while and try to feed it. She let him do that. He said the bird did live and then eventually flew away.

Now I had a little stained glass design on a suction cup that could be attached to a window. The design was of a bird and a little bird house and flowers, and it was very attractive. I put it in a box and brought it to Troy. I didn't tell him it had been mine, because I knew he wouldn't accept it. I said to him, "Do you think Kim might like *this*?" He looked at it and said, "Oh, yes!" He gave it to Kim, who was thrilled with it and told him that he put it on the window in his office.

I used to give Troy hazelnut candies, which he liked; but I found out later that he was giving a lot of them to Kim, who also liked them, and to others. As his health began to deteriorate, he couldn't eat much of anything, so he quit eating the candies and was giving them away.

One time when I was going through Fred Meyer's, I saw a white cap with a bill, which had a red AIDS ribbon embroidered on it, and the word "love" embroidered in black. I immediately thought of Troy, so I bought it. I gave it to him later, and he *really* liked it.

Troy told me that he was born into an Hispanic family in one of the southern states and that there were quite a few children in the family. When he was a baby, his parents left him with a couple who didn't have children; this couple babysat Troy for maybe a week while his family went someplace. They became fond of him during the period that he stayed with them, and sometime after that — I don't know how old Troy was — the couple asked if they might adopt him. His parents said yes, apparently in part because there were so many children in Troy's family and his parents knew that he would get good care and attention with the couple. I think that his parents probably cared for him and that their action wasn't due to a lack of love.

So Troy was adopted.

Now, the Westmans — Troy's new parents — lived on a farm, I guess, and Mr. Westman would go out to the barn sometimes and tell Troy, "Come and help me here in the barn." Troy wouldn't want to go, but he would go anyway. He said he was sexually molested out there. He would come back to the house crying afterwards, while his dad would still be working. His mother *knew* what was happening, but she would just say, "Well, let's make some cookies, Troy," or she would read him a story. She loved Troy, but she apparently loved her husband, too, and didn't want to confront him — at least this is the way it sounded from what Troy said. Troy told me that he was nine while this was happening.

Troy had a letter that he was writing to his adoptive father, which he wanted me to read. He told me that at one time he had hated his father. He started the letter by saying, "I want you to know that you were the best thing that ever happened to my mother" — meaning that he had been good to her. The rest of the letter seemed to indicate that the opposite was true for the boy who had been sexually abused. Troy intended to give this letter to Father Kim to mail to his father after he died.

During one of my visits to Troy at the Joyce Hotel, he said, "You know, I'm beginning to be able to forgive my mother. I've been thinking of the nice things that she did, like when I would come in and be crying after being molested and we'd make cookies" — he was thinking of the happier times. And he was forgiving her, I think, partly as a way of coming to terms with the anger he had felt toward her for not stopping the abuse.

Troy had left home at seventeen. At one time, he told me that he had gone back to visit his birth family and that they were all alcoholics. He said, "I wouldn't want to go back again." Then he added, "So I came by the alcoholism naturally."

As the summer began, Troy said, "You know, I'm not going to live long enough to get into Our House again." He was on their waiting list, and they were reluctant to let him in as soon as he asked because they were afraid he might resume going downtown to do drugs, especially since he was still ambulatory.

His circle of friends had widened by this time, and I had introduced him to Clay Harmon [see Clay Harmon's story]. Clay really was so kind-hearted; he offered to come and help Troy change his bed, empty his trash, and do some other things that were becoming more difficult for Troy to do.

Troy wanted to be baptized, so a baptismal date was arranged with the Downtown Chapel for July. I offered to get him something new to wear, like a shirt and slacks, and he said, "That would be nice." He gave me his sizes, and I asked what kind of clothes and colors he liked. I had Clay go with me to the store because I don't know that much about men's measurements. We ended up getting Troy black pants and a dark gray shirt. He really liked all that I bought, and he felt proud being dressed up.

On the day of the baptism, I picked him up and brought him to the chapel. Seventeen of his friends were present. Tracy and Walt, two young people who worked at MacDonald Center, were his godparents. The service was lovely and very touching. We all put our hands on Troy at one point while Kim gave him a special blessing. Someone had brought a cake, and there was a little reception afterwards. I found it interesting that Troy had shaved his beard; he said he rather regretted that he had done it, because he felt it made his face look much thinner, which was true in a way. At any rate, after the reception and picture-taking, I took him back to the hotel. It was a very special day for Troy and for the rest of us.

A day or two after the baptism, he was told he would be re-admitted to Our House of Portland. Since his admission date was shortly after his birthday, they had sent birthday cards in advance of admission, saying, "We're sorry you're not here to celebrate your birthday." But they had a birthday card for him anyway when he arrived, and a welcoming card.

One of the first times I saw him after being re-admitted, he asked if I would fry an egg and give it to him with toast, adding, "I feel I could eat that," but one bite was all he could eat. He had lost a lot of weight, he had a cough, and he had an abscess on his bottom. Even so, he would get up, put on his robe, and go outside on the patio and smoke; just a few days later he needed help doing these things. He was very sick, and we tried to keep his pain well-controlled. The nurses were very gentle and caring with him. There was one male nurse assistant in particular who would come in at night and sit by Troy and hold his hand; he was very, very good to Troy.

One of the things that Our House asks volunteers to do is to sit with a person if the person is alone, especially when they're so sick. So I told Troy, "I'll stay with you tonight," and he told the people from MacDonald Center who came later that day, "Kate's going to sleep with me tonight!" — of course, they all had a good laugh about *that*. There's a couch in each room, so I rested on the one in Troy's room. That first night he asked if I would help him stand up and then support him so that he could cough; he had some relief from this and then went back to bed.

Troy hallucinated a lot for a while that first night. One time he said, "Kate! Kate! We've got to get out of here. We've got to get out of here. It's dangerous!"

"What?"

"It's just dangerous. We've got to get out of here right away."

"Troy, you're here at Our House and I'm here in your room with you."

"Oh, yes, that was rather ridiculous, wasn't it," and I told him it wasn't.

Then he said he thought he saw something on the floor by the door. "What's that black thing down there? It's moving!"

"It's just a shadow, Troy. You're okay. You're here."

This continued — he would be hallucinating, I would try and reassure him that everything was all right, then he would be quiet again.

I stayed with Troy for three nights, sitting in his room all night. Every now and

then I would doze on the chair or get coffee because he was not responding much at that point. I would go over to him periodically and talk to him, pray a little bit, bless him, tell him that I loved him, and hold his hand. Towards the end, his breathing was labored, but he was conscious and his eyes were open. He looked for all the world like Christ dying on the cross: he was thin, and in his large brown eyes you could see the pain.

I had a little pamphlet called *How to Say Goodbye* which told of the different stages or aspects of the dying process and ways to recognize them. It said that when the dying person is quiet and seems to be in a coma they are actually processing things in their life, and it's very important time for them. There was something very beautiful about this book.

Troy wasn't afraid to die. I had asked him if he was afraid and he said he wasn't. I told him that people who loved him would be there waiting for him.

I went to work Monday morning after the third night with him, and before I left I said, "Troy, I'll be back tonight as soon as I get off work." I came after work, and his condition had deteriorated during that day. Kim wasn't there, but Carolyn, from MacDonald Center, was. His godparents also were there, and so was Sherry Parker from Our House — she was the social worker and a very great help to the people who were dying, and to the family and friends.

I was pretty upset at this point, and I went over to him and said, "Troy, I'm going to leave and go to Mass in Time of AIDS. I will be praying for you, and then I'll come back." He reached up and put his hand on my arm, almost as if to say, "Don't go." I turned and started to cry as I was leaving the room, when Sherry put her arms around me and said, "Kate, they don't need you at Mass." So I went back in and put my hand on his head, and he died at that moment.

Troy died on the thirty-first of July, eleven days after he arrived at Our House, and not long after he had turned thirty-nine; he had said more than once that he wanted to live to be forty. There were several of us around him at the moment of his death. It was a very special gift for me to have been with him for three nights, and then to be with him when he died.

While Troy had been at the Joyce Hotel, he had a watch, without a band, that he kept on a metal TV table by his bed. It had a black face and a red AIDS awareness ribbon as part of the design. I was commenting on it one day and said, "I really like it. Would you like a band for it? I could get you one." He said, "Yes, but I don't want any animal to have suffered because of it." I said, "Okay, no leather. What about an expanding one like mine?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, I'll see what I can find." So I went to Newberry's [a department store] and picked out an inexpensive black plastic watchband. I put the band on the watch and brought it back to Troy, and then he started wearing it. He had said I could have the watch when he was gone, so when he died I took it off his wrist, kissed it, and put it on — and I still have it.

I missed him so much. He was missing a front tooth, and I have a picture of him grinning, which is just dear! In spite of the suffering that he went through, he had a cute sense of humor and he could be a tease.

Troy apparently had talked over funeral arrangements. He wanted his ashes scattered at the beach. We had a memorial service for him at the Downtown Chapel, with almost the same group of people who had been there for his baptism. After the service was over, we tried to decide on a day when I and everybody from MacDonald Center could go and scatter his ashes. Probably close to three weeks after Troy died, Kim got in touch with us, and we made arrangements to go to Nestucca [on the Oregon coast]. After we got there, we used five small paper cups that Kim had provided to scoop the ashes; then we went down to the beach and scattered them near the waters of Nestucca beach.

I remember that Clay Harmon, who was with us, walked off alone at a certain point, scattering his portion of the ashes. He was dropping them slowly, and I could tell that he was very deep in thought.

After we scattered Troy's ashes, I picked up a tiny shell I had found on the

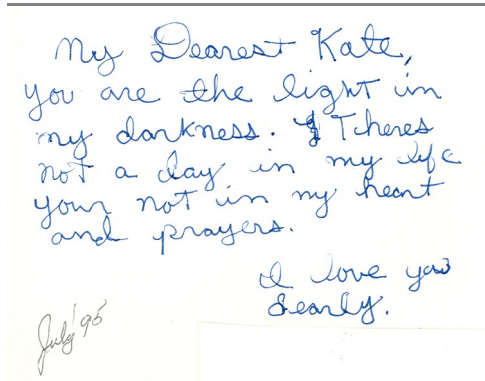
beach, put a few remnants of his ashes in it, put this in the paper cup I had used, and took them home with me. At home, I put plastic wrap over the ashes in the shell and put this by Troy's picture; this may seem a strange thing to have done, but he was so dear, and I really loved him very much. I don't know if I'm becoming more sentimental as I get older, but I have Troy's picture by my bedside — the one in which he's grinning and his tooth is missing — and I have another little picture of him in a small brass frame, in which he has a somber expression and is just looking straight ahead. I also have two other pictures of Troy (that I took from his wall) which he told me were of himself. One of them looked a little different; I remember he had said, "I used to go by the name of 'Gypsy'," and the picture showed him with a bandana on his head and it seemed like a little make-up on his lips. In the other picture, he looked like a rough and rowdy little guy, with longer hair and a beard, and a cap pulled down over his face. It was hard to believe that those pictures were of Troy, he had changed so much by the time I knew him.

I remember that Clay said at one point, "Troy is going to be my angel now." He was moved by Troy's death, as he was moved by his life. And I know that Troy's life was worth celebrating, because he had had a hard life — being adopted and alcoholic and addicted to drugs, and experiencing the abuse.

Troy never mentioned the frequency of the abuse by his adoptive father, but he had said, "I don't think I can ever forgive my father." In those days of processing, however, closer to the end, it's very possible that he did forgive him, because he *did* want Kim to send that letter that I mentioned earlier, and he *had* said, "You were the best thing that happened to my mother." I had read the letter a couple of times, and it seemed clear that he didn't have much love for his father — he *may* have forgiven him in time, but he didn't feel much love for him; *forgiving* and loving or liking are not the same thing. Because of the kind of background that Troy had had, and because he hadn't appeared to be a religious person, I would think that it would have been very hard to forgive somebody doing something like that to a little boy.

I could see the grace of God working in Troy's life — in his wanting baptism, for example, and in forgiving his mother. I think God was very, very good to Troy, and that Troy, in turn, opened himself to the love of God and to the love of others.

Within the span of a seven-month period, Troy was the first one of three very dear people to me who died (my mother especially), and he was the one who taught me the "art" of dying. Some of the others who have died during my life have been very special, but never as special, when it came to life and death, as it was with Troy. I have seen others die, and I have found others dead on Skid Road, but just *facing* so much of Troy's last months with him was such a wonderful blessing and gift. He will always be a very special part of my life.



From a birthday card Troy gave to Kate the same month in which he died. He signed using his first name but his signature is omitted here. The "July '95" was written by Kate.

FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Intuition About the Right Thing to Do

Ron: Kate, when you were bringing Communion to Alfred Howell because he had requested this of you, you kept bringing him Communion even after you found out he wasn't Catholic — never mind that the Church does not condone this practice. This was not something most Catholics would have done.

When I asked you recently if seeing Jesus in everyone was what allowed you to get through those initial years on Burnside when some of the sights and smells would have been normally so abhorrent to you, you said, "I don't think the idea was that prevalent, but probably was just *in* there, *within* me. I wasn't aware at that time, I don't think. I didn't think about it that way. *I just knew I cared about people and I never thought of why.*"

That summer day at your apartment when you brought a very ill Troy to visit, it was *you* who suggested the two of you split a beer, which you then both drank, though you knew full well he was alcoholic. Again, this was not something most people in the field of alcoholism (as you were then) would have done.

You, a seventy-four-year-old nun doing your laundry every week with Clay, a thirty-four-year-old man — definitely not something most women (God forbid, nuns!) would do in the presence of a man. And it's not that you needed transportation or other assistance with doing your laundry and Clay was taking you there or helping you do it. No. Yet there you went, that you did, every week, no problem.

And, finally, you have said in various places in this project and elsewhere that you really never knew and still don't really know what drew you to work on Skid Road and remain there for so many years. You just knew that's where you needed to go, so you went, without understanding it, without planning it, without a mission in mind.

What I have been leading up to, Kate, is this: It's becoming increasingly obvious to me that you seem to know intuitively what the right thing is to do, and you do it. I've just given you four examples. You don't seem to deliberate at length about what the right thing is to do, beyond your own sense, your own intuition. The right thing to do seems to come to you quickly, at the moment, without a lot of debate, without loss of momentum, loss of time, and without loss of an opportunity to do what seems right. Many of us lose the opportunity in thinking about it; you don't lose the opportunity.

You gave a clue about this in Alfred's story when, in reference to not asking your pastor's permission before bringing Communion to a non-Catholic, you said to me: "I'm not always one for asking; I sort of move and go ahead and do something about the situations I encounter."

And my sense, too, is that you feel comfortable and at peace with the decisions you make to help others.

Can you explain in some way what this is all about, how it works in you? Do I have it wrong, or *is* there some internal filter, some inner dynamic that seems to bring you to action so quickly, intuitively, and comfortably?

This has been a very long build-up and question, but there it is.

[Kate asks Ron to repeat the question, which he does.]

Like with Troy, for example. You knew he was alcoholic; you were conscious of that. And yet *you* suggested the two of you split a beer. No hesitation. That obviously came from your intuition about that moment, and you were comfortable with it, I'm sure. Were you not?

Kate: Yes.

Ron: Yeah. Well most people I think would say, "What are you doing, lady!"

Kate: I knew he was dying. I knew he was in a lot of pain and that he did the drugs he did to take care of the pain. But at this stage, it was one of the few times and one of the very last times that we were out. It was a hot summer day, and it just came out. And I thought, "This isn't going to hurt this man." I didn't really think that thought, but... [Kate hesitates]...

Ron: You knew intuitively.

Kate: I think so... that he would enjoy it, and we would share it. It was just like sharing something with a friend. [Kate hesitates again.]

I would like to answer the question in this way. I have felt for a long, long time that the Holy Spirit works within me, that a lot of times I may be prompted by the Spirit to do something. And I don't *question* why, but if I look back in retrospect — because you've certainly made me do some self-reflection in a lot of the questions that you've asked me — I feel that a lot of my life has been guided by the Holy Spirit. And I would hope that not just in the bigger choices that I have made in my life, but in the day-to-day and the moment-to-moment choices. I wish that I would be more conscious of it and let the Holy Spirit take over always, but I don't. I let myself get in the way a lot of the times.

I don't know about this inner filtering; my own answer is I feel the Spirit is behind it, and that I'm doing what God wants.

And I make mistakes. I've made big mistakes. I've made mistakes that I've regretted, in some of my treatment of some of the people at times. And I would, I think, let myself get in the way—

Ron: But getting back to the intuiting what's right — like bringing Communion to Alfred... now obviously, you're a Catholic nun and you knew the Church didn't want that or says not to do that, and yet you *knew* it was for you the right thing to do. And you knew it fast, and you just kept doing it.

Kate: Yes.

Actually it was a request by Norbert Pratt [Alfred's housemate], if I would bring Communion to Alfred. And I didn't know initially that he wasn't Catholic. And then when I found out that he wasn't, that didn't make any difference for me. I just kept giving it to him. I mean, he wanted God and God wanted him. I look at it that way... I think that if somebody wants to receive, there's a drawing within them, and for them to receive means something to *them*...

Ron: But so many of us, I think — that was part of what I was getting at in my question — we would lose the opportunity because we would spend so much time thinking about it, or "this isn't right" or "I don't know." And so by acting more quickly, you, Kate, don't lose the moment. You don't lose the opportunity for something good to take place.

Kate: You know, I think something else may be behind that, too, Ron. Once I started working on Skid Road, I was on my own. I wasn't accountable to the Community [Kate's religious order]. They [the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon at that time] just kind of brushed me off, just said "let her go" — but I am eternally grateful that they allowed me to go. So I made decisions on my own. I was given donations to use, and I used them at my discretion; I set up a bank account, and that was my ministry fund for housing or whatever. But I didn't have to account to people. I mean... I never thought about it; I just went ahead with what was needed at the time, which very often would be something on the spot and that needed an instant decision.

Ron: So, in other words, you didn't have a lot of resources around you to ask opinions of or seek advice from.

Kate: That's right.

Ron: You didn't have a team; you just had to make a decision *now*.

Kate: And I probably am more of a spontaneous person that goes ahead, sometimes headlong, into something, without thought... or thinking of the consequences.

Ron: Well maybe like getting kicked out of the convent the first time. You wanted to talk, you broke some of the rules—

Kate: I was *too young* at that time.... But I still think that was all part of the plan, because if I hadn't gone there first as a boarder or gone back as a sophomore to enter the convent the first time, I'd have never entered that Community [Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon] and been where I am. So, that's again where I think the Holy Spirit gets involved in our lives, and I have felt that.

Ron: So in a way, I mean you've clearly said that part of the "mechanism" in you, because of which you end up acting so spontaneously, is, in your opinion, the Holy Spirit. In a way it's not explicable.

Kate: Yeah. It isn't a pre-thought-out plan. There are times however when I *did* plan different things.

And when you mentioned the laundry — as far as I know I probably didn't have personal items in there.

Ron: But, still, don't you think Clay *needed* to be with you in those simple, everyday ways? And that consequently, because of the choice you made more intuitively than otherwise, he experienced one more confirmation that somebody special to him really wanted to be with him for *all* of who he was, *just* as he was?

Kate: Oh, yes. I do.

Ron: Can you think of other seventy-four-year-old nuns who — even women who *aren't* nuns! — who would do this? I mean, women just don't *do* that, *do* they? They don't do laundry with men.

Kate: Well, we were doing his, too. We were sharing.

Ron: Well, that's even *more* to the point!

Kate: It saved him the money.

I never thought of this question as being an item in an interview, that's for sure!
[Kate laughs.]

Ron: Well, you talked about it when we did Clay's story.

Kate: Yes, I know. But I just never thought of it as anything extraordinary at all. This is a homeless man, and living in a shelter at that time.

Ron: I know; but that's partly what I'm getting at. You just act. Just seem to know what to do.

[There's a long silence here between Ron and Kate.]

Kate [under her breath, pensively]: Yeah. Which isn't always commendable—

Ron: But still you seem to know the right thing to do — if you want to call it the "right" thing; I mean, some people might not agree with what you consider right. But... you just do it. You don't spend a lot of time deliberating. You didn't talk it over with your Sisters — "Hey, do you guys think this is weird?" You *didn't* talk it over, right?

Kate: No. And I probably wouldn't have (I might have told a real close friend if I was living with her). No. Because I would probably not want a negative reaction.

Ron: That's right! Because they perhaps would be taking it through their logical — this thing I was referring to earlier on in developing the question, that in trying to think everything through, their conclusion would have been, "No, *don't* do it." You didn't go through that process. This was your friend. Doing laundry was what *he* needed. You needed it too. So you did it.

But there you are. You didn't talk it over with your Sisters because you knew what they'd say. They would not think this looks good. Right?

Kate: I guess I never thought about it. I just—

Ron: Exactly!

Kate: I just avoided the confrontation.

Ron: But for *you* it was comfortable. For *you* it was good. It was natural and right.

Kate: And I would do it again.

Ron: And you would do it again.



VERNON

Vernon was the manager of a very small grocery store on Burnside, called Addy's. I think that even into his sixties he managed this store.

Years ago, when a lot of the men would go out berry-picking or go out to do farm labor, the buses would come in very early in the morning from Hillsboro or Gresham or wherever and they'd load up the men [Hillsboro and Gresham are more rural communities west and east of Portland respectively, neighboring Portland]. The buses would park at around two in the morning and wait for the people; then, when a bus was loaded, it would take off for the fields.

Vernon had his little store open for their benefit. He sold coffee, juices, hard-boiled eggs, sandwiches and such, but mostly coffee. He was a very friendly, personable, large man, always interested in having people stop in. We became pretty good friends, and every time I'd come in he'd give me a hard-boiled egg and a small can of grapefruit juice.

As time went on, I found out that he was also an excellent photographer. He would show me pictures that he had taken on the streets of Burnside. There were sunsets, silhouetted trees — his photos displayed a sense of beauty that you don't really think of as being part of the personality of someone in the Skid Road area.

In the early to mid eighties, there weren't as many people from the Burnside area who were going to do the picking and farm labor. Various ethnic groups I think had begun to come into the state to do this. They were younger, and they were able to get on the buses earlier, leaving the older men from Burnside without as much opportunity there. So Vernon began to open the store a little bit later. Then at about nine-thirty or ten o'clock in the morning, when his customers had pretty much finished coming in, he'd close up the store. He had had his business for the day, so then he'd go over to a local tavern nearby for a few beers.

Vernon also managed a little set of apartments above the grocery store that is located near there, and I think he was a pretty good manager. I remember that when he first took over managing the apartments, somebody had been killed up there. They had been beaten pretty badly, and Vernon said that blood was spattered all over the walls and ceiling. It sounded pretty gruesome, and he had to clean that all up and then get the apartment painted and ready for an occupant.

I always enjoyed Vernon, and I know that he always was glad to see me. If I wanted to see him at times other than those at his little store, I would go to Gus's Café (which is now called Old Town Café), on the corner of Northwest Third and Couch. I'd go back in the bar part, and Vernon would be sitting there with friends. I'd sit down, and (of course kidding) he'd say, "Can I get you a drink, Sister," and I'd say, "No thanks, I'll have coffee." We'd sit and talk, and then he'd involve the other people sitting there in the conversation.

At one point, he gave me one of the most beautiful pictures that I've ever seen. Above a building on the north side of Burnside, around Fourth or Fifth, there used to be a large neon-lit sign that said, "Jesus saves"; and opposite this, on the south side of the street, there's a curved fountain coming out of pipes. Vernon got behind the fountain to take a picture. The sky was blue, and he took the picture on an angle, so that he got the fountain, the blue sky, and the "Jesus saves" all in one picture. It really was a beautiful picture, but I put it away so well that I haven't been able to find it.

Vernon later developed cancer of the lungs and was in a nursing care facility in Beaverton. The manager notified me of this, and I visited him several times. Later I was told that Vernon had died. And I lost another very good and loved friend.

VICTOR HADDOCK

I first met Victor Haddock very early on in my work downtown. He lived in one of the little inside and darker rooms of the Holm Hotel, which I usually refer to as the Chicken Coop Flop because it had the chicken wire above the various partitioned rooms. The hotel was a maze of rooms, and it could be a task just to go around and know where everyone was.

Victor had a lot of pictures on his wall, kind of Playboy pin-ups. I remember one of the earlier times when I was visiting him, I was probably still wearing the veil, and another man said, "You can't go in there, Sister. He's got a lot of dirty pictures on his walls." I don't remember if he said "dirty pictures" or "nude women." And I said, "I'm not going in there to look at the pictures. I'm going in there to see what *he* needs and to help him." So I went in. And Victor and I became friends.

The time that I was probably more involved with him was when he had given up on life. He was going to get married, and he was very *happy* about that; but then later, for some reason, his fiancée broke off the engagement. Victor didn't recover from this, really. He was so depressed that he stayed in his little partitioned-off area in the Holm and drank quite a bit; everyone thought he was drinking himself to death. And he smoked a lot. I would see him occasionally, and even though he didn't seem to need anything in particular, as far as I knew, he didn't have the energy or motivation to get up and get moving.

One day he was smoking, and this resulted in a very severe fire in that hotel. Victor burned to death; they couldn't get him out. The fire was so intensely hot that the metal frame of his cot was melted in places down towards the floor.

I don't believe anybody else was injured in that fire, and I think they got everybody out, though they may have hospitalized some of the older people for evaluation of smoke inhalation. I remember that that part of the hotel was closed off. Oliver, the manager of the hotel [see Oliver's story], felt pretty badly that Victor had died; and he felt badly, too, that the fire had resulted in lost revenue, which he needed in order to keep the hotel going.

After a long time, insurance people came out to size up the situation. A lot of the damage was repaired, and the hotel re-opened, with some improvements: it was lighter, some of the rooms were a little bigger, and more room for escape was created.

In the newspaper, there was either a picture of the funeral or an article about it that included words something like "the body nobody wanted" or "the body nobody claimed." There weren't any relatives present at the funeral.

[See also *From the Times: Home*]

VINCE FLEMING

I first met Vince very early in my work on Burnside when he was volunteering to help Father Jim Lambert in the Burnside Hotel. He had left the seminary in the sixties when a lot of people dropped out.

I'm bringing Vince into these stories because he was working at the Burnside Hotel for a time, and he continued to have contact with Scott throughout the years [see Scott's story]. Actually, I *met* Vince through Scott, who was living at the Burnside Hotel at that time. The two of them hit it off for some reason and became lasting friends. Vince loved to play cribbage with Scott. He was good for Scott. He had a lot of respect for older people, and he was a *good* man.

Vince was a tease. He never married. He coached Little League baseball. He was highly educated. He had been working at St. Mary's Home for Boys, in Beaverton, but he quit because he did not agree with what he thought of as their bureaucratic policies. He began to wash dishes, instead, and he continued doing that. It is my opinion that he felt more authentic, real, and true to himself washing dishes than he did dealing with the controversies and policies that are so common in bureaucracies.

I met Vince's dad once, and he told me about his two sons. Vince was very well educated and had a photographic memory, according to his dad, but chose to work washing dishes in restaurants. His brother, on the other hand, struggled through his studies, especially in law school, but became a lawyer.

One time Vince and Scott were driving, and some girls were hitch-hiking. Vince was wearing a red derby. He was dressed in colorful, gaudy clothes — real crazy — and he said, "Let's pick these girls up." So they *did*! The girls were asking Vince what he did, and he said he worked in a circus.

"Gee, that must be *fun*!" they said.

"Oh, yes it *is*! Would you be interested in working?"

"Oh, *yes*!"

"Well, I'm sure that I can talk to the people and they'll hire you." He lead them on and on in this way, and they were really falling for it.

One time, years ago, he stopped by Harmony House's administrative office, where I was living temporarily with Sandra, a Holy Names Sister. He wanted to go and visit Scott. He said, "Come on, we'll go and see him. We'll hitch-hike." The weather was very icy and snowy. I said, "*Vince*, come *on*! You're not serious?" He said, "*Yes* I am. They'll stop and pick me up now that I'll have a little gray-haired lady with me!" Well, I was embarrassed to death, but sure enough a car picked us up on [Southeast] Twentieth, took us as far as [Southeast] Division Street, and then let us off! On the way back, Vince said, "*Well*, we'll do this *again*!" So he stood there with his thumb up, and I'm standing there beside him, embarrassed as I could be, and then a car did pick us up again, and we returned to Harmony House. It was *so* funny!

WALLY

Wally was a man I first met in the soup line at Blanchet House during the period when I used to go there and pass out vitamins to the men as they were waiting for their meals. I was still wearing the veil. When I asked what his name was, he said, "Wally." Because of something that was said regarding names, and because "Kay" is the name that my family calls me at home, he always called me Sister Kay when he saw me, instead of Sister Kathleen which is what most people at that time called me.

Wally came to my office once with an ulcerated leg, a large wine sore, so I cleaned it and put a dressing on it and said, "I want to see you soon." The next time he came he had taken the dressing off, and I said, "Wally, why don't you leave it on until I see it so we can keep it clean and give it a chance to heal?" He said, "All right, Sister, all right Sister Kay, I will, I will." Of course he never did though!

He told me that his son was in the seminary studying to be a priest. A couple of years later, when his son was going to be ordained, Eric Hobbs (the Jesuit Brother who was in charge of managing the Matt Talbot Center at that time) obtained a suit for Wally and got him all cleaned up; then the two of them went to attend the ordination.

At some point after this, something very tragic happened to Wally. He was living in one of the downtown hotels. He and another man were drunk, and they got into an argument over a radio. The other man stabbed Wally, who was killed. I was very sad when I heard about it. I was asked later if I would appear in court as a character witness for the man who killed Wally, because he really was a good man. As I said, the incident had happened while both men were drunk. While this wouldn't have excused the behavior, it would have at least changed his sentence somewhat, lightened it, because the jury would have known that when he was sober he was a very kind, grandfatherly type of person. I remember going to court that day; I waited and waited, but the hearing (or whatever it was they wanted me to testify at) wasn't held. I never did find out what happened to that man, but it was a very sad ending for Wally.

FROM THE TIMES

Rescue Mission

[Excerpts from "Portland Rescue Mission," an article by Greg Luebbert, in BCC Pipeline, October 1975.]

Last month 570 people slept there, 2000 people ate there, and 400 people received clothing at the mission.

All users of the facility enter the building at exactly 6:30 each evening, heading directly for the chapel and a half hour of fundamentalist preaching. Following the service the men move to what may well be the cleanest dining facility in Portland. After the meal they are allowed a few minutes to step outside for their last smoke (no smoking inside). It's then around 8 and off to bed for everyone. Policy requires this process be executed orderly fashion. Everyone must take a shower before getting in bed.

If one doesn't mind the regimentation, the mission offers about the finest facilities in the area. The food is not bad, the building is hospital clean and the beds are comfortable.

She Never Really Gave Up on Anybody

[Excerpts from "Making a Difference," an article in a publication of Kate's religious order, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, 1998. Author not indicated in article.]

To many of her "clients" Sister Kate is their only link with compassion, care, and unconditional love. Since 1973 she has been an outreach nurse and drug and alcohol counselor in the Burnside area ministering to alcoholics, drug addicts, and victims of AIDS. Most recently she has worked at the Hooper Center Detox and volunteered at Our House [of Portland], a hospice for AIDS victims. In her time off she visits the Skid Row hotels checking on needs of residents. It is not unusual for her to help them find employment or legal assistance, act as advocate as they deal with government agencies, visit them in jail and plan or attend their funerals.

Juanita Gail, Nursing Coordinator at Hooper, says of Sister Kate, "For our clients she represented hope [Kate retired from Hooper in 1998]. Our mission statement says in part 'we serve even the least of these.' Sister was the one that could be counted on to live that fully. She never really gave up on anybody."

Sister speaks of her street friends Michael, Jim, José, Mark, Robert and others. "They are near and dear to me," she explained. She encouraged and helped them in life and comforted them as they were dying, often staying through the night so they would not die alone.

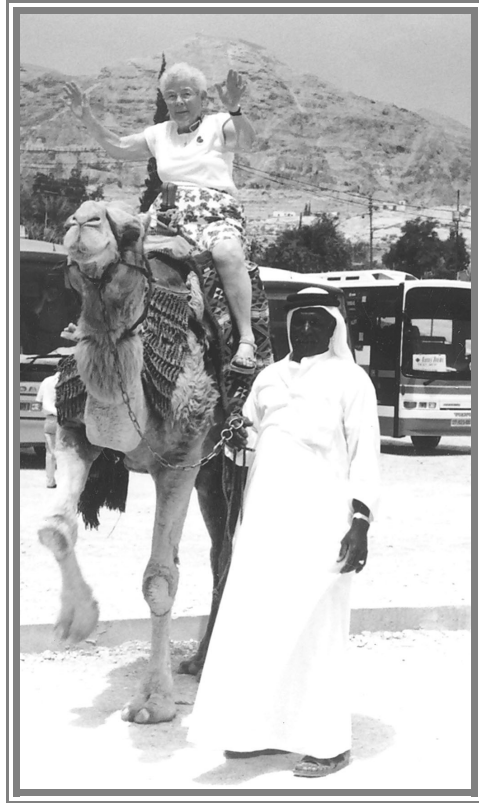
In March [at age 76] Sister Kate left her paying job at Hooper. "I haven't wanted to let go of my job or volunteer work, but I have fifteen years of catching up to do," she says. "Now I can spend more time with the people who need me and reconnect with old friends."

There is always someone new that needs Sister Kate. "When someone pops out of my life, God pops someone else in," she says enthusiastically.

Photo Gallery VI: The Later Years



Kate and good friend at Mass in Time of AIDS, 1995. The charming tenderness and reassurance of love captured in this photo served as ongoing inspiration and energy during many periods when, over 27 years of project development, darkness and abandonment of the project were tempting options for the author. The author and young man pictured here were new friends at the time of his tragic death within a year after the photo was taken.



Galilee, 1996, age 75.



A lighthearted moment during Gay Pride Portland, circa 1997. The sign on the side of the wagon reads, "Honor Diversity." Kate's shirt is from Our House of Portland, a residential care facility for people with HIV/AIDS, where she has been volunteering weekly for more than thirteen years.



Kate (in the middle), participating in a protest march in 1999 at Fort Benning, Georgia, in an effort to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas and change what she believes to be oppressive U.S. foreign policy. She participated in this march two years and, due only to failing health, was unable to participate a third year.



Embracing an individual at the commitment ceremony of a gay couple, 1999, age 78.



Enjoying a moment of relaxation and a beer on the swing in Ron's backyard, summer 2006, not long after her eighty-fifth birthday.



Caught off guard, again at Ron's house, summer 2006. At the time this photo was taken and due to failing eyesight, Kate had just moved from independent apartment living to semi-independent living.



Same visit as previous photo. At a more serious point in our conversation about war and other problems in the world, Kate turned from me, fell silent, and gave the troubled expression above. This expression was one I saw frequently whenever the likelihood of improvement or resolution of a problem situation, particularly in society or the world generally, or in the Church, was unclear to her or in doubt. -Ron



"Where am I going?"
-Age 13



"How have I done?"
-Age 85



FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

State of the World

Ron: The state of the world now, January 2005. What thoughts and feelings come the most quickly to mind, Kate, when you think of this, after eighty-three years? Getting above the forest for a minute, if you will, and looking down on this old place we call Earth, and home, what comes to mind as you look about, from your perspective, after all your experiences and years? When you look at all this, does anything come to mind [Kate breaks in]—

Kate: Yes.

I think I look at it as such a turmoil of hurts and angers and fighting and strife and inner struggles, whether it's desire for power or desire for greed, in different countries. Just a struggle — a lack of peace is what I see. And that really, really hurts, because Christ came *always* saying "Peace be with you," "I give you peace." That is probably my biggest hurt.

The other thing that really, really has come to me (this is more in the last couple of years) is, we have such a wonderful, wonderful world — Earth — and we are consuming it in so many ways through industry, through development — again, I look at the word *greed*, of a nation; wanting to cut down forests, cut down the sequoias which grow only in Northern California; they're not anyplace else in the world and they want to cut them down. The conservation of the *beauty* of our world... I guess I look at no matter what it is — like your little hummingbird [that Kate has been observing through Ron's kitchen window]; the beauty of God in that hummingbird. Just looking at little flowers, looking at the — it's just a beautiful world. When you get away from the city and go to a lake or go to the mountains or go to the ocean — *that* has impressed me And to me we are destroying it as a nation...

Ron: As a nation... or as a world?

Kate: As a world. Yes, it's going on in other places, too.

Yet, I see so much beauty in it; the world is a beautiful, beautiful place. And it's filled with people; and *people* are very beautiful.

Now I don't know if this answers your question or not, but it's how I look at the state of the world. I wish with all my heart for peace. I pray for peace, and my prayer usually is, "Please grant peace to our world, to our Church, to our families, to our friends, and peace in our own hearts."

Because when there isn't peace (when you stop to think about it), what have we? As a nation, we have war. And the inner turmoil of people that don't have peace within themselves, for feeling unfulfilled or not being able to have what they feel they want and desire. We *don't* get everything we desire, and we don't have the reasons for that.

Ron: We don't have the reasons for that?

Kate: I don't think we do.

Ron: What do you mean?

Kate: Well, I guess because so many things are out of our control, things that we would like to see. They don't happen and we don't know *why*.

But, I... okay; what comes to mind right now is the many people that are going to come back terribly, terribly traumatized, crippled, by the war in Iraq. And they come back to a family that doesn't know how to cope with the changed personality, the changed physical inability for many of them, the post-traumatic stress, and things like that. This is something we haven't even stopped to think about, and the toll that it's going to take. And they've cut back services a lot already to the *present* veterans, and look at what we're going to be faced with as time goes on with these crippled, maimed, mentally and/or physically wounded individuals, and the families that will be broken up as a result. This part (when I look at the world) is the part that makes me heartsick. And that little poem [actually an excerpt from *Pippa Passes*, by Robert Browning] "God's in his Heaven, All's right with the world!" — well all *isn't* right with the world. There's one way to look at it if you're out in the meadow and looking at the flowers and the trees and the hummingbirds and things. But it isn't all right with the world.

And I'm part of the world. And each *person* is my brother and sister.

And that, that's another thing, Ron: that I've come to a much bigger realization of the values of other religions — Sufism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam. I've come to a *deep* appreciation of them — even just through that one book of poems by Hafiz, the Sufi master, and of the gentle, gentle humor and love of God that's in his poetry.

I just totally believe in God. I totally believe Jesus is the son of God. I totally believe that *you* are a son of God and I am a daughter of God. If Jesus is divine, if that's true — I want to believe it.

Ron: You said Jesus is God's son, you're God's daughter, I'm God's son. Are you saying we're all equal?

Kate: I didn't say that, no. I've read and heard that, and this doesn't mean this is true, but it's one of the things that kind of makes you think more and want to read more and know more.

I want to believe what is true, let me put it that way.

Ron: You say that you want peace very much and believe in peace very much. And you do work for peace very much. In thinking just now of Pope Paul VI's well-known words "If you want peace, work for justice," one of the ways you have tried and try to make peace is through justice issues, right? You believe that very much. That's why Call to Action. That's why Voice of the Faithful. That's why the demonstration against the School of the Americas. That's why in significant part your involvement in St. Andrew's parish. That's why you read NCR [National Catholic Reporter newspaper]. That's in large part all those years on Burnside.

Peace through justice is part of your way of operating.

Kate: I think so. I don't stop and think that out, but I think that is the way I operate.

Ron: You had justice issues down on Burnside.

Kate: Yes.

Ron: And you worked to resolve those justice issues regarding the men.

Kate: On individual people, yes. I didn't go through the system; I didn't go down to the courthouses, for example. There were other people who could do that part. That wasn't my part in life.

Ron: You did it on a case-by-case, personal basis.

Kate: I think you're right, there.

I know, I've thought often there are different ways you could change things. All of our Sisters are in different fields, for example; and I think, again, they are doing it where they feel called. I think they do it because the Spirit is working within them to do this. I think the Spirit is working with *you* for some reason, for this project.... And as you said once, something about how the project will have been worth doing even if it is never finished or if nothing ever comes of it, because what matters most to you is the process and intention involved — the *direction* of your efforts.

Ron: Anything more, Kate, about the state of the world?

Kate: I have hope. I see, in spite of all the turmoil and problems in the world today, that there is much reason to hope and believe that God has given all that is necessary for us to live in peace and harmony with the earth and with each other.



WARD

Quite a number of years ago I had some contacts with a man named Ward, down in the Burnside area, but they were contacts that never stood out much in my mind. He had come to me at Matt Talbot Center. One day, I got a call from a social worker who said that Ward was in the hospital and wanted me to manage his money. I told her that I really didn't know him very well, and she said, "Well, he feels he could trust you." So I went to the hospital, talked with her, met Ward, and said I would do it.

What had happened to Ward was that he had been drinking down on Third Street at the Lotus Club. He had had a veterans check on him and was jack-rolled outside the club. He became almost a quadriplegic as a result. He was in a wheelchair because he could no longer walk, and he had very poor control of his hands. I remember watching him hold a cup of coffee — he would hold the handle with one hand and then steady the side of his other hand against the cup as he brought it to his mouth. In addition to his veterans check, he received money as a result of this disability.

Well, Ward was pretty much a confirmed alcoholic, and he found it hard — even after the Lotus Club incident — to go without his wine. He had more money now, of course, as a result of his disability. He was in a nursing home first, and then he moved into a hotel downtown. I don't recall the name of the hotel, but it had to have been one with an elevator.

I was still at the Matt Talbot Center then, and, naturally, Ward couldn't come up the stairs. As a result, someone would come to me and say, "Ward is down there and he needs some money." So I'd go down and give him twenty dollars. Of course, people knew he was getting money, and he'd be jack-rolled almost immediately each time — I think I gave him money three times one day! Some people really were ruthless, and one time someone pushed his wheelchair over while trying to get his money.

He was a sweet person, but finally I couldn't handle this arrangement any longer, and I went back to the social worker or the agency and said that I didn't want to continue taking care of Ward's money because it was too difficult.

After this, I saw him only occasionally. I think he ended up again in a nursing home because he was not able to function too well by himself; plus he was drinking. I believe he was declared incompetent. I'm not sure if Ward is still living, but it seems to me I heard at one point that he had died.

WAYNE

Wayne was somebody who apparently was in an orphanage at an early age in life; as a result, he never really got to know his mother during the years when it would have meant a lot to him. I think this later caused problems for him. Also, he had an older brother, who was a lawyer I think, and who seemed to have done very well.

I met Wayne in the mid-seventies, when he would have been in his forties. He was a big, burly type of man, with a lumbering gate to him; I could recognize him just watching him walk. He was clean personally, when he wasn't drinking, and he smoked Camels — about three or four packs a day when he had the money.

Wayne got on the skids. When he would go on a drunk, he would be really destructive. He'd be barred from hotels a lot of times when drunk, because he would tear up places, really tear them up, destroying property for example. He often ended up in detox, but at a certain point he wasn't allowed to go back there either because of his behavior while he was drunk.

He came up to the Matt Talbot Center once, very drunk and wanting some help. I remember talking to him about whether he was interested in getting help for his drinking problem, like going into a halfway house. During that period I would likely have recommended Harmony House to him, which was a halfway house, because I spent quite a bit of time there providing group and one-on-one counseling. During that visit, he made the decision that he would give Harmony House a try, so he moved into the house on Southeast Thirty-ninth, just north of Division.

When Wayne sobered up, I discovered that he liked me. It didn't bother me at first because I was used to hearing people say things like, "I'd like to have married you," or, "It's too bad I didn't meet somebody like you when I was younger." And I had different proposals along the way, as well, from different older people I was trying to help. Wayne's attraction for me was more like that of a kid who has a crush on somebody. I remember he told me once that he always would kind of pretend that any woman he ever worked for was like his mother.

He was a good worker, a thorough and hard worker, so we got him working in our yards at Harmony House. He would do yard work for other people, too.

He was doing fine and wasn't drinking. But then he got drunk, and, of course, he had to leave because that was a Harmony House policy. When he sobered up, he wanted to come back, but, since he had gone in and out of Harmony House several times already, this last incident finally resulted in our saying, "That's it — we can't do it anymore."

When Wayne couldn't come back to Harmony House, he asked, "Well, can I come back and do your yard?" I said, "No, I don't think you should." By then I knew that he felt an inordinate affection toward me — he had a crush on me. I was getting very uncomfortable with this, and kind of scared. I was much older than he was, perhaps by as much as twelve years, but that didn't make any difference to him.

When he wasn't allowed to do the yard work, he got very angry and his whole personality changed. Sandra (a Holy Names Sister) and I were living in the Southeast Twentieth and Taylor Street house at that time [this was one of the houses that belonged to Harmony House]. We were living there under special circumstances [see Steve's story for an account of those circumstances], and Wayne would call the house at any time of the day with obscene comments — inappropriately suggestive and just awful. I remember he said once, "I'll just come and sleep in your backyard." Apparently he did that once, but I wasn't there; Sandra was home, but nothing came of that incident. He must have slept in the weeds, and I would imagine he was drunk when he did this. This strange behavior went on for some months.

This one time, I was alone, and *I... was... scared*. Wayne would call, and I would hang up the phone; as soon as I'd hang up, he would call again. So I called the phone company operator and said, "Is there any way that anything can be done about

this?" and she said, "No." I remember that at one point Wayne said, "You can't leave the phone off the hook. It'll drive you crazy with the beeping!" but I left it off the hook anyway, and I soon discovered that after a minute or so it would quit beeping. Later, instead of doing that, I learned that I could just disconnect the wire from the phone, which would result in ringing at his end, but he wouldn't know if I was home — my hope, of course, was that he would assume I wasn't there. And If somebody else answered the phone, he'd say things like, "Is the princess up yet? Has she taken her bath yet?" — just really lewd things he would say, lots more lewd than that. Of course, too, he would be drinking at the time.

On another occasion, I came home and found that he had taken a bunch of flowers and put them between the screen door and the door jamb, with a piece of a paper bag on which he had written, "For Sister Kathleen, from your lover, Wayne."

One day I saw him outside of the Downtown Chapel, after Mass was over. I believed that he saw me, too, and was waiting for me. I told someone I was with, "I'm afraid to go out there by myself. I really don't want to face this man." So I waited inside the vestibule until most of the people had left; when I went out, he was no longer there.

Wayne knew my car, too, and he knew where I parked it.

I... really... was... scared during this period. I avoided that man from then on, particularly face-to-face contact. I used to be scared stiff that I'd run into him, and I remember I always had the feeling that Wayne could easily rape and kill me and feel that he had nothing to lose.

Another time when I encountered him, I don't remember what he said to me; I just remember that his eyes were narrowed, with a mean look, and that I was scared.

The next occasion when I saw him face to face was almost four years later. He was in a doorway, but by then I had overcome my fear of him. I thought he looked very pathetic, and he had deteriorated a lot. Not recognizing me at first, he said, "Ma'am, could you spare some change?" Then he looked at me, and he said, "Oh... it's you. I loved you, you know." And I thought, "Oh, Lord, after all these years, and in his condition!" I said, "I know, Wayne. I will give you something, but I have to see someone first; then I'll be back." Then when it was time to go back, I thought, "I don't want to see him again," so I sent a man with a dollar telling him where Wayne was sitting and to give him the money. I assume the person gave it to him because Wayne wasn't there when I went back to my car.

On another occasion, at night, I had gone on Operation Nightwatch [see information below], and I saw Wayne stagger into a tavern, but I didn't think he recognized me.

Though I had been deathly afraid of him for a while, he became just too pathetic to be afraid of any longer. There were not many occasions when I had to go through with others what I went through with Wayne.

I remember asking about Wayne on different occasions after this, but he hadn't been seen, and I really never heard any more about him again. Because of this, and because of his pattern of heavy drinking and smoking, I have assumed by now that he is possibly dead.

about Operation Nightwatch

When I was working at De Paul Center, a man came down from Seattle to talk to me about Operation Nightwatch, a hospitality ministry which had been founded or co-founded by a Jesuit. The man who came to see me was involved with the program in Seattle and was interested in setting up a similar program in Portland. He asked about possible locations, and ultimately a program was set up in a building storefront on Southwest Thirteenth, between Washington and Alder, across from the De Paul Center building. Mort Lincoln became the first director. On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, between 8:00 PM and midnight, homeless people from the streets, or residents from the hotels in the area, would be welcomed for hospitality; this service was for any of these

who cared to come in. Coffee and sandwiches would be served, card and table games would be played, and once a month they would have a movie and popcorn. At that time, Nightwatch was staffed by volunteers who served one day a month; I used to serve on Thursdays.

Operation Nightwatch was set up for basically nighttime hospitality. During cold weather, as many as one hundred individuals might pass through in an evening. I think people came in as much for the coffee and the warmth as for anything else.

Part of the program was a street ministry outreach that involved two volunteers who would walk the streets and talk to people they saw in groups or in taverns. If they met any emergencies of any sort, they would call detox, an ambulance, or the police, according to the need. This outreach was a caring presence on the streets.

ZACH SHARP

Zach Sharp and his wife, Patricia, were referred to me, apparently by a man who had been in Harmony House and also in De Paul. I remember the first meeting with them in the living room of Harmony House. Patricia was crying. I said I would be willing to do anything to help, and Zach seemed to be willing to do what he had to do to save the marriage. I was aware of a lot of accusations by her of things he had done and a lot of defensive reactions on his part. His face had a sad expression of somebody in trouble. Before we were finished, I said that I would meet with them again if they wanted to return. They both wanted to come back, so we began meeting on a pretty regular basis. Zach wasn't drinking at that time, and I remember loaning him some tapes I had that I thought were pretty good at the time — tapes I was using with clients to supplement and initiate discussion in groups.

I became a friend of the two and began to be invited to their home at times. Then Zach would drink again, and would say, "My wife doesn't love me. I just want my life." He would be so unreasonable in so many ways. He *did* not believe in going to AA; he didn't *want* to go to AA, and he would become very angry when *she* would go to Al-Anon. He'd say, "You people just go there and talk about the rest of us." He was a very angry man, but he loved me and I loved Zach. I wasn't sure where any of this was going to go, because Patricia would call me sometimes and say she didn't know what to do. She'd say, "I just can't stay here. I just can't stay here." And of course Zach blamed Al-Anon for some of the things that she subsequently did and had the courage to do; she left the house for a few days, for example, and stayed with a friend. I think one of his problems was related to the fact that years ago he injured his back and was never able to return to the work he had done; he finally got SSI (disability income), which helped. He's someone who would say "yes" to something when he really wanted to say "no," and then he'd be very angry about it. He would spend a lot of time working on people's cars, and then they wouldn't pay him or would pay him very little. He couldn't seem to hold his own and ask for what was fair or just for himself. I used to talk to him a lot about this; whatever it was, I'd say, "You know, you don't *have* to do this."

One time I was going to Tacoma [Washington] for Thanksgiving or Christmas. It was very snowy and icy, so I was going to take a bus. I asked Zach if he would take me to the depot, and he said yes. We were talking on the way about different things, and he was drunk! He drove okay, but I was a little uneasy with him and said, "You know, I'd like you to think about going to De Paul, Zach. I think that you need that." I guess his drinking got so bad that he did go to De Paul, but he was drunk and it was after hours, so he didn't get in. After this, he got into a detox and treatment program in Vancouver [Washington], which he had been in before.

Another time, Patricia was very upset because she had done something she later regretted: Zach had been stopped while driving and taken to the police station because he was drunk. He called Patricia and wanted her to come and get him, which she did.

But the second time something like that happened, she wouldn't go. She told him, "Just wait until they release you in the morning!" He was very angry about that.

One time Zach was *so* drunk and Patricia was *so* scared that she called me and said, "Could you come over?" I said yes. When I got there, Zach was ranting and raving. He threatened to kill himself if she left him, because life wasn't going to be worth it — and he had a gun. She was talking about divorce, which really threw him, and she was asking *him* to leave this time; she said, "I don't know why I always have to be the one to go out." Leaving was hard for her because part of the house was her office (she was a real estate agent). At one point, Zach went outside and put a "for sale" sign on the lawn. He said, "Well, we'll just *sell* it! We'll *split* it!" She said, "Zach, I'm not ready for that move at this point, but you need help." I talked to him quite a bit, too, about getting help, but he sure wasn't ready to do anything about it that day. I think *she* was the one who ended up moving out that time.

They had a daughter, Evelyn, who was still at home and had turned completely against her dad. She had loved him when she was a little girl, Patricia said, really loved him, but she could not handle his drinking. She would never go to Alateen or anything like that, and she didn't want to be home when *he* was home. This hurt Zach very much because he really loved her.

Theirs was a very sad situation. He would go to AA when Patricia would make that part of the stipulation of her staying with him, but he always had gripes and complaints about it; he didn't think it was the answer. They would continue to participate in social activities once a week in what they called "The Winners' Circle," which served as a support group, several members of whom were also AA members.

Zach would sober up for a little while, but his anger and resentments would start building up again, and he would begin drinking again. He never did his drinking in the house, I should say; he had a motor home in the yard, and he'd go in there and lock the door and drink. I think he drank vodka. Patricia said she was never allowed to go in there because this was where he stashed his alcohol. It was so pathetic, because she said that when he was drinking he would come through the house and be so angry — at *himself*, too, at times. She said he would go and just *pound* on the wall, in frustration, and would almost cry. But still he wouldn't be ready or able yet to let go and take the next step toward recovery.

One time he struck out at her a couple of times. He didn't hit her, but he struck out at her, pushing her. She would be scared in these moments, afraid of his anger. He could be resentful and sarcastic, and so different from the Zach she had known.

I used to feel that she, too, was very sarcastic at times. I thought that she would act very much superior to him, especially when he was drinking. Well, she *was* superior in a way; I mean, she was an extremely capable person who would have to take charge of a lot of things because of his drinking. She was someone with a tremendous heart and would often go overboard trying to help people — she couldn't say no to helping someone. She had a lot of older relatives who had nobody else to care for them, and she would take them shopping and do other things for them.

Patricia married Zach when she already had three children, who were all small at the time. He was maybe four or five years younger than she was. She said he was *such* a good father and *such* a good husband. The two of them had a son together, Billy, who is married, living in Alaska, and has a lovely family. Then they adopted Evelyn. Also, one of the children from a previous relationship, Margo, who had mental health problems, began to pose difficulties. One time, I guess they were going someplace, and Margo was causing such a problem that Zach let her out of the car and said, "Walk!" At a certain point, though, Patricia made him stop and go back and get her.

Patricia was a very fervent Seventh-Day Adventist. Zach used to be a Catholic, but when he was sober he'd go to Seventh-Day Adventist church with her. I think he always felt and feared that he was going to go to hell because of his drinking. He had absolutely no self-esteem; you could see that. He could accept love — he certainly accepted Patricia's — and he was very loving to me, but he had *no* self-esteem through all his drinking times.

The last drunk that Zach had was so bad that somebody he knew suggested they take him to St. Joseph Hospital, in Vancouver [now Southwest Washington Medical Center], which had a detox and alcoholism treatment center. He went there, and that was the beginning of a sobriety which he maintained. He became a completely changed person. At one time, for example, he hadn't wanted to see Patricia help their own children with food when one of their sons wasn't doing too well or when Margo's teenage son stayed with them for a while (because Margo didn't want him, saying she was afraid of him) — but Zach could cope with this kind of thing in sobriety, and his self-esteem improved so noticeably. They went to a party once, and Zach was up there in front of people clowning away and getting people to dance. Somebody asked, "Patricia, is Zach drinking?" and she said, "No! This is the way Zach *used* to be years ago before he started drinking."

Every spring for three years now [1987] I have gone with them to the North Coast Roundup, which is at Seaside [a town on the northern Oregon coast], with thousands of alcoholics and Al-Anon and Alateen members attending. This past year there were over five-thousand, and if you don't think *that* was an impressive kind of function to be at! I remember that I slept in their motor home, above the cabin, which was a fun experience!

Zach is friendly and funny now. He will go out of his way for people, and he seems not to let himself be used by others anymore; he's able to say no or whatever he needs to say. And he's capable of doing *so* much; there's nothing, really, that he can't do with his hands — house renovating, plumbing, wiring, to name a few.

I stopped over the night before Halloween and had a short visit with them, because I hadn't seen them for a while. Zach is on social security and SSI, and he supplements this income with the work that he does on cars. Patricia is doing well in real estate, but she had a slight stroke. She takes a little too much load on herself, I think.

At this point, theirs is a very special story. This is one of the more positive stories I have told, where somebody is successfully in ongoing recovery and has undergone a marvelous change as a result. Now Zach goes to AA meetings and encourages others in their "Twelve-step program." He's really a changed man, and dear and lovable. Margo is doing well, and Patricia and Zach help and see the other children. So they're special people whose efforts were well worth while. It's a happy ending — and it's an *ongoing* happy ending.

1996 update, nine years later

Zach was working on the house this year, when he collapsed and died of a heart attack.

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## FROM THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

*Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life*

**Ron:** I would like to know more about your prayer life, Kate.

From our many conversations over the past twenty-one years, I know that your prayer life has evolved and continues to evolve and is not what traditionally one might imagine a Catholic nun's prayer life to be. You don't say rosaries on your own initiative, for example, or use a traditional prayer book. Nor is contemplative time alone a preference. More than once when you were still driving a car, you mentioned that you would pray while driving.

And I still remember the time, maybe seven years ago, when you made a one-person, one-day spiritual retreat at my house, staying the night. The plan was that you would have your retreat during the day while I was at work, and then we would be on the quite side during the evening. It was summertime, and while I'm not sure what exactly I expected to find when I got home on the day of the actual retreat, I do know that it was not what I found — which was you on the patio peacefully fast asleep in a chair, in the late afternoon sun, with an empty bottle of beer at your side. That really was a special surprise for me!

You seem instead to pray during the moment at hand, in the energy and spontaneity of that moment. And perhaps most of all, I have made the connection only recently that the many small favors you do for people, the special moments you spend with people every day, seem to be prayers as well for you. You clearly see the face of Jesus, the face of God, in the people you meet and in the moments you are with them; and the more I get to know you the more those moments seem to translate as moments of prayer. Consoling someone or having a heart-to-heart talk with someone, for example, seem to be a prayer for you, a prayer as valid as saying any traditionally structured prayer would be. And I imagine that your second protest march last year in Georgia against some of the practices of the School of the Americas was very much also a form of prayer to you.

So please, Kate, share your thoughts and feelings regarding the development of your prayer life over the course of your life, particularly where it stands now, in this your eighty-third year.

**Kate:** My prayer life began as a child when my parents taught my brother and me morning and night prayers. I believe we knelt beside our beds for that (my brother still does). [Kate's brother, Al, is a religious Brother in the Congregation of Christian Brothers.] They were simple prayers. I think we said the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the prayer to our guardian angel. And we prayed, I think, for mom and dad and each other and maybe our grandparents. We also said a blessing before meals. I don't know that we said the thanksgiving after meals (I don't think we did).

And I think I have always, from the time I was very young, been in touch with nature. When I say young, I mean from Skagway (Alaska) days when there was so much beauty all around us, in the mountains, in the waterfalls.

**Ron:** How old would you have been?

**Kate:** Eight to thirteen.

I don't know that I contemplated *God* in all that. It's too bad I didn't have more of an awareness of God in that, but we didn't have that kind of instruction at that time.

When I was in Benediction [of the Blessed Sacrament] during this period [Kate

with her family] — Benediction would be, let's say, Sunday evenings, after which we would go to a show — when I was in Benediction I would pretend *that* was a show, because I was kind of bored.

**Ron:** Pretend Benediction was a show?

**Kate:** Yeah, something like that. I remember that thought.

Then I went to boarding school [in Beaverton, Oregon], and we were into the stage of indulgences — all these... boy, you say this and that and you get 500 days knocked off your time in purgatory or something like that.

And I used to make Spiritual Bouquets for my parents—

**Ron:** Spiritual Bouquets?

**Kate:** It's an offering. Like I would offer up 150 or 200 or 300 Masses, Holy Communion, Our Fathers, Hail Mary's, Glory Be's (I don't know if I put ejaculations down). [Kate would attend the Masses, receive the Holy Communion, say the prayers.] And I'd do it for Christmas, for Easter, for their birthdays, and any other occasion. So, during the course of a year, they had the promise of a couple of *thousand* Masses... well, we did daily Mass as a boarder (not only Sunday Mass). And I would still be in debt if I were trying to carry it all out!

So that was part of my prayer life then.

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After I entered the convent the first time at age fifteen, I don't remember too much about that, except I still know a night prayer we used to say, which is rather a very sentimental kind of prayer, and I still say it at night just because I remember it, and to keep my brain active before I decide to go to sleep.

But when I entered the second time at age nineteen [Kate was asked to leave the convent during her first attempt to become a Sister], we got up early in the morning and we chanted the Divine Office in Latin — matins and lauds. And then we had the morning prayer and several other prayers before meditation. We also chanted vespers in the early evening.

And then we meditated for an hour, I think, but maybe it was a half hour; whatever it was, it was a long time for me. And I didn't know what meditation was all about, didn't know anything; I probably just fell asleep or just thought my thoughts. I remember asking somebody what meditation was, and it just didn't make sense to me. If we did have a good explanation I didn't pay attention to it.

We said a long prayer in Latin every day, standing before the dining room table. As the food was on the table getting colder and colder, we recited this strung out psalm.

And the thing that used to bother me a lot was if we had to go to a doctor's appointment or something else, where we were away for the good part of the day — and going from Beaverton to Portland took quite a bit of time. We took a bus in, walked and did whatever we had to do, and would end up having lunch in the little room off the bathroom of the Catholic bookstore at that time [in downtown Portland, between Southwest Third and Fourth & Washington].

**Ron:** They had a restaurant?

**Kate:** Nooooo! No. We just took our little sack lunch in there. We didn't get to eat in restaurants; we had a little sack lunch. And, you know, sometimes there's a little lounge area in a restroom area, and we got to eat our sack lunch in there.

Anyway, when we would get home, all the prayers that we had missed we had to make up before we went to bed. And I remember kneeling in chapel (because we didn't usually sit for our prayers) and saying all these different prayers — the spiritual

reading, the devotional prayers. And you'd see a Sister there trying to get all these prayers in, crowd them in... well there's *no* devotion there for me. You just wanted it to be over and you did it because you thought you had to; at least *I* thought I had to. So that wasn't really devotion for me.

I went through a period when they thought I had glaucoma. I wasn't supposed to read anything, so I made a little booklet of pictures from calendars — biblical scenes — and I used to look at those. Then I did a little of what I would call imaginative meditation, and realized *that* was a form of prayer.

I remember making the Stations of the Cross down in chapel early, before morning prayers (we got up at ten to five). We had large three-dimensional stations, and I remember when I'd come to the one where Jesus was nailed to the cross (the eleventh station), I would stand where I could make eye contact with Jesus from the position he was in. And I always felt that I was contacting him in a special way at that point, and I would pray. At times I would spend a little more time with that. It was probably sentimental, but that's where I was at that time. I could never fall asleep making the stations. The Stations of the Cross — the Passion of Christ — was a very important part of my life, before the Eucharist [in this case, Mass] became that.

**Ron:** When you would be making the Stations, would you be *inventing* prayers, or were they traditional prayers?

**Kate:** I was talking. I would just look and talk or think.

When we used to have Adoration [of the Blessed Sacrament], I used to go by the chapel door sometimes and nobody would be in this big chapel. I'd feel kind of sorry for Jesus, and I'd go in and make a short visit. I just felt like he was sort of abandoned, but basically the other Sisters were all doing what they were supposed to be doing (their assigned tasks).

We used to have some priests come in now and then for conferences, and they were very good — some Jesuits — and that's where I gained a little more knowledge of spirituality.

We had a sixty-eight-year-old novice mistress, and when we used to have a spirituality session (I'll call it), she would read from Mary of Agreda (one of the Spanish mystics who had all these visions of Jesus) [dating from the 1600s]. The novice mistress presented just a lot of things that you wondered about whether they were true. I mean if somebody says they see the Blessed Virgin with a tear coming down her face on a statue, or sees the sun in a certain spot everyday and the Blessed Virgin seems to be crying or something — those are not taken seriously by people that study those accounts. Bernadette of Lourdes [dating from 1858, France], however, was well researched, I think. And Fatima [dating from 1917, Portugal] probably was, I think. I feel better about Our Lady of Guadalupe because the picture on the cloth was an image of Mary as Juan Diego had seen her [the picture that reportedly appeared miraculously on the cloth]. This all happened a long time ago [1531], but I believe it personally, and if I'm ever wrong about it, that's fine. But in the other cases [above], the statues and that were made after descriptions by the children of what they thought they saw.

Anyway, that was my prayer life more or less at that time.

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I do remember at St Agatha [in the parish convent] that, after some of the changes were beginning in the Church, we didn't have to stay in the chapel for meditation. We could go outside and walk around if we wanted to.

**Ron:** Now when was this?

**Kate:** In the early sixties.

**Ron:** So you weren't on Burnside yet.

**Kate:** No. I was stationed at St. Agatha as a teacher [in the parish grade school].

So anyway, I remember one nice, sunny day seeing an ant carrying a heavy load. I stooped down to look at this and was wondering at God's mysterious ways. That was an awareness of God on that day.

There was a time during this period in the mid-sixties, after I had moved to St. Andrew's the second time, that I used to go to Mass two or three times on a Sunday, and I remember sometimes saying, "Ahhh... how wonderful!" I was just really enraptured — at least I thought I was. And then a couple of us Sisters were sitting on the steps talking and saying, "We're saying the same thing over and over [at Mass]. Do we think Jesus didn't get the message the first time we went?!" So we stopped going to Mass more than once on a Sunday, much to the dismay of some of the other Sisters; and I remember feeling affirmed in this after reading an article in the periodical *Review for Religious*. That period of my life I just don't understand. I mean I tried to be a good religious; I did little acts of penance during one period. But afterwards when I'd think back... well, that's where I was at that time. And I have to look at anybody else in that stage and think, "You accept people where they are. You're not going to change them to where *you* are."

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When I began nursing at Maryville Nursing Home and volunteering on Skid Road in the late sixties and early seventies, my whole life changed as far as schedules were concerned. I worked the swing shift three to eleven at Maryville, so I tried to get my prayers in when I got out of bed in the morning (the required prayers), because anything after that I wasn't going to be able to do. We still got up early; we didn't sleep in. I would do some spiritual reading and some reflection on that, but I don't remember much more about my prayer life during that period. Nothing stands out. I began to reschedule my life, sort of as it fit my time schedule. What I couldn't do I just let go. And I didn't feel too guilty about it, I don't think.

**Ron:** You mean in terms of your prayer life.

**Kate:** Yes.

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Working on Burnside, I remember at times thinking of things I had heard many years before — that when you see somebody, for example, you're looking at Jesus. And that made an impression on me. I heard it from a retreat master who also said that if somebody comes and panhandles you for a nickel for a cup of coffee — if Jesus is thirsty — you know it's going to go for booze but you give it to him. And I remember that that statement stayed with me... "if Jesus is thirsty."

So I think that as time went on I saw the suffering and the beauty in so many of the people that I met on Skid Road. Something had to have held me there for the number of years that I was there. Going into Blanchet House and smelling the odors of the unwashed bodies when I was giving out vitamins or just going around or doing nursing or other services for the people — it's something that normally, I think, many years before, I would have just absolutely abhorred... the odors and the stench. When I was in the Matt Talbot Center, for example, many people would come with various needs, and some of these included people with unwashed bodies, bodies and clothes smelling of stale urine, open wounds that had been neglected... and I remember one individual in particular who had a badly infected knee with the leg covered with fecal matter.

**Ron:** So are you saying that it was different then because of this idea of seeing



Jesus in the men?

**Kate:** I don't think the idea was that prevalent during that period, but probably was just *in* there, *within* me. I wasn't aware at that time, I don't think. I didn't think about it that way. I just knew I cared about people, and I never thought of why.

Then as time went on I began to see the struggles and became more aware of God in the world, in nature, and in people.

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In 1972, I moved to St. Andrew. [This was the third time that Kate lived in the convent at St. Andrew, a parish in which she has remained an involved parishioner to the present, 2005].

I've been associated with St. Andrew since the fifties, in one way or another. In those earlier years it was... in a seemingly bi-racial area, but in effect it was a poor black area that white people were moving out of; it was sort of a ghetto. When I... first started teaching in the grade school there in the fifties, I only had one black child among fifty children; in later years I had about five in my two grades. I never had a black child in any of the other parishes I taught in [Kate taught for twenty-five years before starting her work on Skid Road]. So that part — living and worshiping in a bi-racial parish — was new for me.

I think that one of the things, too, that made me more aware and made me defensive of people was that quite a few of the men on Skid Road were very bigoted. They really had no use for the blacks in any way.

**Ron:** So the Skid Road men themselves had a prejudice against black people?

**Kate:** They had had a lot of experiences, I think, which probably weren't pleasant, and also ingrained prejudice probably. This goes back, before there was as much acceptance and diversity as there is now.

Anyway, going to St. Andrew's and getting the NCR [National Catholic Reporter newspaper] had a lot to do with freeing me, inasmuch as the way I thought about a lot of things I found was affirmed by my experiences at St. Andrew and by a lot of what was in the NCR. And that made me feel a lot more confident.

Then different magazines and different things that I read... I just found myself changing.

**Ron:** In your prayer life.

**Kate:** Yes.

And I think it's more in the last few years that I pray for a lot of people. I pray for a lot of people and I ask God to take care of them. And because there's no *way* I can remember to name everybody, I got this book where I list them — and, Lord, it's pages and pages of people! Periodically I try to read it, and then at other times I say, "God, take care of these people, please!"

**Ron:** You mean you have a book in which you write—

**Kate:** I started listing them, yes, so I wouldn't forget all the different people.

**Ron:** Do you still add names?

**Kate:** Yes.

**Ron:** So this is a new idea.

**Kate:** Yes. And that's because of my memory, in a sense, not because of my prayer life. I pray for people a lot.

But more recently, I talk to God about people a lot. I find myself *talking* to God a lot, and I mean a *lot*.

**Ron:** What do you mean "talking" to him? People might not understand what you mean.

**Kate:** Like when I wake up in the morning. I start out saying, "Thank you, God, for letting me get through the night and have another day. Help me to live it as you would like me to live it." And then I say the Morning Offering and a prayer for the Pope. Then I say the prayer that Mychal Judge said: "Lord, Take me where you want me to go. Let me meet who you want me to meet. Tell me what you want me to say. And keep me out of your way."

**Ron:** And who said this?

**Kate:** Mychal Judge, the Franciscan priest that was hit and killed by a piece of falling debris after 911. He was giving the last sacraments to a firefighter [the sacraments given before imminent death, namely Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick]. He was called. He was the chaplain of the fire department there. They found in his papers that little prayer that he used to say.

**Ron:** Did he compose the prayer?

**Kate:** Yes, he did. It was his own.

He was alcoholic and he was gay, and he dealt with both.

And so, people like that started making a deep impression on me.

And then I always blow God a kiss in the morning and at night. When I first get up I just go [Kate demonstrates blowing a kiss], and that's taken from a poem by that Hafez Sufi master [from the 1300s].

**Ron:** Am I right that now, usually, on your own, you don't really say traditional prayers — you don't say, for example, three Hail Mary's and one Our Father...

**Kate:** Nope. No, no, no, no, no, I don't. You're right. I just talk, now. I talk to God a lot.

Like, if I'm talking about you: Help Ron, in the different things that are a problem for him. Help him to find someone that he can feel close to or intimate with. And I don't mean necessarily as a partner. Just, just, to fulfil your life. And I think, more and more, you've got a lot of friends, it sounds like, that you go and have coffee with and things like that. It may not meet all your needs.

But I think probably one of the saddest things that I heard you say once was, "I feel like I'm not a complete person," because you haven't experienced the love.

But what does that make the rest of us that *choose* a celibate life? It's a different sort of thing. In other words, that makes us not perfect? not complete? because of that? If we looked at it that way, I think, it would be a disservice to what we vow willingly.

And it's not an easy thing. It was not always easy for me to go through life celibate.

Also I find that when I see people (not everybody) I just feel very drawn to them and feel a warmth from myself to them, and I think they experience that a lot of times.

**Ron:** And is that not, in its own way, a form of prayer?

**Kate:** I think so. I think it's a drawing of the Christ in me to that person, or the Christ in that person to me. I do... I think of that. But that is not a constant thing.

I know that from the time I get up in the morning I'm talking to God a good part of the time.

So I've ended up at this stage wanting and trying to see God in everybody, asking God to let me be the kind of person she intends me to be.

**Ron:** "She" intends you to be.

**Kate:** Yes. And I use that [pronoun reference] on and off because God is a spirit, neither male nor female.

And more and more I feel in tune with nature, in the fact that... we're all connected about this... first beginning. Whatever God started everything from, we're all — whether it's animal, plant, worm, human — somehow created, grown, evolved from that original "first bang" or whatever it was that exploded, however God started creation, however long it took for things to form.

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**Ron:** Let's talk a little bit more about your prayer life during your time on Burnside during the seventies and eighties. We kind of skipped that piece.

**Kate:** At that time I tried to make myself aware — not that everybody that I saw when I walked down the street I saw as Christ — but I knew in reflection I was meeting Christ. When I would think about this, I knew that Jesus was there and I was serving him in the men and women. It wasn't a conscious thought all the time; but when I did take time for reflection or prayer, this would be the bulk of it.

*Something* drew me there, Ron! [Kate said this with what seemed to be a certain frustration at not knowing what that something was.]

What... what *drew* me there? [This was said pensively and while looking at Ron in a focused way that lingered some and seemed to indicate she really did not know the answer and was searching him to give it.]

Of all my senses, my sense of smell is the most highly developed and is still with me. (The other senses are going one by one — diminishment; but that one's still there.) And believe me, when I think of the reek, especially in the early days, in the things that I did, and yet it wasn't abhorrent to me. And it still wouldn't be. I would still be able to bear that.

I don't know what drew me there, but it was the people I met who kept me there.

And maybe more recently, too — it's over ten years now that I've volunteered at Our House of Portland [a care facility for individuals with late-stage AIDS] — maybe more recently... being with people that were dying seems such a special period of being in the presence of Christ; knowing that this person was transitioning from living to something different that none of us understand, have not experienced or can see. And for the dying person it's scary.

I remember when this very good looking man who was dying said, "What's it like to die?"

What do you say?

I don't know. I say, "I like to think, and I really believe, that those who loved you and have gone ahead are going to be there to greet you and welcome you with open arms. I'm sure, I know you're going to be welcomed and loved." Just letting people know — whether they are conscious or unconscious — to just say, "God loves you unconditionally." And I don't know that two people that I was alone with when they died had ever heard those words. One of them — he'd been in and out of jails for his drug use and I guess dealing with drugs and alcoholism — he just looked at me intently; he could no longer speak or communicate, but he just kept looking at me. And I thought, "You've

never heard this before, my guess is," from the life that he had led, "that God loves you unconditionally, just as you are."

**Ron:** And *there* is a prayer, again — saying that to him.

**Kate:** That's a prayer.  
That was John.

And then the other man was Mexican. He had a little Spanish bible, and I said, "I can read it. I won't know what I'm reading, but would you like me to read a little bit?" He nodded his head, so I read in Spanish. And to him, too, I said, "God loves you."  
And when I'm alone with them I say that or I whisper it to them.

**Ron:** Again, a different form of prayer.

So, what is occurring to me now is that, in a very real way, Kate, you are saying that life itself and the way you live it can be a prayer, and *is* a prayer for you.

**Kate:** And I think—

**Ron:** Excuse me, but is this right?

**Kate:** Yes, I'd like to think so.

**Ron:** This is such an interesting and radical departure from the simple, formulary prayer life that you started out with as a child, as a young woman, and for many years as a Sister.

It shows, I think, an eighty-three-year path of evolution that has resulted in the expansion of your prayer life from the rather restrictive, passive, and word-bound to the truly boundless, immediate, and action-enhanced — to something that incorporates living a good life and performing good deeds toward others into the very heart of its definition.

**Kate:** And another thing I think, Ron, is that accepting people for who they are and where they are and what they are is so important. I've tried to do that instead of trying to change people. But to me, each person is what and who they are, and they're precious in God's eyes. They are precious. *I* may not see that, but I have to know that they are, and that they're very much loved.

**Ron:** And was it primarily the Burnside experience that brought that out in you?

**Kate:** Yes.

*Referred to earlier in this interview, the text on the next page is the night prayer Kate first said at age fifteen as a postulant in the convent, and still says.*

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*Jesus, dear, the day is over.  
Now I lay my labor light,  
And before I seek my slumber  
Come to say a sweet good night.*

*Would that I might tarry, Jesus,  
Rest beneath your sacred  
shrine—  
You would whisper loving secrets  
and I'd tell you all of mine.*

*I will lay my heart beside you.  
It will rest securest there,  
And within your fond embraces  
It will grow to be more dear.*

*But I cannot linger, Jesus,  
I must leave you for a while.  
So bestow on me your blessing  
And a fond approving smile.*

*So good night once more, my Jesus.  
Grant no matter where I be  
All my day thoughts and my night  
dreams  
Be of you and only you. Amen.*

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**TALARICO: FIRE IN THE DARK**  
**- Audio Excerpts from the Original Recording Sessions -**

*(The audio excerpts referred to below  
are contained on the two CDs that accompany this book.)*

To the Listener:

The original recording sessions between Kate and Ron were intended for transcription rather than for listening, and thus no consideration was given to ambient noise, of which, as a result, there is much in the audio tracks presented on the media disks that accompany the paperback edition of *Fire in the Dark*. The listener will hear coffee cups being placed on hard surfaces, wind chimes, birds chirping, the shuffling of papers, a room fan, use of a microwave, water running at the sink, music playing, the phone ringing.

In all cases, the 58 audio excerpts presented are from the original recording sessions. At times and for the sake of economy, different segments from the same story were cut and pasted into a single new audio track in order to combine and highlight certain details from a man's story or an interview session without including others. Because of this, the listener might notice an occasional awkward transition from one mini-segment to the next within the same excerpt.

The names indicated in the audio list below are the same fictitious names as those used in the book and belong to the same man (e.g. Alex in the audio recording is the same Alex as in the written narrative).

Since the original recording sessions are raw, unedited material, and the written narratives drawn from those sessions have been edited (as explained in *Appendix IV: A Look Inside Some of the Project Development Process*), there will often not be a word-for-word correspondence between the audio excerpts and their corresponding written narratives in the book.

Finally, in order to protect the identity of the men (whose real-life names were used in the original audio excerpts), pronouns have been mechanically substituted for the men's names. Thus, for example, *John said* becomes *He said*; *for John* becomes *for him*; and *John's alcoholism* becomes *his alcoholism*. The recordings of the *he-him-his* substitutions were simply pasted over the men's names. This results in some noticeable awkwardness in Kate's vocal quality, because while that quality changed within the same recording session and between recording sessions and through the years, the pronouns pasted never vary in vocal quality (e.g. the very same mechanical recording of *he* is used throughout every excerpt). And this use of pronouns-only could also result in some confusion from excerpt to excerpt unless the listener keeps in mind the announcer's introduction to each excerpt (or uses the list below).

*Order of Audio Presentations & Approximate Times:*

- 01 - Alex - 228
- 02 - Arnold - 106
- 03 - Beginnings: Part 1 - 057
- 04 - Beginnings: Part 2 - 101
- 05 - Beginnings: Part 3 - 149
- 06 - Blanchet House - 048
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## EPILOGUE

### *choices*

Here end twenty-five years of probing one person's response to the question posed at the start of this project: "What positive impact could the efforts of just one person like me possibly have on the world's problems?"

Appearing throughout the hundred and fifteen stories just presented have been countless, simple, and relatively easy-to-accomplish actions that just one person has done on behalf of others to address the problems of the world around her and answer the question in a way that worked for her.

Despite the endless barrage of highly materialistic, pleasure-bound, speed-driven, instant-gratification attractions and distractions that our culture presents to us day in, day out, beckoning us often to self-centeredness, Kate St. Martin consistently chose instead to go outside herself and act on behalf of others. And she operated without hidden motives. In her actions were no desire for wealth or power or fame. No corruption or political machinations. Neither point-scoring nor judgment nor effort to control others. No false promises or waning of purpose. Just simple actions done simply, on behalf of others, on a regular basis, with follow-through. In the end, choices. Primarily choices.

### *models of service*

An impressive variety of models for making the world a better place already exists: various social services, volunteer organizations, and self-help movements; parents raising their children; religions, the Peace Corps, good laws, good policies, philanthropic organizations, art and literature — these are just a few. Through its own uniqueness, each model shows us a different way of visualizing the world as that better place and provides its own special road map to accomplish the goal. In the end, the actions and attitudes of Kate which are documented in this project are simply one more model among many excellent others.

### *the I in the central question*

The unusually large number and variety of Kate's actions and the indomitable tenacity with which she carried them out have caused me to look inside and reflect on where I myself stand when it comes to promoting the common good of the people around me and the world at large.

Do I try to promote the common good? Do I care about it and, if so, how do I show this? Do I want to contribute to making the world a better place or would I rather let it continue the way it is, assuring my own interests instead and not concerning myself much with the interests of others? Do my actions build bridges rather than walls? Is the basic relationship between my words and my actions one of harmony and integrity or one more of disconnections? Will I continue for ever to *resist* the thought that no one is worth more than I am and no one is worth less, or will I surrender to it at last?

In short, to use Cain's wording of the question after murdering his brother Abel:

*"Am I my brother's keeper?"*

This question is, I believe, and always has been *the* central day-to-day practical question confronting the human race regarding its relationships among its members. Whatever my own answer to the question, the long and detailed record of Kate's activities on Skid Road presents a compelling example of what can happen when that answer is a resounding *yes*.

### *focus of attention*

The temptation to turn my focus more and more toward Kate herself in this project became gradually more and more difficult to resist as the years went by.



You will likely remember her regularly going down the soup line at Blanchet House saying, "Have a vitamin?" Or her first experience standing on a street corner in a strange new world, a woman alone and a nun in the habit, waiting for one of the men to approach her, knowing she had no clue what she would say or do if he did. Or the amusing proposals of marriage that were offered to her. These and many other vignettes easily tickle one's curiosity, and it became increasingly obvious that I and others would want to know what would motivate an individual to continually go outside herself, stretching her potential in an effort to help others.

Yet, however things might appear otherwise, this project is neither primarily nor in its essence about Kate and was never intended to be. Quite the contrary.

*We* are the intended focus of attention.

Despite the charming photo galleries and engaging audio segments and interview sessions and other moments that appear to be about Kate, this is so only on the surface. For the goal behind everything on that surface has been to get as far as possible *beneath* the surface, to gain access inside to the nooks and crannies of the stuff of existence of one human being in order to discern in her the Everyone in *us*, the universal that is common to all of us.

If Kate becomes the focus, then the project fails miserably and — far worse — we risk failing to visualize *ourselves* inserted into the lives of the people around us, doing what *we* can do to support their self-actualization and dignity. If Kate the individual becomes the focus rather than Kate the Everyone, then this project becomes little more than a nice book to put on a shelf and forget about not long after it is read, leaving its invitation to action trapped inescapably within its pages.

However "action" might be defined (including even prayer and living the religious contemplative life), you and I are the intended focus of this project, and what each of us can do to affirm and sustain the dignity of human life everywhere and protect it from the forces that would devalue it and lead it away from the light, into which it was born, to the shadows, where it does not belong.

### *fire in the dark*

Fire in the dark is the image that keeps coming back whenever I think about the positive impact that just one person has had on the lives of the individuals whose stories have been presented throughout these many pages.

In the darkness of the human misery that Kate encountered every day of her Skid Road experience, her actions were sparks, were lights held up to that darkness. And fueled by the fans of profound concern for the welfare of others, her actions grew into a raging fire of good: unceasing, unstoppable, passionate testimonies to the refusal of the human spirit to be overcome by however much and whatever types of injustice, unfairness, and pain come its way.

-RT

## Appendix I GLOSSARY

This glossary is the project's central source of information about the various terms, concepts, agencies, buildings, places, and events that are mentioned throughout its pages. The information appearing herein is only as comprehensive as was believed necessary in order to define, clarify, or enrich the meanings of the entries in the contexts in which they appear in the project. While the definitions, therefore, are not intended to be exhaustive or applicable to every life context, they *are* intended to help one better understand and appreciate more finely the many details, nuances, and technical terms within the project as well as to support additional interest.

All religious terms apply to the Roman Catholic Church and many apply in part or completely to other Christian denominations. The texts of any prayers quoted are common traditional quotations. Given the Church's 2000 years of history and its universal dimension, there are surely other versions and translations in use, and many individuals nowadays prefer to compose the content that is addressed in the prayers using their own words.

Any updates to this glossary will appear exclusively on the author's web site: [rontalarico.com](http://rontalarico.com)

It is hoped the glossary in and of itself will serve as a catalyst of sorts, a type of agent of change, by leading readers to new thoughts and connections within themselves which in turn will lead to increased positive impact on the wider world.

### -A-

AA. See *Alcoholics Anonymous*

AAA

Automobile Association of America

AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. This is the final stage of HIV disease/infection. Individuals at this stage of HIV disease have badly damaged immune systems, which puts them at serious risk for life-threatening infections. See also *HIV disease*

Access Clinic

Per Kate at the time she and Ron were taping the stories, this was a small clinic, no longer in existence, with a doctor and one or two nurses who provided medical evaluations to indigent individuals and prescribed medications for them. Kate's vague recollection was that the clinic was located between S.W. Fourth and Fifth and Stark in downtown Portland, several blocks from Skid Road, which would put it in the same location as the Multnomah County Westside Health Center today (see entry). However, the 1975 phone book lists a Multnomah County "Medical Access Clinic" at 105 S.W. 5th Avenue, which also is a possibility per Kate and would have been several blocks closer to Skid Road.

Act of Contrition

Prayer expressing sorrow for one's sins. It is commonly said as part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (also "Sacrament of Penance," "confession," or "going to confession"):

*"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to sin no more and avoid the near occasions of sin."*

Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love

Three traditional devotional prayers.

*Act of Faith:* "O my God, I firmly believe all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches; I believe these truths, O Lord, because Thou, the infallible Truth, hast revealed them to her; in this faith I am resolved to live and die. Amen."

*Act of Hope:* "O my God, relying on Thy promises, I hope that, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, Thou wilt grant me pardon of my sins, and the graces necessary to serve Thee in this life and to obtain eternal happiness in the next. Amen"

*Act of Love:* "O my God, I love Thee with my whole heart and above all things, because Thou art infinitely good and perfect; and I love my neighbor as myself for love of Thee. Grant that I may love Thee more and more in this life, and in the next for all eternity. Amen"

Addy's (grocery store)

Small storefront convenience store on S.W. Burnside, Portland (between 4th & 5th Avenues, Kate thinks). Addy was the name of the owner.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Practice of spending time before the Blessed Sacrament (Eucharist or consecrated bread) in a church, affirming belief in the real presence (see below), contemplating its mystery, fostering interior communion with Jesus, and characterized by any of several forms of quiet prayer.

During this time the Blessed Sacrament resides in the tabernacle where it is normally reserved,

or it is exposed specially for this purpose in an object of display called a monstrance.

The real presence (simply put) refers to the complex and fundamental Catholic belief that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is present truly (not only symbolically), really (objectively, not only subjectively in one's mind), and substantially (body and blood, soul and divinity).

Adult and Family Services (AFS)

No longer a state governmental entity with this name, the services once provided by AFS now are provided by the Children, Adults, and Families Division (CAF), State of Oregon Department of Human Services. CAF oversees self-sufficiency and child welfare programs in the state.

Al-Anon

A worldwide organization whose purpose is to help those who live or work or otherwise interact with alcoholics (e.g. family, co-workers, friends). <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/index.php>

Alateen

That part of Al-Anon that is for younger members, usually teenagers. See *Al-Anon*

alcoholic blackout

Period of memory loss related to drinking alcohol.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." "... at any [AA] meeting you will find alcoholics talking about what drinking did to their lives and personalities, what actions they took to help themselves, and how they are living their lives today." [quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous Web site in 2008] <http://www.aa.org/>

Started by two men in the U.S. in 1935, AA has twelve main steps (The Twelve Steps) in its recovery program (e.g. admitting one is powerless over one's drinking and over one's life because of drinking, turning one's life over to God or a power greater than oneself, making a moral inventory and amends for past wrongs, offering to help other alcoholics). It is an organization both voluntary and worldwide. Many other addiction recovery programs have adopted the principles and traditions of AA (e.g. Overeaters Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous).

alcohol seizure

Seizure triggered by complete withdrawal from alcohol, or sudden reduction in the amount normally consumed.

apostle

One of the twelve men specially called by Jesus in the Gospels to bring his teachings to the world (examples are Saints Peter, Andrew, Thomas, and John).

Apostles' Creed

Summary of the faith professed by Christians, which traces its roots back to the apostles of Jesus Christ:

*"I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Under Pontius Pilate He was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."*

archbishop

Title given to a bishop who governs an archdiocese, which is a territorial division of the Church.

archdiocese. See *archbishop*

Arlington Hotel

333 N.W. Sixth Avenue, Portland.

**-B-**

Baloney Joe's

Grass roots night shelter for homeless individuals which opened in 1978 in a storefront somewhere on N.W. Couch Street, Portland, and operated into the late 1980's. It closed in 1995 under another name and different management. Over time, Baloney Joe's offered several services in addition to shelter and meals (e.g. dental work provided by volunteers, daytime services). It was an activity of the then Burnside Community Council and its chairman, Michael Stoops. Originally on Skid Road, Baloney Joe's later re-located across the river from Skid Road, to the east end of the Burnside Bridge, north side of approach ramp.

"The Burnside Community Council [no longer operating] is a non-profit, community organization

- dedicated to assisting the homeless and poor. This transitional assistance takes the form of emergency shelter, food, health care, counseling, information and referral, advocacy, employment assistance [...]" [from the Summer 1987 issue of These Homeless Times]
- baptism  
Sacred rite by which a person becomes a Christian.
- baptize. See *baptism*
- Baskin-Robbins  
Ice cream specialty shop.
- BCC Pipeline  
Monthly newsletter of the now defunct Burnside Community Council, Inc., Portland.
- Beaverton (Oregon)  
City located approximately 7 miles southwest of Portland, and part of Portland metropolitan area.
- Benediction (of the Blessed Sacrament)  
Religious service involving exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Eucharist or consecrated bread), a blessing by the priest of those who are present, and usually the use of incense and the singing of traditional hymns.
- Bernadette of Lourdes, Saint (1844-1879)  
French peasant who at the age of fourteen claimed that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to her many times (reportedly eighteen). An unaccountable spring and reports of miraculous healings contributed to making Lourdes a world-famous site of pilgrimage. Bernadette became a nun eventually and in 1933 was declared a saint by the Catholic Church.
- Bethany Center  
A place for people with AIDS to go to receive free massages and sometimes haircuts. Closed in 2004, the center was started by Fr. Bruce Cwiekowski in 1998 or 1999 and was housed in a couple of apartments provided by Providence Portland Medical Center adjacent to their facility. Every other Sunday individuals would come to the CHAT group (Christ Has AIDS Too), which was a spiritual session, and on special holidays dinner would be served.
- bi-polar disorder  
Also called manic-depressive illness, a serious disorder basically involving extreme mood swings (from highs of things like increased energy, being extremely anxious or irritable or happy, talking too much and fast, and delusions, to lows of things like feeling very sad, depressed, inability to concentrate or sleep, and lack of interest, energy, or appetite).
- bishop  
Commonly the leader and chief priest of a diocese. Considered to be a successor of Jesus' twelve apostles, he, among other duties, ordains priests and participates as a member of the college of bishops, whose head is the pope.
- blackout. See *alcoholic blackout*
- Blanchet. See *Blanchet House*
- Blanchet Farm  
Large working farm in Carlton, Oregon, founded and operated by Blanchet House of Hospitality in Portland, where some forty men recovering from substance abuse continue their efforts to remain clean and sober while working and learning teamwork and similar life skills.  
<http://www.blanchethouse.org/farm.html>
- Blanchet House (of Hospitality)  
[Blanchet House of Hospitality provided Kate with her first important experience of the Burnside Skid Road area and played a fundamental role in and throughout her work on Skid Road.]
- "From Social Club to Social Work — What began as a social club, founded in 1938, at the University of Portland has since developed into an institution unique among its kind in Portland's oldest and deepest 'poverty pocket', the Old Town/Chinatown area. Today, not only does the original Blanchet House of Hospitality, at 340 N.W. Glisan Street, founded in 1952 continue to offer to the poor: free meals, beds, jobs, and HOPE, but it has been joined by two more properties to become a multi-unit complex of charitable endeavors. The scope of Blanchet House of Hospitality has grown to include Blanchet Farm in Carlton, OR, and Mr. Riley's Place at 615 N.W. 18th. Charity - With No Commercials—'Unique' was the word we used to describe our organization in relation to others in the locality and it applies in certain important aspects. Of primary note is the fact that the Blanchet operation is not the integral agency of a church (although named for the pioneer first Archbishop of Oregon and directed by a board of Catholic laymen); nor is it an adjunct of government or of public fund groups such as the United Way, but rather it is independent of all, both legally and financially. Another unusual aspect is our policy regarding those we aid: no moral judgements are imposed and no participation in religious services are required.
- A further distinguishing feature is the composition of our staff. All staff members are unsalaried volunteers; the Executive Directors have come from business or non-profit management backgrounds. The other staff has been recruited from among those we serve. The latter live in the House and perform all of the daily tasks involved in its operation, thus contributing to their own self-esteem and developing a community spirit. Since its inception, the House has served over seventeen million hot meals, provided over one million night's lodging, distributed over 800,000

items of clothing, and filled over 120,000 temporary jobs. Countless food boxes also were given to families in need, and small loans were made for training courses, licenses, tool purchases and whatever might contribute toward another chance in life. A number of new charitable undertakings have been successfully launched with aid from Blanchet House in the form of money for a few months rent, food supplies, equipment and experienced advice." [quote from Blanchet House Web site in 2008] [www.blanchethouse.org/](http://www.blanchethouse.org/)

[For more information on Blanchet House but through Kate's eyes, see stories *Beginnings*, *Blanchet House*, and *Mel & Harvey*. See also *From the Times: Blanchet House of Hospitality I* and *From the Times: Blanchet House of Hospitality II*.]

Blessed Mother

The mother of Jesus Christ.

Blessed Virgin. See *Blessed Mother*

Body of Christ

The community of believing Christians — the Church — of which Jesus Christ is considered to be the head.

Broadway Hotel

10 N.W. Broadway, Portland.

Brother (religious)

Male member of a religious order who is not a priest and not studying for the priesthood.

Burnside area. See *Skid Road*

Burnside, down on. See *Skid Road*

Burnside Hotel

[Located at 208 N.W. Couch Street, Portland, second floor, this hotel opened November 1, 1969, and closed February 1, 1973. The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project. It was a newspaper article about him — "Priest Runs Skid Road Hotel" — that was Kate's primary inspiration to go to Skid Road and ask Gil if there was anything a nurse/nun could do to help out.]

"I was assigned to the Downtown Chapel, [then located at] 516 West Burnside, Portland, in the summer of 1968, as an associate pastor. As one of my responsibilities, I was liaison for Downtown Chapel to Hub-CAP, the church community action program for the downtown area. Hub-CAP was the ecumenical community outreach program sponsored by the Portland Council of Churches. There were, I believe, 13 member churches in Hub-CAP, including Lake Oswego Methodist, First Unitarian, Zion Lutheran, St. Mary's Cathedral, the Downtown Chapel and others. My focus at Hub-CAP was, of course, on the Burnside area.

"When the hotel opened, the Downtown Chapel contributed \$300 each month to pay the rent. I moved into the hotel, and slept there with the men at night. Once we had a kitchen operating, I took some of my meals there with the men too. I kept my room at the Downtown Chapel at the same time, and was at the chapel each morning to celebrate Mass and for breakfast.

"For the hotel, I remember building kitchen cabinets at my Dad's shop in Salem [state capitol fifty miles south of Portland], and installing the kitchen. I remember that the sizes were right, but I failed to allow for the fact that the walls were not plumb and true. I had to use a sledge hammer to get them into place. Those cabinets weren't coming down until the walls came down.

"We had showers for the men, and a washer and dryer for them to clean their clothes. We hustled beds, mattresses and linens from St. Vincent de Paul [thrift store] and from the Providence Hospitals. We collected food from the markets on the east side of the river [e.g. produce from the old produce houses in inner southeast Portland]. The men prepared the meals — some good cooks came off the street. I remember some of the faces and stories, but the names slip my mind.

"The men who came in were required to keep the rules — No drinking, No fighting, Help with your assigned tasks — and the consequences would be expulsion. If the men came back at night after drinking, they would not be admitted. Some stays were short. Some stays were for extended periods of time. The rules enforcement is what led to the opening of the Drop-In Center [see Drop-in Center]. It was gut-wrenching to turn an intoxicated resident away at the door at 10 p.m. when it was raining and there was no other place for him to go for the night."

[See *From the Times: Housing I* for photo of Burnside Hotel and Gil Lulay.]

Burnside, on. See *Skid Road*

Burnside Project. See *Burnside Projects*

Burnside Projects See also *Transition Projects Inc.*

[www.tprojects.org](http://www.tprojects.org)

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project. There are several references in the quote to entities that have their own glossary entries: Burnside Hotel (regarding Hub-CAP churches),

Cardinal Café, Clean-up Center, Downtown Chapel, Drop-in Center, Last Chance Café. Burnside Projects eventually changed its name to Transition Projects Inc.]

"Around 1971, I saw the need for some structure for the programs, if they were to continue after I no longer was present there. That is why Burnside Projects was incorporated [in 1971], with a board of directors that could carry on the work of continuity. [As stated in the articles of incorporation, the purpose of Burnside Projects was 'To provide lodging, food and other assistance for poor and homeless men.']

"Before incorporation [from 1969-1971], the programs operated 'seat of the pants.' The Downtown Chapel was the chief support, as well as the Hub-CAP churches [...].

"In 1971, Burnside Projects was operating the Everett Street Drop-In Center primarily [also called simply the Drop-in Center]. The staff from Burnside Projects also managed the Clean-up Center [in the basement of the Downtown Chapel], but this was as much a project of the Downtown Chapel as it was of Burnside Projects. [...] The Last Chance Café had been left behind, as had the Cardinal Café [i.e. they had closed]."

[In the 1986-87 Portland phone book Burnside Projects listed its main office and "Emergency Night Shelter" as 523 N.W. Everett Street, and its "Burnside Clean-up Center" as 601 West Burnside, which would have been still in the basement of the Downtown Chapel. With the 1987-88 phone book, main office and shelter are listed as 435 N.W. Glisan Street, about three blocks away. At some point in 1987 the Clean-up Center moved from the Downtown Chapel to the Burnside Projects location. In 1991 Burnside Projects changed its name to Transition Projects Inc. (TPI), and it is still located at the Glisan Street location (though at number 475), with greatly expanded services to individuals who are homeless.]

[Additional information from Kate: "Hugh did very well at Burnside Projects. He was kind of in charge of several of the areas there by 1988. Burnside Projects had *really* developed by then. I had a deep respect for what they did. One of the services they had was crisis intervention; if somebody, for example, was being evicted from his hotel, I could pay for him to stay at the Burnside Projects night shelter if there was an available bed. I did this for quite a few months with one man, which was why my ministry funds got so depleted at a certain point." (from Hugh Wright's story)]

#### Butte Hotel

Located at 610 N.W. Davis Street, Portland, this hotel is owned by Central City Concern and is Section 8 Housing for single adults. [www.centralcityconcern.org](http://www.centralcityconcern.org)

#### -C-

##### Call to Action

Catholic national movement to promote justice and equality in the Church and society, involved in issues such as stopping war, abolishing the death penalty, ordination of women priests, acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals. <http://www.cta-usa.org/>

##### Canon Law Society of America

Professional organization of Roman Catholic canon lawyers in the United States that promotes the study and application of canon law in the Catholic Church. Canon law is the body of general laws and regulations governing the Church.

##### cardinal

Member of the clergy, usually a bishop of a prominent diocese, appointed by the pope, and who serves a prominent role in Church administration, including the election of a new pope.

##### Cardinal Café (also The Cardinal)

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project.]

"The [Cardinal] Café was opened in a restaurant on [West] Burnside between (I believe) 3rd and 4th Avenues, on the north side of the street. One of the residents of the Burnside Hotel [see *Burnside Hotel*] painted a red cardinal on the front window. My best guess is that the café opened sometime between October 1970 and March 1971 and closed before the end of 1971.

"The café grew out of the work at the [Burnside] Hotel. As residents came into the hotel and stayed for a period of time, there was no work to keep them busy and no way for them to earn spending money. Many of the men from the street had food prep experience, and some of them were rather good cooks. We had work for only two at the hotel, preparing the three meals each day for the residents. The purpose for the café was to provide a source of some small income for the residents of the hotel. It was opened for about a year, and provided meals to the public for breakfast and lunch.

"[...] The chief chef went on to be the Clean-up Center manager [see *Clean-up Center*] for a

number of years after the café closed. All income from the café went back into paying the rent and supplies, and paying a small stipend to the men from the hotel."

Care Unit

Defunct alcoholism detoxification and treatment facility on N.W. Lovejoy Street between Nineteenth and Twentieth Avenues, Portland, apparently affiliated with the also defunct Physicians and Surgeons Hospital.

Cascade AIDS Project

Agency established to "lead efforts to prevent new HIV infections, care for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, educate communities to eliminate stigma and shame, and advocate for immediate action in combating the pandemic." [quote from Cascade AIDS Project Web site in 2008] <http://www.cascadeaids.org/>

Catholic Charities (USA)

National social service network that provides "... a continuum of services — food, shelter, supportive housing, clothing, financial assistance, and other forms of help — that give people a leg up when life has knocked them down."

"... We also strive to strengthen families and build stronger communities by offering a variety of other programs such as counseling, immigration and refuge services, adoption, disaster response, child care, employment training, supports for seniors, and much more."

"Why do we do this? Because our Catholic foundational values tell us that every human is worthy of dignity and respect, and that if any are in need, then we share in the responsibility to help them." [quotes from Catholic Charities Web site in 2008]

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>

celibacy

Abstention from marriage, by promise, by Catholic clergy.

Central City Concern. See *detoxification center*

chastity, vow of. See *vow*

Chicken Coop Hotel, Chicken Coop, Chicken Coop Flop, or Chicken Coop Flophouse. See *Holm Hotel*

CHIERS (Central City Concern Hooper Inebriate Emergency Response Service). See *detoxification center*

CHIERS wagon. See *detoxification center*

Christian Brothers de la Salle (Brothers of the Christian Schools)

International Catholic religious order of men founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719), French priest, for the education of young people, especially those poor.

<http://www.lasalle.org/>

Church, the

Roman Catholic Church; Catholic Church

Clean-up Center

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project.]

"The Clean-up Center was opened in the basement of the old Downtown Chapel, on the corner of 5th and Burnside in 1970. The entrance was at 516 W. Burnside [on the *south* side of Burnside, where the present U.S. Bank Tower stands]. There were 2 or 3 doors there — one to the sacristy of the chapel, another to the basement of the chapel. Father Louis Weis was the pastor at the chapel at the time, and was a support for all of the projects that we undertook in the [Burnside] area. [Fr. Weis is Fr. Harold Webster in the project.] Through the chapel, he provided the \$200/month stipend for each of the three conscientious objectors [see *conscientious objector*], and provided \$300/month for the rent for the Burnside Hotel [see *Burnside Hotel*]. In addition to that, he opened up the basement of the chapel for the Clean-up Center. There was a shower facility there, and we set up a washer and dryer to help to recycle the clothing the men left when they came for a shower. He also spent hours keeping the laundry moving through the machines.

"With clothing contributions from the Hub-CAP churches [see *Burnside Hotel*], we set up a clothing room. Men from the Burnside Hotel staffed the center, dispensed the clothing and towels, cleaned the facilities and kept the laundry going. The facilities were makeshift, at best.

"In 1971, [...] [a bank] wanted the 5th and Burnside site for construction, so the bank worked out a property exchange with the Archdiocese of Portland. The bank purchased an old hotel on 6th and Burnside, gutted the 4-story structure and rebuilt it to suit the needs of the chapel [this is the present chapel at 601 West Burnside]. In the renovation process, the basement was designed as a clean-up center, with more appropriate facilities for the showers, laundry and clothing room. The property exchange took place sometime in 1972."

[See *From the Times: Clean-up Center* for additional information.]

[The Clean-up Center moved in 1987 to the Burnside Projects. See *Burnside Projects*.]

Communion

Also called both Holy Communion and Eucharist. The body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine that have been consecrated by a priest during Mass. Reception of Communion always involves the body (the Host or consecrated bread), whereas reception of the

- blood (the consecrated wine) is optional.
- Community. See *religious community*
- confirm (confirmation — the sacrament)  
 Act of conferring or of receiving the sacrament of confirmation in which it is believed the recipient receives special strength for life from the Holy Spirit in order to hold fast to his or her profession of faith and the way of living it requires.
- Congregation of Christian Brothers  
 International Catholic religious order of men founded by Irishman Edmund Rice (1762-1844) for the education and care of young people, especially those poor. Also called Christian Brothers and Irish Christian Brothers. <http://edmundrice.net>
- Congregation of Holy Cross  
 International Catholic religious order of men founded in 1837 by French priest Basil Moreau. Particularly known for work in education. Founded University of Notre Dame and University of Portland (Oregon). <http://www.holycrosscongregation.org/>
- conscientious objector (CO)  
 [Whenever conscientious objectors are referred to in this project, the reference is always to three and the same three of them. The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project.]  
 "Father Louis Weis, pastor at the Downtown Chapel during this time, provided the stipends of \$200 apiece [per month] for the two years the COs worked there [e.g. at the Drop-In Center and Last Chance Café]. The three of them were very much into this community work and served the community members well during their time there. [Fr. Weis is Fr. Harold Webster in the project. See *Downtown Chapel*, *Drop-In Center*, and *Last Chance Café*.]  
 "During these years, the Viet Nam war era, some of those who objected to the war and the draft, upon Selective Service Board review of their individual cases, were granted Conscientious Objector status and were allowed to put in two years of community service in lieu of two years in the Army. To qualify for the CO status, each had to provide a sponsor who would provide a position in a program that served the community. The sponsoring agency for these three COs was the Portland Council of Churches, which then placed the COs in our program in the Burnside area." [See *Drop-In Center* for more information on PCC.]
- convent  
 The place where a community of nuns lives.
- County Hospital  
 3171 S.W. Sam Jackson Park Road, Portland.  
 Known initially as Multnomah County Hospital, and since 1923 located on the campus of Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland, this medical facility takes patients even today who are indigent, some of whom are from Portland's Skid Road area (now called Old Town/Chinatown). In the early seventies, the County Hospital became part of the University Hospital complex of OHSU. The County Hospital was the main medical institution to which Kate referred many of the individuals she served on Skid Road in the seventies and eighties.
- CPR  
 Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, an emergency procedure administered to victims of cardiac arrest.
- D-**
- Dairy Queen  
 A chain of fast-food restaurants commonly associated with soft serve frozen ice cream.
- Dammasch State Hospital  
 Psychiatric hospital once located in Wilsonville, Oregon, 17 miles southwest of Portland. Opened in 1961; closed in 1995.
- Danmoore Hotel  
 For most of its history a low-income housing hotel located at 1217 S.W. Morrison in downtown Portland, in 2004 the Danmoore moved to a newly constructed building at 8 N.W. Eighth (Eighth and N.W. Burnside), a few blocks away. Operated by Central City Concern (CCC), the Danmoore is still considered affordable housing and has alcohol and drug-free units. CCC is the agency for which Kate worked as an admissions nurse in the nineties, at their Hooper Detox Center.
- decade (of the rosary). See *rosary*
- delirium tremens. See *d.t.'s*
- De Paul. See *De Paul Treatment Centers*
- De Paul Center. See *De Paul Treatment Centers*
- De Paul Treatment Centers  
 "De Paul works in partnership with individuals, families and communities seeking to create freedom from drug and alcohol addiction. De Paul Treatment Centers is marking its 27th year of providing chemical dependency treatment services to some of Oregon's most severely affected low-income adults and youth. [...] Established by the Portland Society of St. Vincent de Paul to provide housing to late-stage alcoholics on Portland's 'skid row,' [...]. The program was located in the 1907 Franklin Hotel at 1320 S.W. Washington St., Portland, which is the present location of De Paul's adult treatment center and administration. De Paul's second director, Steve Newton,



changed the agency's focus from providing food and housing to treating the disease of alcoholism beginning in 1977. A recovering alcoholic who was expelled from Notre Dame's Moreau Seminary, Newton's vision was to treat the homeless and the poor with the same methods that had proven effective with people who have health insurance and the ability to pay for treatment. The National Council on Alcoholism stated at the time that De Paul was the only agency in the country providing treatment to indigent, late-stage alcoholics. The organization was separately incorporated in 1978. The De Paul Youth Residential Treatment Center opened in 1985 [...]. Today the Youth Center continues to serve low-income youth from throughout northwestern Oregon with residential and outpatient programs and the De Paul Alternative School." [quote from De Paul Treatment Centers Web site in 2008] [www.depaultreatmentcenters.org](http://www.depaultreatmentcenters.org)

[Kate worked at De Paul from 1982-92 and Ron worked there from 1984-86. It is at De Paul that the two met, and without that encounter and their shared experiences there this project never would have been. Kate and Ron both regard De Paul with a certain affection and gratitude that goes far beyond simply serving as the birthplace of their relationship.]

[The following quote is from something Kate wrote in 1977 for a Holy Names Sister who used it in a presentation about her. By 1977 Kate was already volunteering as a nurse at Matt Talbot Center and was a salaried employee at Harmony House. She is referring to a period in 1977 that is likely either just before Steve Newton came to De Paul or in the very early stages of the treatment program he spearheaded.]

"The first part of the week and the first part of the day begins at St. Vincent de Paul Residence [this is in the same physical location as the current adult component of De Paul Treatment Centers, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth and S.W. Washington Street], which is a hotel with alcoholic treatment to some degree. The people cannot be drinking; they are encouraged to go to work, but they do have older people there also. It provides meals and referral service. They were funded through the public inebriate program, and that funding will discontinue at the end of this month. And this will cut back a lot of services that have been given for the men. And at this place I either take referrals from the staff or just go around and see what needs there are."

detox. See *detoxification center*

detox center. See *detoxification center*

detoxification center

#### *Hooper*

Formally known as the David. P. Hooper Detoxification Center and currently located at 20 N.E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Portland, the detox center began in 1971 and has grown in size and in variety of services through the years. It is one of many programs operated by Central City Concern (see below). Kate remembers when Hooper was first located on the north side of S.W. Pine Street in downtown Portland, between Second and Third Avenues, across from the county jail, which, at that time was at 222 S.W. Pine. In 1973, Multnomah County assumed management of what, until that year, had been the city's jail; Portland police headquarters was located on the same block as the jail, but on the Oak Street side. In 1983, both the county jail and police bureau moved into the then newly constructed Justice Center about ten blocks away, at S.W. Second and Main Street.

Hooper later moved from S.W. Pine to N.E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, which in effect was a move from the west end of the Burnside Bridge (where the majority of the stories of this project take place) to the east end of the bridge.

Kate worked at Hooper from 1972-74 as an outreach nurse and an evening staff nurse, and from 1992-98 as an admissions nurse.

#### *CHIERS*

Central City Concern Hooper Inebriate Emergency Response Service, also called the CHIERS Wagon, is a vehicle which picks up individuals who are inebriated on the streets of Portland and brings them to the Hooper Detox Center's sobering program.

[two quotes below about detox center are Kate's words and taken from stories in the project]  
"[...]during my first couple of years on Burnside, there was not yet a public detoxification center. If a person needed detoxification, he was taken to the county jail — usually referred to as 'the drunk tank' by the men — and he would be kept there for thirty days." [from Gary's story] [Kate related many years later that after a man detoxed (after the first few days in jail) he would be required to do work at the jail for the remainder of his thirty-day stay.]

"In the days before there was a detox center, the police would often pick up a man who was sleeping off a drunk on the streets; they would put him in the paddy wagon and take him to the 'drunk tank' in the county jail, where he would be kept for thirty days and then be released. With no treatment, no money, and no place to go, he would begin drinking again. There was sometimes an opportunity for a man who wanted to stay sober to go to Blanchet House where he would have

a place to sleep and meals, but he would be required to help at meal times and with the operation of feeding breakfast and lunch to hundreds of people daily. Also during that period, a halfway house called Harmony House provided housing to those who wanted to stay sober." [from Chris's story]

#### *Central City Concern*

"Mission: The Mission of Central City Concern is to provide pathways to self-sufficiency through active intervention in poverty and homelessness.

Philosophy: It is the core philosophy of Central City Concern that in order for a person to successfully achieve self-sufficiency, they must not only have access to housing, support services and employment opportunities, but also must be building positive relationships with those who have had common experiences and can offer support."

"Currently, CCC works in three broad areas: health and recovery services, housing and residential services and employment. Each of these are then divided into programs that meet the needs of special populations: people with substance abuse, mental health and/or primary healthcare issues, people living with HIV/AIDS, people involved with the criminal justice system, displaced workers, people lacking education and/or job skills, people with disabilities, criminal records, single adults, women who are pregnant, single parent families and people simply living on very low, fixed incomes. Services are linked so that no matter what door someone walks through, CCC staff has the ability to piece together what an individual needs in order to gain self-sufficiency and independence."

[two quotes above from Central City Concern Web site in 2008]

[www.centralcityconcern.org](http://www.centralcityconcern.org)

#### Dignity Mass

Mass at which there is special effort to make members of the gay Catholic community feel welcome, including gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender individuals.

#### diocesan priest. See *priest, Catholic*

#### Divine Office

Now more commonly called Liturgy of the Hours, this is the official public daily prayer of the Catholic Church. Present form dates back roughly to the fifth century. The chanting by monks and nuns in monasteries that is familiar to many is often of the Liturgy of the Hours. The complete Liturgy of the Hours is a multi-volume set of books (the English version used in the U.S. is four). All books together span and address the parts of the Church year and consist basically of hymns, psalms, prayers, and biblical and spiritual readings for various parts of the day — especially morning (lauds), mid-morning, mid-day, mid-afternoon, evening (vespers), and night. Often referred to as the breviary. Required of all priests and deacons and once prayed mainly by these and by religious brothers and sisters, it is now prayed also by many lay people.

#### Dominican

International catholic religious order, known commonly as the Dominicans and formally as the Order of Preachers for their emphasis on preaching. Founded by Dominic de Guzman (St. Dominic) in the early thirteenth century. <http://www.op.org/>

#### Downtown Chapel

Located at 601 West Burnside, Portland, the Roman Catholic Downtown Chapel (in 2012 renamed St. André Bessette Catholic Church) is in the heart of the same Skid Road area (now called Old Town/Chinatown) in which the majority of the stories of this project take place. Before this location, the chapel was located on the opposite (south) side of the street, at 516 W. Burnside, where the U.S. Bank Tower stands currently. See *Clean-up Center* for additional information on the chapel.

[quote below from Downtown Chapel Web site in 2008. The site at that time was

<http://www.downtownchapel.org/> but has since been changed to [www.saintandrechurch.org](http://www.saintandrechurch.org)

"The chapel neighborhood began to change in the 1960s. More transients and unemployed men arrived. So, a new drop-in center was opened in 1970 [in the chapel which, from 1945 to 1973, was located at 516 W. Burnside. The chapel had been at other locations in the area prior to 1945.] Then in 1971, negotiations started for another move — which was to be the last. ...] [... A new chapel was financed for the parish] at the corner of N.W. 6 th and West Burnside — the site of the old Glenwood Hotel. The new chapel was opened in February 1973. It also had residences for priests. And the basement had showers, washing machines and a service center for homeless men. Through the 1970s the chapel took on still more social work. [...] In 1982 the chapel was remodeled. Changes were made so it could better handle its growing social needs. The second floor had an auditorium and kitchen added. Food programs for the elderly and needy were set up on a regular basis. In 1987 the clean-up center moved from the chapel to the Burnside Projects [see *Burnside Projects*]. A hotel was opened for a short time in the basement in 1989. [...] [In 1989, also, the] Congregation of Holy Cross took over care of the parish ...].

"Today, the parish continues to provide a ministry of prayer, service, and education. Through our Open Door Ministries we provide a Morning Hospitality Program, a Food Pantry, and our Brother

Andre Café, which provides a warm meal every Friday night. [...]"

[information in paragraph below also gathered from Downtown Chapel Web site in 2008]  
The hospitality program offers such services as foot care, clothing & hygiene, blankets, hair cuts, phone use, laundry vouchers, job- and medical appointment-related bus tickets. The food pantry distributes food bags to neighbors in the area who live in single-room occupancies, subsidized apartments, or who are homeless.

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project and was assigned to the Downtown Chapel from 1968-1972.]

"The Downtown Chapel has always been rectory, worship space, and service space. The rectory at 516 W. Burnside was on the second floor, chapel on the first, and clean-up center services in the basement. [...] The Downtown Chapel was not a parish as such. It had no assigned territory, but provided Mass services primarily for the people who worked in the Downtown area. Masses were provided at 6:30 and 8:00 a.m., 12:05 and 5:30 p.m. daily, and three times on Sunday for travelers (or those who didn't want to go to their home parishes)."

#### Drop-in Center

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project.

The Drop-In Center moved three times in its first year of existence, 1970. Although Gil recalls below that the second and third moves were from Couch Street to Third Avenue, an undated Burnside Projects' flyer probably from the 1970s (see *From the Times: Service Center/Night Shelter*) states the moves to be the reverse — from Third to Couch. Since the flyer indicates the move from Third to Couch took place in September 1970, and since Kate began volunteering in the area in August of that year and has no recollection of the Third Avenue site, it would appear reasonable to favor the two moves in question as having been from Third to Couch, per the flyer.]

"The first all-night Drop-In Center was opened on Everett Street, between 3rd and 4th Avenues, on the south side of the street. The opening date there was March 1, 1970. The purpose of the center was to give the men and women on the street a warm place to get off the street for the night, with a hot cup of coffee. The room was a store front, approximately 16' wide and 40' deep. There was a half-bath on the right rear corner. The coffee pot was set up in the rear at the left.

"Before opening, I sent a letter to all the pastors in the Hub-CAP churches challenging them to come down to the Drop-In Center, bring coffee, and spend the night as a supervisor for the people there. [Hub-CAP was, in Gil's words "the ecumenical community outreach program sponsored by the Portland Council of Churches."] The hours were from 8 in the evening until 5 or 6 in the morning — hours when other programs in the area were closed. As I recall, all of the church pastors responded, and after the initial round of supervision, the churches provided volunteer supervisors from their congregations for the years that the center was open. Within a year, the center was moved from Everett Street to the first floor of the same building in which the Burnside Hotel was located [see *Burnside Hotel*] [see also the note above regarding the sequence of the second and third moves]. Jazz de Opus was a yuppie bar on the corner of 2nd and Couch [below the Burnside Hotel and currently a bar of another name], and the Drop-In Center took up residence on Couch [at 216 N.W. Couch], just to the west of the bar, directly below the hotel. We were there from the fall of 1970 (more or less) [September, according to the flyer mentioned in the note above] until we lost our lease [for the Drop-In, probably around September of 1972]. [...]"

"This time period coincided with the Vietnam War. Through the Council of Churches, we became the assigned program for 3 conscientious objectors [COs]. They were assigned to do community service with us for two years in lieu of military induction. [...] [Per Gil in a separate communication, "The Portland Council of Churches (PCC) was an association of churches of all denominations in the Portland area. During the 1960's, with the focus in the greater community upon Community Action Programs (CAP) to improve the neighborhood environments, and with the emphasis on ecumenical activities within the Catholic Church (an outgrowth of the Second Vatican Council), the PCC developed various XXX-CAP programs to focus the social concerns of its member churches in their immediate neighborhoods."]

"When we opened the Drop-In, I put out a call to the Hub-CAP churches, asking for pews to furnish the center. Lake Oswego Methodist had just replaced the pews in their church, so they volunteered to donate some pews. Two of our COs went out to the church to pick them up. They found the church — apparently no one was around, so they proceeded to the church and removed 6 or 8 pews from the church and headed back to the center. We quickly received a panicked phone call from the church secretary. Seems that the guys had removed some of the new pews from the church. They returned and reinstalled the shiny, new furniture and picked up the old ones.

"I always thought it poetic that we furnished the overnight sleep center with church pews. People have been sleeping in pews for centuries — why not use them for the center? The men and women came into the center and stretched out on them and under them — instant bunk beds.

"The center was then moved [around the corner] to 3rd Avenue, west side, between Burnside and Couch [at 25 N.W. 3rd Avenue] when we lost the lease on Couch Street. This operated the same way as the previous center, but with the addition of open daytime hours. Sister Kate St. Martin had come for dinner at the Burnside Hotel one evening with another Sister companion, and from that time on she was hooked! She brought her nursing, nurturing, caring skills to the area and worked out of the Drop-In Center, the Blanchet House, and the hotel opened by Blanchet House on Couch Street called the Matt Talbot Center, just to the west of the Burnside Hotel [the two buildings abut against each other]. [...]

"At the Couch and 3rd Avenue sites, the COs carried on other advocacy services for the men and women from the area. They helped the residents make contact with Social Security, SSI, VA, Welfare, Job Services and other assistance programs that offered the potential of help for the residents. [Job Services was, per Gil, a "State of Oregon job placement office that offered casual labor placements for those looking for work or for workers."] At the time, there was no neighborhood presence for these programs. Through the work of the COs, this began to change, as some of the service organizations came into the area to meet the people on their own turf, rather than requiring the clients to come to the bureaus' offices. This was the beginning of the services that are now (as I understand it) the chief focus of the programs in the area.

"Around 1972, the Drop-In Center moved from the 3rd Avenue site to a location on Everett Street [523 N.W. Everett Street], and became known as the Everett Street Drop-In Center [also Everett Street Service Center]. Location was on the north side of the street[...].

"I left the Downtown Chapel in February, 1972, and continued to work with Burnside Projects [of which the Drop-In Center was part] until the fall of 1973, when I left the program and went to work for the Human Resources Bureau of the City of Portland."

[Additional information from Kate: "During the day some of the men in the Drop-in Center would socialize and play cards. I used to provide tobacco, cigarette papers, and rollers for the men there who had none." (from Les' story).]

[See *From the Times: Drop-in Center* and *From the Times: Service Center/Night Shelter* for additional information.]

drunk tank

Jail or other police custody unit in which persons arrested for drunkenness are kept until sober.

dry-drunk syndrome

Symptoms present in some recovering alcoholics who have stopped drinking alcohol but who have not adequately embraced the principles of recovery, such that they display their old alcoholic behaviors and attitudes (e.g. they might anger easily, live chaotic daily lives, evidence unrealistic or grandiose thinking, frequently display unacceptable verbalizations and physical actions, show unusually high levels of intolerance, indecisiveness, or impulsiveness). Dry-drunk syndrome sometimes leads to relapse back into full-blown alcoholism.

d.t.'s, the

Known formally as delirium tremens, this is a medically serious component of withdrawal from alcohol in some individuals who have become physiologically dependent on alcohol, especially those, for example, who consume heavily daily over a period of months or years and then cease or significantly reduce alcohol intake. The brain and nervous system are negatively affected, and the individual may display such symptoms as confusion, hallucinations, restlessness, tremors. The d.t.'s can lead to seizures.

[two quotes below are Kate's words and taken from stories in the project]

"At times, when a person had been drinking very large amounts of alcohol, he would get to the stage where he *needed* a drink but it wouldn't stay down. Some told me that they would swallow a raw egg to settle their stomach in this situation. It was a sad, scary situation when a person *needed* a drink to stave off the possibility of going into the d.t.'s, but the alcohol wouldn't stay down." [from Chris's story]

"He would try to eat a little bit and slow down on the wine, but when he would get this sick the wine *itself* would make him sick, yet he needed it to keep from going into the d.t.'s or alcoholic seizures. It's a terrible state when the alcoholic gets so sick that the wine is needed in order to keep going, but it won't stay down, and the person has to keep drinking quite a bit before enough alcohol gets into their system to settle them down inside." [from Henry's story]

**-E-**

Easter

Sunday on which or period during which is celebrated the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ. Greatest and oldest Christian holy day.

ejaculation (religious prayer-form)

Also called aspiration, a short exclamatory form of prayer used to recall or otherwise keep the mind focused on God or other spiritual themes. Some are traditional; others composed by the individual. Examples: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"; "Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, inflame our hearts with love for you!"; "Thanks be to God!"

ejaculatory prayers. See *ejaculation*

Emanuel Hospital

Now called Legacy Emanuel Hospital & Health Center, this hospital is located in north Portland.

enabler

Individual or system which, by its behavior or policies, allows for and in effect encourages, unconsciously or not, undesirable behavior. In the case of alcoholism, for example, a family member enables by not saying anything to an alcoholic member who is consuming alcohol; a passerby enables by giving money to an inebriated street person who then uses it to purchase a drink; a friend enables by loaning money to an alcoholic to buy food or gasoline for his car after the alcoholic has spent his food or gas money to purchase alcohol. The actions of the person who is enabling delay the consequences of the alcoholic's behavior and thus increase the likelihood of making his or her problem worse.

enabling (behavior). See *enabler*

Ensure

A line of nutritional drinks.

Estate Hotel

Located at 225 N.W. Couch Street, Portland, this hotel is owned and operated by Central City Concern and is transitional housing for individuals in early recovery. The Estate is across the street from what was once the Matt Talbot Center, at 222 N.W. Couch Street, where Kate volunteered many years as a nurse and many of the stories of this project take place.

Eucharist. See *Mass* and *Communion*

Everett Street Service Center. See *Burnside Projects*

Eye Opener (meeting)

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that begins early in the morning (commonly between 6:00 and 7:00).

**-F-**

Faith and Sharing Retreat

Faith-based, gospel-focused retreat modeled after retreats begun in the late sixties by Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche movement (see <http://www.larcheusa.org/>), and intended especially to include participants with disabilities and those who share life and faith with them. See also *retreat (religious)*.

Fatima

Reference is to the reported apparitions and messages of the Virgin Mary to three peasant children near Fatima, Portugal in 1917 and to related events, believed by many to be miraculous.

feast day

Day reserved by the Church to specially honor God, the saints, and sacred events and mysteries (e.g. Easter, Christmas, Saints Peter & Paul, Pentecost, Our Lady of Guadalupe, All Saints Day). Also sometimes called a holy day.

Feast of the Assumption

Feast day on August 15th commemorating the Catholic dogma that the Virgin Mary was assumed (taken up) into heaven body and soul at the end of her earthly life.

Final Profession (of religious vows)

Commitment for life to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, made by Sisters, Brothers, and priests of religious communities.

First Communion

Generally, reception of Communion for the first time. Most frequently refers to reception by children once they have reached the age of reason.

First Friday devotions

Devotional practice, including reception of Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month and belief that successful completion brings certain special favors to the participant. Origins with St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, seventeenth century French mystic nun and the promises she claimed that Jesus made to her regarding devotion to him.

flophouse. See *Holm Hotel*

Foster. See *Foster Hotel*

Foster Hotel

Located at 216 N.W. Third Avenue, Portland, the Foster was renamed Lyndon Musolf Manor in the late 1990s. In the 1970s this hotel was low-income/affordable housing for a variety of individuals, many of whom were elderly and/or had disabilities, and the same is still the case in

2008. The Foster was one of the main hotels on Skid Road that Kate was in and out of frequently in the 1970s and 80s, visiting and helping many individuals. Below, in her own words from various stories of the project, Kate describes the Foster as it was in her day.

"The Foster was not alcohol-free at that time." [from Frank's story]

"This was one of the first hotels renovated in the area in the late seventies or early eighties. What they did was take two of the original sleeping quarter rooms and make them into one little apartment. Each apartment had a shower, toilet, and wash basin. There was a small closet for clothes and a little recessed area with a couple of drawers and a place where they could also hang some clothes. There was a two-burner stove without an oven, and a little cupboard above it for canned goods. Under the sink and stove was a small refrigerator. They had a table, two chairs, and a bed. These were basic furnishings, and the apartment was very sparse, but it seemed like heaven to the tenants. Most of them had come from Blanchet House, or they were individuals who had had no home, who had been sleeping under the bridge, or who, for so long, had been living in the Chicken Coop Hotel. They were now beginning to receive a fixed income or SSI; this was the first time they received an income because of age or disability, and they really were so pleased with this." [from Henry's story]

[A different description of another individual's apartment:] "The Foster Hotel is now [1986] one of the subsidized housing units operated by the Housing Authority of Portland. It was one of the first such units for Skid Road people. When it was renovated, they made small efficiency apartments. The units have a linoleum flooring and a little bathroom with a toilet, wash basin, and shower. There's a small, two-burner stove, and, under the stove, a very small refrigerator with a small freezing compartment. There's a sink by the stove, and a little cupboard space with a shelf and two drawers. The apartments have a bed and basic furniture (most of the Housing Authority's units were unfurnished). This housing was a simple arrangement, but for many of the men who had only known the flophouse, or living under the bridge or at Blanchet House, it was more than they had experienced for many years. And they had their own room." [from Carl's story]

"You had to use a key in that [the Foster's] elevator in order to keep street people from going up, because that hotel was much more accessible to street people than many of the other Housing Authority hotels were." [from Ivan Miles' story]

[See *From the Times : Housing II* for more information on the Foster.]

Franciscan

Member of any of many religious orders of men and women whose way of living and religious commitments are modeled particularly on the spirituality and rule of life of (Saint) Francis of Assisi (1181?-1226).

Fred Meyer (One Stop Shopping)

Multi-department-store chain.

## **-G-**

Gamblers Anonymous

"Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem." [from Gamblers Anonymous web site in 2012] This recovery program includes the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (see *Alcoholics Anonymous*).

[www.gamblersanonymous.org/](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/)

Glory Be

Common doxology or prayer of praise to God.

"*Glory (be) to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*"

Good Shepherd Sisters

International Catholic religious order of women founded by (Saint) Mary Euphrasia Pelletier (1796-1868), French nun. "One person is of more value than a world" is one of their guiding principles, and they "admit to a preference for those who in any way have been marginalized or left behind, anyone who has been abused or neglected, especially women and children" (quotes from Good Shepherd Sisters Web site in 2008). <http://www.goodshepherdsisters.org/>

Grace at Meals

Prayer before meals invoking God's blessing on the food and on those who will partake of it; also prayer of thanks to God after meals.

Grace before Meals. See *Grace at Meals*

Gresham (Oregon)

City located approximately 11 miles east of Portland, and part of Portland metropolitan area.

guardian angel and prayer to

Prayer said to one's guardian angel, believed by many to be a spiritual being assigned by God to protect and guide an individual through life.

Gus's Café. See *Old Town Café*

## **-H-**

### habit (religious)

Distinctive garb of men and women religious and priests of religious orders, with specific details peculiar to each religious order. Still worn by many, in formal traditional or in modified form; no longer worn by many others.

### Hail Mary

Very common, traditional prayer to Mary, mother of Jesus Christ:

*"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."*

### Harmony House

[The information on Harmony House provided below is a composite of several quotes of Kate. These texts have been pulled from various places within the project. Since available material on Harmony House appeared to be very sparse except for Kate's accounts, it seemed more desirable and perhaps more interesting to use her own words here rather than to re-write a single running account using her words as the source. As a result, the transitions between quotes may not be as smooth as could have been otherwise, and the reader will experience some redundancy. The location of each quote is included at its conclusion.]

"The program was begun [in 1970 or 1971, in Portland] by a group of [three] recovering alcoholics who had received a grant to set up a simple rehabilitation program[/halfway house] for men. The program didn't function too well at this point because not all the men worked, which meant that there was not as much money available to the house as there would have been otherwise to feed the men, keep supplies stocked, and keep the program going.

[...] [T]he Kerby Street House [...] was one of two houses that formed the Harmony House group at that time. That house has now been leveled, and the area has become part of the expansion of Emanuel Hospital." [from Alan's story.] [The second house was at the corner of S.E. Twentieth and Taylor Streets, northwest corner, facing Taylor. It was eventually also razed and is now a community-use garden for growing produce.]

"Harmony House is the most encouraging part of the work that I do. The program [...] consists of two houses, halfway houses for alcoholics, and the program director entered the program almost seven years ago. He is a recovered alcoholic with five years sobriety, almost five and a half years now. We have several people in the program that also have any place from one to five years sobriety. And the idea behind Harmony House, the philosophy here, is that a man can return to society, a successful way of living, happily, without the use of alcohol, a satisfying life without this. The people [men] are supposed to be self-supporting, because we feel that the work program is a very important part of their therapy. We are licensed, and we also I think have a good credibility and are highly respected from what we hear from different agencies, state and city, county agencies that help fund us. We don't receive much in the line of funding. We are applying for some funding, because it's difficult to run a program like this on just the income from the clients." [from a text Kate wrote in 1977 for one of her Holy Names Sisters, who used it in a presentation.]

[By 1977, the two houses mentioned above were those at S.E. Twentieth and Taylor Streets and on S.E. Thirty-ninth Avenue, a few blocks north of Division. At some point during this general period a third house was added, in Oregon City, a town south of Portland, such that all three houses for a while were operating at the same time. In addition, yet one more house may have opened later (mid to late 1980s or after this?), in Hillsboro, a town west of Portland.]

"[Harmony House initially] was only loosely organized. [...] The program in those early years consisted of house meetings, staying sober, and looking for paid employment. [...] It was a very unpretentious program. As the years passed, the government became involved with federal funding, which resulted in the inevitable paperwork and more accountability. More board members were added in time, which I too was, in addition to being a counselor and general support person. Donations used to come once in a while, but we tried to encourage the men to find a job as a means of supporting themselves and the program. They didn't have to pay very much in rent (I think it might have been twenty or thirty dollars a week); it was very little at first, and then as times got better or the men were earning a little more, they would be asked to pay a little bit more." [from Scott's story]

"The program was low-key: the men were expected to go to work if they could; they had group[/house] meetings, and they met individually for counseling with some of the staff (including me at that time). The men didn't have to come to us from detox; they could move into the House just on the basis that they were alcoholic and wanted to remain sober." [from Matthew's story]

"The most responsible man at Harmony House was usually selected as manager of the house. We'd take whoever had the longest sobriety and looked like he could probably manage." [from Charlie's story]

[Harmony House had an administrative office for a time at 2005 S.E. Hawthorne Boulevard (upstairs), which is only a few blocks from the Taylor Street house. Since at a certain point the Taylor Street house, which had been housing about nine men, no longer met the requirements for a residential facility, it became administrative offices and a place to hold board meetings, and the Hawthorne office likely closed as a result.]

"We kept all our records, files, and equipment there [referring to the Taylor Street house after it could no longer serve as a residential facility and house the men]. We used the back room as the manager's office, the dining room as an administrative office with our records and files, and the living room for meetings and counseling sessions. And upstairs lived Steve; he was the only one holding that place down, and he was there so that the house wouldn't be open to vandalism." [from Steve's story] [At whatever point Steve stopped living at the house, Kate and Sandra (one of Kate's Holy Names Sisters) lived there for a year.]

"It is important to know that Harmony House was not an alcoholism treatment center such as De Paul Center. It was an alcohol- and drug-free environment in which everybody who was on the staff was a recovering alcoholic, and the people were expected to go to the house meeting. [...] [In the early years the men were expected to go to AA meetings. Later this requirement was relaxed in favor of just house meetings, which in effect served as a type of AA meeting.] It was a supportive atmosphere and a supportive group of individuals, and that was about the sum of it. Some of the men did very, very well; they stayed with the program long enough, they got a job, and then they supported the program by paying for their room and board at the house. Others, if they didn't look like they were making efforts to look for or take jobs, or if they drank, would be asked to leave. It was rare that people were asked to leave if they were trying." [from Kirk's story]

HBO (channel)

Home Box Office is a for-pay entertainment network channel for televisions, computers, and other devices.

Henry Building

Low-income housing for single adults, at 309 S.W. Fourth Avenue, Portland, currently managed by Central City Concern. See *detoxification center* for more on Central City Concern.

Hillsboro (Oregon)

City located approximately 15 miles west of Portland, and part of Portland metropolitan area.

HIV Day Center

Multi-service daytime center in Portland serving individuals living with HIV/AIDS whose income is low. [http://www.emoregon.org/HIV-day\\_center.php](http://www.emoregon.org/HIV-day_center.php)

HIV disease

Human Immunodeficiency Virus disease. This is an infectious disease which, over time, can lead to AIDS by destroying too many of the body's infection and disease fighting cells. See also *AIDS*

Hobo Parade

The Hobo Parade, later called Homeless Parade, began in 1980, partly as a reaction to Portland's Rose Festival Parade (see *Rose Festival*) and the negative intersections experienced between the police and homeless individuals who would be in the same basic area as the Rose Parade and related activities, and partly to raise community awareness and understanding of homelessness and of the dignity of those who experience it. The parade included the selection of a King and Queen of the Hobos [or of the Homeless]. The parade was sponsored by the non-profit Burnside Community Council (see *Baloney Joe's*), and proceeds were to benefit the charitable work of the council. The Homeless Parade was held in 1988, which may have been its final year.

Holm Hotel (also called Chicken Coop Hotel, Chicken Coop, Chicken Coop Flophouse, Chicken Coop Flop)

9 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland.

[See introductory comment for Harmony House. Same case for Holm Hotel.]

"On the southwest corner of Second and West Burnside was the Holm Hotel, with its entrance on Second Street. [There were a lot of stairs to go up.] The men in the Holm [...] did not have to be sober to stay there; they could drink and they could be drunk. While the Holm and the Western had separate street entrances, you could go through to one small area of the Western from the third floor of the Holm [the Western hotel was south of the Holm and next door to it]." [from "Beginnings" story]

"[The Holm and the Western were]... right across from Salvation Army [which is still there in 2008]; but, at the time I started on Burnside [1970], the Western had been closed down. When I think of it now, I realize there were fire traps that existed in some of the buildings on Skid Road at the time; you could have really gotten trapped if there ever had been a fire in one of them." [from Randall's story]



"The hotel was a maze of rooms, and it could be a task just to go around and know where everyone was." [from Victor Haddock's story]

"It [the Holm] was nicknamed "Chicken Coop" because of the chicken wire that covered the top of each partitioned sleeping space. The main purpose of the wire was for ventilation and lighting. It also prevented a man from tossing his empty wine bottle into the next partitioned space when he was finished. Each room had a door that the occupant could lock. The Holm was a flophouse where a man could stay for one night at a time, for fifty or sixty cents." [from Chris's story]

"He [Nate] was in a large, large room which was subdivided into smaller, partitioned rooms with chicken coop wire over them. Some of the partitioned rooms were along the window side, and they were brighter and cost more. There was an aisle and then a big square in the middle of this large room, and that square was subdivided into small rooms. There was one little light bulb up in the ceiling of the entire space, so you can imagine how little light there was. These inside rooms were usually the kind that would be rented on a one-night basis to people who just wanted to stay a night or two; those who were there for a longer term had the outside rooms. In the early days when I first started down on Burnside [1970], the outside rooms were sixty cents a night and the others were fifty. When I'd send people to that hotel, Oliver [the manager — see Oliver's story] would always give me the rooms for half-price or less, even much less, in spite of the fact that he took a loss on this favor. I would pay the bill, then, at the end of the month." [from Nate's story]

"This was one of the hotels where I could just give a man a note that said, "If you have room, will you put so and so up for three to five nights?" and they would do it. They would mark down the number of nights that he stayed, and then at the end of the month I'd pay the bill for that person and for however many others I might have sent. Oliver was very good about helping me in this way, and he gave me cut rates (which Salvation Army did *not* do). He reduced the rates for me, and he kept them much, much lower, even when he had to keep raising prices for others because of heating and utilities. There were no women in that hotel at all; in fact, they didn't even let women up. But Oliver got to know me and trust me — and the fact that I was a nun I know had a lot to do with allowing me in." [from Oscar's story]

[See *From the Times: Housing V* for photos of a typical chicken coop flophouse and of one Holm Hotel cubicle.]

holy card

Small prayer card, usually with prayer or other religious sentiment on one side and related picture on other. Used commonly to promote particular religious devotion or thought or as remembrance of deceased individual.

Holy Communion. See *Communion*

Holy Cross Associate(s)

Catholic volunteer organization founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross and whose mission includes "to engage lay people to grow in the life of Christ through Christian service, spirituality, simple living and community" (quote from Holy Cross Associates Web site in 2008). Current site is <http://www.brothersofholycross.com/Associates.htm>

Holy Cross order. See *Congregation of Holy Cross*

Holy Father. See *Pope*

Holy Names Community. See *Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*. See also *Community*

Holy Names Sisters. See *Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*

Holy Spirit (also called Holy Ghost)

In Christianity, the third person of the triune Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Commonly associated with God's spirit or movement within individuals, with spiritual grace, sanctification, and spiritual gifts.

Home Hotel

16 S.W. Third Avenue, Portland.

[See introductory comment for Harmony House. Same case for Home Hotel. In addition, while the Home still functions as a hotel, it is important to note that the comments below regard primarily the 1970s and the situation may be much different today.]

"At the opposite end of the block from the Holm, on the southeast corner of Third and Burnside, was the Home Hotel, which had its entrance on Third Street. The men in the Holm and the Home did not have to be sober to stay there; they could drink and they could be drunk." [from "Beginnings" story]

"By contrast [with the Holm Hotel], the Home [...] had more stable residents and slightly larger rooms, with regular ceilings." [from Chris's story]

"The Home was one of several rundown hotels in the area that people could stay in for a night or two. These hotels were usually dirty, dark, and kind of smelly. Some of them, I found out later,

- were owned by some of the very wealthy people in Portland. The buildings had steadily deteriorated over the course of many years before any improvements were made. Perhaps the owners foresaw that these properties would later be developed for housing and business [as part of urban renewal and gentrification], and so would increase in value. I remember feeling angry when I realized that the owners were benefitting financially at the expense of poorly lit, poorly ventilated, poorly heated buildings that had been left to deteriorate." [from Ed & Gina's story]
- "At the head of the stairs was an office and bedroom for the manager." [quote originally from Arnold's story but later omitted]
- Hooper. See *detoxification center*
- Hooper Detox(ification) (Center). See *detoxification center*
- Host. See *Communion*
- Housing Authority. See *Housing Authority of Portland*
- Housing Authority of Portland (HAP)  
 "HAP is committed to providing safe, decent and affordable housing to individuals and families in Multnomah County, Oregon, who face income or other life challenges." [quote from Housing Authority of Portland Web site in 2008 <http://www.hapdx.org/>] In 2013 [www.homeforward.org](http://www.homeforward.org)
- HUD (U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development)  
 "HUD's mission is to increase home ownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. " [quote from HUD Web site in 2008] <http://www.hud.gov/>
- Hunthausen Peace Award  
 Award named for retired Catholic Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle, known for his efforts in the areas of peace and justice.
- I-**  
*indulgence*  
 In Catholic theology, a way to lessen or take away what is called the "temporal punishment" that remains for sins even after the guilt associated with those sins has been forgiven (by confession to a priest, for example). Temporal punishment is a correction, of sorts, of the consequences of one's sinful actions. When a person steals, for example, then later asks forgiveness of the individual who was stolen from, the forgiveness (mercy) granted eliminates the associated guilt (as does the confession indicated above) but the person still needs to make reparation or restitution (justice), correcting the consequences (the temporal punishment) of his or her actions. Indulgences are a way for an individual to satisfy the temporal punishment for his or her sins in this life rather than in purgatory (see entry), or for the sins of a deceased person whose soul is in purgatory. Indulgences frequently involve prayers, compassionate actions, fasting, or almsgiving.
- Irish Christian Brother See *Congregation of Christian Brothers*
- J-**  
*jack-roll*  
 To rob, often including physical harm and sometimes while an individual is inebriated. A term in common use during Kate's time on Skid Road.
- jack-roller*  
 A person who jack-rolls. See *jack-roll*
- J. Arthur Young Award  
 Award Kate received in 1970 or 1971 from the Beaverton (Oregon) Area Chamber of Commerce for her dedicated community service on Portland's Skid Road, including work with Skid Road alcoholics and drug addicts who were from the Beaverton area. Award included a purse of perhaps a few hundred dollars. See *From the Times: Award* for photo and brief article.
- Jesuit  
 Member of an international Catholic religious order of men, formally known as the Society of Jesus, founded in 1540 by Spaniard (Saint) Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). Jesuits are commonly associated with education and with the Spiritual Exercises which were developed by Ignatius and regard spiritual discernment and the deepening of one's faith experience. <http://www.jesuit.org/>
- Jesuit novice. See *novice (religious)*
- Jesuit Volunteer. See *Jesuit Volunteer Corps*
- Jesuit Volunteer Corps  
 "... Jesuit volunteers are called to the mission of serving the poor directly, working for structural change in the United States, and accompanying people in developing countries. The challenge to Jesuit volunteers is to integrate Christian faith by working and living among the poor and marginalized, by living simply and in community with other Jesuit Volunteers, and by examining the causes of social injustice. Since 1956 the Jesuit Volunteer Corps has worked in collaboration with Jesuits, whose spirituality the volunteers incorporate in their work, community, and prayer life..." (quote from Jesuit Volunteer Corps Web site in 2008). <https://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/>
- Joyce Hotel

322 S.W. 11th Avenue, Portland.

-K-

-L-

Last Chance Café

[The following quote was taken from information provided by Gil Lulay in 2008. Gil, a former Catholic priest, is Fr. Jim Lambert in this project. Per Gil, the Last Chance Café opened most probably during the last quarter of 1970 or possibly at the start of 1971, and it likely closed at the end of 1971.]

"It [the café] started as a daytime response to some of the first-aid type needs of the area residents. The most pressing need was for first-aid type medical attention. Cuts, abrasions, blisters, open sores were common occurrences with the men and women who lived on the streets. Most of these went untreated — of lesser concern to the wounded as they tried to cope with their daily struggle for survival (something to drink, to eat, a place to spend the night). There was seemingly no end to the problems that the men and women brought in off the street — some of them were very simple needs that a little time and attention could alleviate. The conscientious objectors were outstanding in their responses to these people. The café got its name from its role as a last chance source of nourishment for the clients. The staff hustled soup and sandwiches for the hungry that came to them."

[When asked on another occasion what he meant by "last chance source of nourishment," Gil responded with the information quoted below.]

"The meals for the residents of the area often came with a limitation or a catch. Blanchet House served breakfast and lunch only. The Portland Rescue Mission and the Union Gospel Mission required attendance at chapel before the meal. If they missed chapel, they missed the meal. If they came in, they were in for the night (if they wanted to maintain their standing with the mission).

"If you had a street life-style, time schedules and restrictive conditions were not high on a list of daily goals. Hunger was constantly there for those who were more committed to alcohol and to upward mobility (or more in need of alcohol than they were of the approval of others). They couldn't always eat — the digestive system sometimes reacts violently to the presence of food when it has seen too much alcohol flow by. The café attempted to provide a bowl of soup (or sandwich) on the client's schedule rather than on the kitchen's schedule."

[The two quotes below are Kate's words and taken from stories in the project.]

"Another one of the fellows from the group of conscientious objectors opened what was called the Last Chance Café, which, in effect, was a meal service operation where men could get coffee and a bowl of soup (or chili, depending on the day). The Café was located on the south side of Couch Street, between Second and Third, and was below the then Burnside Hotel [Gil Lulay believes the café may also have been located for a time on N.W. Second Avenue, street level, also below the Burnside Hotel; this, in effect, would put it just around the corner from Kate's placement of it. If this is so, the café likely quickly moved to the location on Couch Street]. The men could get this meal for twenty-five cents. If they didn't have that much money, they could pay whatever they had or use a voucher from me, which was a simple note that would allow them to get the meal free.

"My use of the space in the Last Chance Café came to an end in 1971 or 1972." [This was when the café closed and by which time the Matt Talbot Center had opened at the end of the same block and Kate had begun to volunteer there.] [from "Beginnings" story]

"I mentioned in a previous story that at one time, in the back of the Last Chance Café, I would meet with some of the street people who would want to see me about some medical problem or other need. This was during the Vietnam War when some conscientious objectors had to put in community service. One of these conscientious objectors had opened a little space near the entrance to the Burnside Hotel and called it the Last Chance Café. Street people could get soup or chili, and coffee, and I believe bread, for twenty-five cents or less. In the back of this, in a little dark room, I had a small area to work in. It had no running water and just one light bulb hanging from the ceiling. I think I only spent time there during the lunch hour, around noon. The café itself probably didn't last longer than a year, if that. I would simply see a few people who would come to see me. I would do things like make referrals to other services, call for transportation, and distribute simple, over-the-counter medications such as remedies for pain and colds." [from Paul's story]

lauds. See *Divine Office*

Librium

Tranquillizer used to treat anxiety, as well as symptoms of withdrawal in acute alcoholism (including the d.t.'s and seizures).

limbo

Refers most commonly to a Catholic belief held by some, but which is not part of Church dogma,

- that children who have died without receiving baptism (essential to salvation) go to a special place in the afterlife, where there is no suffering but which is not heaven proper.
- Little League Baseball (& Softball)  
A non-profit organization in the United States that organizes local youth baseball and softball leagues both in the U.S. and in other parts of the world.
- liturgy  
The many official public worship services of the Church, presided over by a priest or other representative, including, for example, the celebration of Mass; administering of baptism, marriage, and other sacraments; benediction; and recitation of the Divine Office. Often used alone to refer to the Mass.
- Loaves and Fishes (Centers)  
Non-profit, non-sectarian agency in the Portland, Oregon tri-county area which delivers "meals on wheels" to homebound senior citizens. Seniors who are able may also be served the meals at thirty-plus Loaves and Fishes centers. <http://feedseniors.org/>
- Lord's Prayer  
Christian prayer which traces its origins to Jesus Christ.  
*"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."* Sometimes added is: *"For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever."*

## **-M-**

- Macdonald Center (Maybelle Clark Macdonald Center)  
605 N.W. Couch Street, Portland  
"The Macdonald Center fosters the sacredness and dignity of all individuals, builds community by breaking down isolation through outreach and hospitality, and provides assisted-living for low-income residents in an urban setting. Through service, education and research, the Macdonald Center raises public awareness about the challenging health and life issues faced by individuals who are homeless and poor. This work of the Macdonald Center is nourished by a faith tradition that identifies with those who are poor, isolated, and in need." [quote from Maybelle Clark Macdonald Center Web site in 2008] <http://www.macdcenter.org/>  
As their brochure in 2007 states, "Our award winning urban Assisted Living Facility (100% Medicaid) is the first of its kind in the nation. [...] We hope our facility will serve as a model for other urban centers."
- According to Kate and referring to the center: "Initially it was in the basement of the Butte Hotel. You would go into the basement from the street, on the north side of this building. They had comfortable chairs and a radio, television, and coffee, and mostly men would come in. It was a place to get off the streets — a drop-in center — and it was called the MacDonald Center at that time, after Maybelle. I don't know when it transferred to the downstairs of the Downtown Chapel. And then, a little over a year ago [1992], they built the new building on Sixth and Couch. They do a tremendous service to the people with mental illness or chronic disabilities, and they still continue to give clothing and food stuffs (when available) to others who come in." [from the interview question on the social justice involvement of the Catholic Church on Skid Road]
- Macdonald, Maybelle Clark. See *Macdonald Center*
- Madeleine convent, The. See *Madeleine parish, The*
- Madeleine parish, The  
Catholic parish in northeast Portland that for years had a convent of Sisters.
- maintenance drinker  
"A maintenance drinker [...] is one who has to begin his day with a drink, and who then continues drinking all day. To put it simply, a maintenance drinker is someone who lives to drink and drinks to live. When I say "drinks to live," I mean that without the alcohol he can go into severe tremors, the d.t.'s, or an alcohol seizure." [from Dan's story]
- maintenance drinking. See *maintenance drinker*
- Marlena's (Marlene's) Tavern  
125 N.W. Sixth Avenue, Portland.
- Marshall (Union) Manor  
2020 N.W. Northrup Street, Portland.
- Mary  
In the context of this project, the mother of Jesus Christ.
- Maryknoll Sisters  
International Catholic religious order of women founded in the United States in 1912 by Massachusetts-born Mary Josephine Rogers(1882-1955), religious name Mother Mary Joseph. "Maryknoll Sisters are committed to crossing boundaries, whether cultural, social, religious, geographic or economic to proclaim the Good News of the Reign of God." "After handing over most of our schools, hospitals, and other institutions to local lay leaders, we work in smaller numbers in more places and in non-structured ministries such as basic Christian communities,

adult education, leadership training, teaching English in China, fostering income-generating projects, and working with people who live with HIV/AIDS." [both quotes from Maryknoll Sisters Web site in 2008] <http://sisters.maryknoll.org/>

#### Marylhurst

When Kate uses this term she is referring primarily to the convent and main administrative offices of the Oregon province of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (her religious order), located at Marylhurst, Oregon, about ten miles south of Portland. The immediately surrounding grounds contain The Christie School (a psychiatric residential treatment center for children, founded by the Sisters); Mary's Woods (a retirement community developed by the Sisters); and Marylhurst University (founded by the Sisters in 1893).

#### Maryville Nursing Home

Senior care facility in Beaverton, Oregon, opened in 1963 by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and still operated by them in 2008. This is the same religious order of women that Kate first joined in 1935, at age fourteen.

#### Mass

Primary act of worship of the Catholic Church, celebrated daily. Also called the Eucharist. Among its many components are Penitential Rite (acknowledgment of one's sins and asking God's pardon); Gloria (hymn of praise to God); Liturgy of the Word (readings from Old and New Testaments of Bible); sermon; Creed (profession of faith); Liturgy of the Eucharist (during which consecration of the bread and wine occurs); reception of the Eucharist (the consecrated bread and wine); and dismissal or sending back into the world to do good.

#### Mass in Time of AIDS

A Mass that especially welcomed those who were HIV-positive or had AIDS. Begun by a local Catholic priest, the Mass was originally held at Koinonia House (also called Campus Christian Ministry at the time, at Portland State University). It transferred to the then nearby HIV Day Center (see *HIV Day Center*) in southwest Portland and finally to St. Stephen Episcopal Church. This special Mass was held approximately once a week from about the late 1980s until 1996 or so.

#### Mass of Healing

A Mass at which those who are in need of healing come forth for special prayers and support.

#### matins. See *Divine Office*

#### Matt Talbot (the hotel/center). See *Matt Talbot Center*

#### Matt Talbot (the person)

Matt Talbot was born in Ireland. He was an alcoholic who sobered up "cold turkey" with the help of a friend of his who was a priest. He died in 1925 on his way to Mass, which he attended daily because he believed that it gave him the strength he needed in order to stay sober. He has served as a model for many recovering alcoholics since. The case for Matt Talbot's canonization (declaration that he is a saint) is in progress, and the title "Venerable," conferred on him by the Church in the 1970s, is a step in that process.

#### Matt Talbot Center

[Located at 222 N.W. Couch Street, Portland, the center opened in 1971 and closed in March or later of 1981. After a fire in Matt Talbot on 1/13/1977, which damaged part of Kate's office there, she temporarily worked out of the Estate Hotel across the street until the center was repaired and reopened.

The quote below is from the "Beginnings" story.]

"In order to take care of the tenants who were displaced when the Western Hotel was closed, a group of individuals that was involved with Burnside Projects secured use of some space which eventually became the Matt Talbot Center.

"This space was located on the southeast corner of Third and Couch, above the Old Town Café (which used to be called Gus's Café). At the opposite end of the same block, on Couch and Second, starting on the second floor, was the Burnside Hotel (which is where La Patisserie coffee house is located currently). The Burnside Hotel and the Matt Talbot Center together took up the entire side of the block between Second and Third Streets on Couch, above the storefronts.

"The space for Matt Talbot Center was very old, and in terrible — just ungodly — shape. You cannot believe the awful shape it was in. They fixed it up and turned it into low-income housing for the men. And by low-income housing I mean two and a half dollars a week, fifty cents a day, or, if the occupants couldn't pay that much, nothing. The occupants would have to remain sober in order to stay there.

"Sean Simons was, for a short time, the first director of Matt Talbot, and Brother Eric Hobbs, a Jesuit, came on the scene soon after.

"It was when Eric came that the name of the center was chosen. Matt Talbot was a man who lived in Ireland. He was an alcoholic who sobered up "cold turkey," and he served as a model for

many other alcoholics. He also attended daily Mass because he believed that it gave him the strength he needed in order to stay sober.

"Eric got a couple of volunteers from the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and other volunteers, to work there. Matt Talbot Center was good for many of the younger occupants — I'd say those between twenty and thirty-five years of age. They did well there, let me put it that way. They received guidance and counseling. There wasn't a recovery program in place exactly, but the men were required to stay sober and not to smoke pot (which wasn't quite as prevalent as it is now). [Kate states in Esteban's story that for men who relapsed and were asked to leave the center it wasn't too difficult to get back in once they quit drinking.]

"After the building was renovated, a little room on the second floor was set up to serve as both a clinic and a social service room for me when my use of the space in the Last Chance Café came to an end in 1971 or 1972.

"The clinic had a shelved storage unit for over-the-counter medications and other medical supplies. There was a desk, and there were several chairs. Eric later had a wash basin installed, which was helpful for dressing changes, among other things. Sometimes there would be so many people waiting to see me that Eric decided eventually to put a bench in the hall outside the clinic for people to sit on while waiting their turn. I had a phone. And Eric had a small seven- to eight-inch hole cut in the wall (low on the wall where the phone line came in), so he could hear me calling through in case of an emergency — if I needed help quickly with one of the men, for example, or if I felt threatened.

"Such was my office. The room was simply provided to me; I never had to pay anything for rent.

"I had a lot of over-the counter medications donated — usually in the form of samples — from such places as drug stores and sales people. I also used my ministry funds for medications and medical supplies that were needed.

"People would come up to see me every day — between twelve and fifteen people on some days. Some would come for dressings and other nursing services, some for appointments with local health clinics, some for housing, transportation, money, cigarettes, clothing — you name it. It became a place of many services for the people. I functioned partly as nurse there, partly as social worker, partly as counselor. My services at Matt Talbot were on a volunteer basis.

"That was the last little downtown clinic/office that I was in, except for a temporary place across the street in the Estate Hotel after there was a fire in Matt Talbot in 1980."

Meals-on-Wheels

Any of many programs nationally (not always called by this name) that deliver prepared meals to individuals who are unable to prepare meals for themselves for various reasons (e.g. age, disability, convalescence). <http://www.mowaa.org/>

Milwaukie (Oregon)

City located approximately 6 miles south of Portland, and part of Portland metropolitan area.

ministry

In the religious context in which Kate uses the term, to serve God by serving others.

mission

Organization, often faith-based, that offers help to the needy, commonly food, clothing, temporary shelter, employment assistance. Also called rescue mission. Examples in Portland are Union Gospel Mission, Portland Rescue Mission, Salvation Army.

missionary work

Charitable or religious activity performed in a foreign country, often with the intent of putting one's faith into practice or of evangelizing.

modified habit. See *habit (religious)*

Morning Offering

Traditional prayer said in the morning, soon after rising.

*"O my God, I adore you, and I love you with all my heart. I thank you for having created me and saved me by your grace, and for having preserved me during this night. I offer you all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day. Grant that they may be all according to your will and for your greater glory. Keep me from all sin and evil, and may your grace be with me always."*

mortal sin

Mortal sin is sin of such a serious nature that the life of the soul ends, as does the relationship with God of the individual who commits the sin. Mortal sin, as all sin, is forgivable.

mother house (religious order terminology)

In the context of the present project, the building housing both the local superior and the administrative offices of Kate's religious order, located in Marylhurst, Oregon.

Multnomah County Detoxification Center. See *detoxification center*

**-N-**

night shelters

[The following quote is from Todd's story.]

"During the 1970s there were several night shelters that existed. They served as a place to sleep. In the beginning the people slept on the floor; later on they slept on small cots that were low to the floor. And there were times during the approach of cold weather when new sleeping bags would be distributed to people to use and keep.

"These shelters had some requirements such as when people could come and when they would have to leave. In the earlier days they didn't necessarily have to be sober, but they *did* have to take responsibility for their behavior; if their behavior was disruptive, for example, they would be asked to leave.

"Some of these shelters also provided refuge from the elements during certain hours of the day, and sometimes there were staff people who provided information and referral services."

Northwest Pilot Project

Begun in 1969 in Portland, was and still is major advocate regarding issues of homelessness, housing, and seniors. <http://www.nwpilotproject.org/>

Northwest Tower(s)

Low income housing facility located at 335 N.W. 19th Avenue, Portland.

novena

Private or group devotion involving nine days of prayer for a special intention or occasion. Often includes Mass and/or Benediction. A *rosary novena* involves praying the rosary as part of the novena.

novice (religious)

Individual admitted to a religious order for a probationary period of training and supervised formation before taking vows.

novice mistress

Nun who directs the training and formation of novices.

novitiate

Both the period during which novices are trained and formed for religious life and the place where novices reside.

nun

Member of a religious order for women, typically living life in community and adhering to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Also commonly called Sister.

**-O-**

Oak Apartments

333 S.W. Oak Street, Portland.

obedience, vow of. See *vow (of a member of a religious order)*

OHSU. See *Oregon Health and Science University*

Old Town. See *Skid Road*

Old Town Café

32 N.W. Third Avenue, Portland.

Formerly Gus's Café (at least between 1970 and 1975), this café was located at street level, below the Matt Talbot Center. Beer and wine were served in both cafés, and it was not uncommon for men from the area to get inebriated there. In 2008 it is a tavern.

"on Burnside." See *Skid Road*

Operation Nightwatch

Located at 522 S.W. 13th Avenue, Portland, and begun in 1981, "Operation Nightwatch is an ecumenical night ministry of friendship and community for the street population of downtown Portland." [quote from Operation Nightwatch Web site in 2008].

<http://www.operationnightwatch.org/>

[The quote below is from Wayne's story.]

"When I was working at De Paul Center, a man came down from Seattle to talk to me about Operation Nightwatch, a hospitality ministry which had been founded or co-founded by a Jesuit. The man who came to see me was involved with the program in Seattle and was interested in setting up a similar program in Portland. He asked about possible locations, and ultimately a program was set up in a building storefront on Southwest Thirteenth, between Washington and Alder, across from the De Paul Center building. Mort Lincoln became the first director. On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, between 8:00 p.m. and midnight, homeless people from the streets, or residents from the hotels in the area, would be welcomed for hospitality; this service was for any of these who cared to come in. Coffee and sandwiches would be served, card and table games would be played, and once a month they would have a movie and popcorn. At that time, Nightwatch was staffed by volunteers who served one day a month; I used to serve on

Thursdays.

"Operation Nightwatch was set up for basically nighttime hospitality. During cold weather, as many as one hundred individuals might pass through in an evening. I think people came in as much for the coffee and the warmth as for anything else.

"Part of the program was a street ministry outreach that involved two volunteers who would walk the streets and talk to people they saw in groups or in taverns. If they met any emergencies of any sort, they would call detox, an ambulance, or the police, according to the need. This outreach was a caring presence on the streets."

Oregon City (Oregon)

City located approximately 12 miles southeast of Portland, and part of Portland metropolitan area.,

Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU)

Located at 3181 S.W. Sam Jackson Park Road, Portland, and now called Oregon Health & Science University, this institution "is the state's only health and research university. OHSU's fundamental purpose is to improve the well-being of people in Oregon and beyond. As part of its multifaceted public mission, OHSU strives for excellence in scholarship, research, clinical practice and community service" [quote from OHSU Web site in 2008]. <http://www.ohsu.edu/>  
See also *County Hospital*.

Oregonian, The. See *The Oregonian*

Oregon Journal

Now defunct Portland daily newspaper.

Oregon Leather Co.

110 NW Second Avenue

Our Father. See *Lord's Prayer*

Our House. See *Our House of Portland*

Our House of Portland

Residential care facility in southeast Portland providing services to individuals with HIV/AIDS. In addition, a wide variety of services is offered off site to those who are living with HIV/AIDS and are in various stages of independence, including help with more affordable access to food, clothing, personal care items, and other goods associated with living independently and managing a household. <http://www.ourhouseofportland.org/>

Our Lady of Grace

One of many honorary titles given to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Derived apparently from the story of the Annunciation in the gospel of Luke, when the angel greets Mary with the words, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Title given to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, who is reported to have appeared to a Mexican peasant in Guadalupe, Mexico, in 1531. Among other things associated with this reported event are a shrine of widespread pilgrimage, the construction of a very large basilica, and a famous icon of Mary mysteriously imprinted on the peasant's cloak.

## **-P-**

Passion of Christ. See *Stations of the Cross*

periodic drinker

Individual who engages periodically in drinking binges involving excessive and uncontrollable drinking. Periods between binges may be as short as a week or as long as years, may involve controlled drinking or no drinking at all, and during them the individual may function normally in all aspects of living.

periodic drinking. See *periodic drinker*

pope

Supreme leader of the Catholic Church, elected by the cardinals of the Church and serving for life. Considered by Catholics to be the successor to St. Peter, the apostle believed to have been appointed by Jesus Christ to be the Christian church's first leader after Christ's death.

Pope Paul VI

Leader of the Catholic Church from 1963-1978. His papacy spanned the majority of the Second Vatican Council and initiated the challenging implementation of the council's decrees in the contemporary world.

postulant

Individual who has taken the first step toward becoming a nun, brother or similar, and who spends time exploring his or her vocation to the religious life with the particular religious order (e.g. Franciscan, Dominican) to which application has been made. See *novice (religious)*, which would be the next step.

poverty, vow of. See *vow (of a member of a religious order)*

priest, Catholic

Male individual who, upon receiving the sacrament of (Holy) Orders from a bishop, officiates at worship services, administers the sacraments (e.g. baptism, Eucharist), and performs various other



duties in the name of the Church. Among the two classifications of priests, *diocesan priests* serve for life the specific diocese for which they are ordained; they do not generally live in community, and they make a promise to their bishop to be celibate (not to marry). By contrast, *religious order priests* serve their religious congregation (e.g. Jesuit, Franciscan) in whatever places in the world and in whatever work they are assigned. They make vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience within their religious community

Pringles

Potato chip product.

Professed Sister

Nun who has made her final (for life) profession of vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and has been fully received into her religious community.

Providence (Portland) Medical Center

Catholic hospital located in northeast Portland.

Provincial (of a religious order)

Member of a religious order who provides general supervision over the communities of religious of the same order living in a given province or geographical area.

Public Inebriate Program. See *Public Inebriate Project*

Public Inebriate Project

Nationally funded grant program initiated in the 1970s in Portland to address the issues of and relationship between homelessness and chemical dependency in an effort to find solutions to both in Portland and Multnomah County.

purgatory

In Catholic teaching a place or state of final purification of those souls of the dead who will reach heaven, achieving final union with God, but only after a period of final cleansing of human imperfection that was not achieved during their earthly life. See *indulgence*, "temporal punishment"

-Q-

-R-

religious (noun)

Member(s) of a religious order (nun or sister, brother, friar, monk, priest).

religious community

Religious order. Also specific local religious community one lives in. Kate's current Community, for example, is the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, and the first Community she belonged to was the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. Term is used also as an adjective (e.g. community living, community life, meaning living a communal life with other members of the same religious order).

religious house

Convent, monastery, priory where religious live and pray in community.

religious life

Way of living of religious order men and women.

religious novice. See *novice (religious)*

religious order

Group of men or women living under a religious rule (plan of life and discipline), living in community, professing the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and whose organization is approved by appropriate Church authorities.

religious order priest. See *priest, Catholic*

retreat (religious)

Time for withdrawing from one's everyday living world to a quieter place where one can deepen and re-energize one's spiritual state through any of several means (self-examination, meditation, individual and group exercises, prayer, Mass, sacrament of reconciliation [confession], guest speakers, discussions with a spiritual director, etc.). Retreats can be private or group and can last anywhere from a few hours in the local parish hall to a weekend or even thirty days (*Thirty-day Retreat*) in a formal *retreat house* or center in another part of the city or another town. Group retreats commonly are organized around a theme.

retreat house. See *retreat (religious)*

retreat master. See *retreat (religious)*

retreat, thirty-day. See *retreat (religious)*

Rich Hotel

Located at 205 N.W. Couch Street, currently low-income housing for adults and managed by Central City Concern (see *detoxification center* for information on CCC). The Rich is across the street and at the opposite end of the block from the once Matt Talbot Center where Kate volunteered as a nurse for 10 years.

Rocky Butte Jail

Located at 9755 N.E. Hancock Drive, Portland, this Multnomah County jail closed in 1983 to make room for the I-205 freeway, and its operations were moved to the then newly constructed Justice Center in downtown Portland.

- "When visitors arrived, they had to explain who they were and why they had come. [...] The jail had a line of about twenty booths with phones, at which visitors would sit to talk with the person they had come to visit. Visitors would have to sit right beside each other. There was thick glass between the visitors and the inmates, and all parties would be talking through phones. The connections were very, very poor, and this was made worse by the fact that you could hear the persons to the right and to the left of you all the while that you were trying to hear the person you had come to see." [from Dan's story]
- Roman collar**  
Stiff white neckband worn by priests (and other clerics) as part of their public attire, commonly seen in combination with a special black clerical shirt.
- rosary**  
Perhaps the most common devotional prayer of Catholics, prayed to and in honor of Mary (mother of Jesus Christ), using a string of beads for counting the various prayers said during recitation. Consists primarily of saying the Apostle's Creed followed by set combinations of *Hail Mary's*, *Our Father's*, and *Glory Be's* (see glossary entries), and including recalling briefly various events and mysteries in the lives of Jesus and Mary.
- rosary novena.** See *novena* and *rosary*
- Rose Festival**  
Hundred-year-old festival held in Portland, Oregon every June. Among the large variety and number of activities taking place over the course of almost two weeks is the nationally recognized Grand Floral Parade, the festival's signature event, including a court of queen and princesses selected from area high schools. <http://www.rosefestival.org/>
- Rose Festival princess.** See *Rose Festival*
- S-**
- sacrament**  
Christian liturgical rite involving an outward (physical, sensible) sign or action believed to communicate God's grace (love and spirit) and sanctification to the participant's soul and to have been instituted by Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry. Catholics accept seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation (commonly Confession), Anointing of the Sick (formerly Last Rites or Extreme Unction), Matrimony, and Holy Orders (ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops).
- sacristy**  
Room in a church, usually close to the altar area, where the priest vests for services and in which are stored vestments, sacred vessels, and other items that are used in liturgical services (e.g. Mass).
- saint**  
Any individual who has died and is now in heaven experiencing eternal life with God, whether declared to be a saint by the Catholic Church (canonized) or other body, or not.
- Sally McCracken Building**  
532 N.W. Everett Street, Portland. Currently owned and operated by Central City Concern and offering Section 8 housing (see *detoxification center* for more on CCC; see *Section 8 Housing*).
- Salvation Army**  
The site located at 30 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland, is the site Kate was familiar with and went to often.
- "The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination." [quote is mission statement from Salvation Army's USA Western Territory Web site in 2008] [http://www1.usw.salvationarmy.org/usw/www\\_usw.nsf](http://www1.usw.salvationarmy.org/usw/www_usw.nsf)
- Founded in England in the last half of the 19th Century, this international organization operates many services, some of which are emergency disaster services, social services, adult rehabilitation services, emergency shelters, group homes, transitional living centers, provision of emergency food.
- "After I began going down to Blanchet's soup line, I would afterwards walk down to the Burnside Hotel and Salvation Army to talk to some of the men there." [from "Beginnings" story]
- Saturday Market (Portland)**  
Located below the access ramp of the west end of the Burnside Bridge, "The mission of the Portland Saturday Market is to provide an environment that encourages the economic and artistic growth of emerging and accomplished artisans. Central to this mission shall be to operate a marketplace. That marketplace, and other market programs, shall honor craftsmanship, design innovation, marketing ethics, and authenticity of product."
- "Every Saturday and Sunday from March until December the Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood transforms into a thriving arts and crafts open-air marketplace."

- [quotes from Portland Saturday Market Web site in 2008] <http://www.portlandsaturdaymarket.com/>
- Sauvie Island  
Located approximately ten miles northwest of Portland, at the junction of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, the island is known for its large wildlife area, fresh produce, and recreational activities.
- School of the Americas  
Renamed in 2001 the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation," this U.S. Department of Defense facility is a combat training school for Latin American soldiers and is located at Fort Benning, Georgia. The facility is highly criticized by many, including Kate, for the participation of many of its graduates in human rights violations against their own people.
- Second Vatican Council  
Twenty-first general council of the Catholic Church, from 1962-1965, convened by Pope John XXIII and concluded by Pope Paul VI, in which more than 2,500 bishops and other clergy from throughout the world participated. Put simply, the purpose of the council was to renew the Church, modernize its institutions and forms, and promote unity among Christians. The council produced sixteen major documents, which, among a large variety of other topics, included the unification of all Christians, greater participation of the laity in Church life, and the relationship between the Church and the modern world.
- Section 8. See *Section 8 Housing*
- Section 8 Housing  
Referring to Section 8 of the 1937 U.S. Housing Act, this federal housing program, operated by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), provides financial assistance to qualifying low income renters and homeowners.
- seminarian  
One who is preparing academically and spiritually to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, thereby becoming a priest. Most typically refers to diocesan (not religious order) clergy.
- Serenity Prayer  
Part of a larger prayer attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, though the origin of the piece quoted here is debated. Adopted in modified form by Alcoholics Anonymous and, in this project, associated with that organization.  
"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."
- Service Center (Everett Street Service Center). See *Burnside Projects*
- severe tremors  
"Severe tremors are usually the sign of impending d.t.'s or alcohol seizures; when someone has severe tremors, he or she needs either medication or alcohol to prevent going into the d.t.'s or alcohol seizures." [from Dan's story] [see also *d.t.'s* and *alcohol seizure*]
- Sister. See *nun*
- Sister of St. Mary. See *Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon*
- Sisters of St. Ann(e)  
Canadian religious order of women whose primary focus is on education and healthcare.  
<http://www.sistersofsaintanne.org/bc/mission.htm>
- Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon (SSMO)  
Religious order of women, founded in 1886 and based in Beaverton, Oregon, having a focus on education and health care. This is the order which Kate joined in 1940, and with which she became a Sister in 1946 and remained until 1975. In 1975, she made formal transfer to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, the order to which she still (2013) belongs. It was at Maryville Nursing Home (in Beaverton), founded and still operated by the SSMO, where Kate sharpened her interest in nursing, eventually becoming a registered nurse in 1969. In 1969 Kate has her first experience serving men from Skid Road who would come for treatment at the county hospital where she was gaining additional nursing training.  
<http://www.ssmo.org/>
- Sisters of the Holy Names. See *Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*
- Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM)  
International religious order of women founded by Marie Rose Durocher in 1843 in Montreal, Canada. Their primary mission regards education, defined broadly, with a strong social justice component. They founded and operate Marylhurst University, a few miles south of Portland, and St. Mary's Academy (high school) in Portland. This is the order Kate transferred to in 1975, after more than twenty-five years as a member of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon.  
<http://www.snjm.org/EnglishContent/homeeng.htm>
- Skidmore Fountain  
A historic fountain in downtown Portland at Southwest First and Ankeny.
- Skid Road  
Term applied to many logging areas in the Pacific Northwest of the 1800s, including Portland, Oregon, which areas were characterized by skidways, or roads made of railway ties, logs or the like, which would allow logs from felled trees to be moved by sliding them along the skidways from where they had been felled to the point at which they would be loaded for transportation to their next destination. In Portland, West Burnside Street was one such skidway which extended

- from the forested west hills (which were apparently barren from logging at one point) all the way down to the Willamette River. The part of this area that was close to the river was inhabited by loggers and by many individuals who were down on their luck or destitute, transient, alcoholic, or day laborers who lived in inexpensive nearby lodging or flophouses, around which were also bars, brothels, liquor stores and the like.
- Skid Road is defined geographically differently by different individuals. For the purposes of this project, it refers primarily to the area from N.W. Glisan Street to the north, to S.W. Pine Street to the south, and from the Willamette River to the east, to Broadway Street to the west. However, in terms of downtown Portland generally speaking, the project stretches south to S.W. Morrison Street and west to S.W. 14th Street. In both cases, Burnside Street traverses the area, dividing it north from south. See *Map of Project Area* at start of book.
- The phrases "in the Burnside area," "on Burnside," and "down on Burnside," as used in the project, refer to the Skid Road area delineated above and to Burnside Street.
- When Skid Road began undergoing gentrification and urban renewal in the 1980s, the area north of Burnside and a small section south of Burnside came to be called Old Town/Chinatown. The term "Skid Road" is no longer in use to refer to these areas, except in historical retrospects. As evidenced in various pages of the project, many publications from the 1970s and 1980s use the term "Skid Road." For more on Old Town/Chinatown, see <http://oldtownchinatown.net/>
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)  
International non-profit Roman Catholic lay organization founded in France in 1833 by twenty-year-old Frederic Ozanam, and named after Vincent de Paul, a saint renowned for his work with the poor. Various Catholic parishes in the United States commonly have parishioner volunteers who form their own local chapter of SVDP and provide outreach services within their parish, perhaps most notably in the areas of food and clothing distribution to the needy.
- On a national level, some of the many services provided by the St. Vincent de Paul Society across the United States and listed on their national Web site in 2008, include: food programs; emergency financial assistance; emergency transportation; disaster relief and victim services; rent/mortgage assistance; shelters for the homeless; and abused; assistance for victims of AIDS, substance abuse, and crime; thrift stores; free pharmacy services; employment services and job training; GED programs; homemaker services; budget counseling; nutritional education; youth programs; prison ministry and halfway houses for ex-offenders; burial of the indigent.  
<http://www.svdpusa.org/>
- soup kitchen (soup line)  
A place where food (usually including soup) is served at no or minimal charge to those who are in need.
- Spirit, the. See *Holy Spirit*
- Spiritual Bouquet  
A card with a list of Masses, prayers, and/or spiritual devotions that will be offered for a particular person.
- sponsor (for Baptism and Confirmation)  
Individual who acts as witness and commits to support the faith journey of another individual at the latter's baptism and/or confirmation
- SSI. See *Supplemental Security Income*
- St. Andrew's (St. Andrew Parish)  
The parish, in northeast Portland, of which Kate is an active member and in whose church she worships regularly. <http://www.standrewchurch.com/>
- stasis ulcer  
Breakdown of the skin on the leg that develops because of poor blood circulation. Can be slow and difficult to heal, develop into an open sore or ulcer, and become infected.
- Stations of the Cross  
Devotion involving praying in front of and meditating on pictorial representations of fourteen particular moments in the last sufferings of Jesus Christ (often referred to as the Passion of Christ), from his condemnation to death to the laying of his body in the tomb. Each scene is most commonly presented separately in the form of pictures or statuary that hang from the interior walls of a church; sometimes the scenes are in the form of small shrines in a garden setting outside. Especially common during Good Friday of Holy Week (the week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday). Related in origins to the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, the street along which Jesus walked with his cross on the way to his death and on which many Christians believe the fourteen moments took place. Also called the Way of the Cross.
- Stewart Hotel  
127 S.W. Broadway, Portland.
- St. Francis Outreach  
"Outreach in Burnside is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the disabled poor in Portland's Old Town Chinatown neighborhood. [Old Town/Chinatown is the very same

geographical area as that in which the stories of this project take place.]

"Sister Maria Francis began this work in 1982 under the name of St. Francis' Outreach. We incorporated in 1986 as Outreach Ministry in Burnside, and use the simpler Outreach in Burnside as our business name. All of these reflect our work and commitment to people with multiple disabilities live independently with dignity.

"Most Members of Outreach live with dual diagnosis, a combination of addiction and mental illness. Some have dementia, brain injuries, or developmental disabilities. Most have been mandated to have a representative payee to manage their money, mostly from Social Security or the VA.

"Outreach has never had government funding, nor direct ties to any denomination. Its strength comes from literally hundreds of individuals who support Outreach. Our daily operations are conducted by a small, dedicated team of six persons, three full-time and three part-time, who uphold the dignity, respect and health of the Members, and function as a community that is family." [quote from Outreach in Burnside Web site in 2008] <http://www.aracnet.com/~omib/>

St. Mary of the Valley (School)

At the time that Kate entered the convent, the term "St. Mary of the Valley" referred to a large complex in Beaverton, Oregon, operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, that included a convent, mother house, grade school, high school, and boarding school. <http://www.ssmo.org/>

St. Philip Neri Church

Catholic church in Portland, at S.E. Eighteenth and Division streets.

St. Vincent de Paul Society. See *Society of St. Vincent de Paul*

Superior (religious)

Person who governs and has authority over a local or larger religious community. May exercise authority over just an individual house of religious.

Superior General (of a religious order)

Highest ranking official in a religious order, having authority over all provinces and individuals of the order.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Income provided by the federal government to qualifying low income individuals who are elderly or have one or more disabilities.

#### **-T-**

Tacoma Café (also called Tacoma Bill's formerly?)

22 N.W. Third Avenue, Portland.

Taft Hotel

Located at 1337 S.W. Washington St., Portland., this was low-income housing, including for individuals with disabilities and who are elderly.

The Oregonian

A Portland, Oregon daily newspaper.

Tom McCall Waterfront Park

Public park greenway in downtown Portland situated along the Willamette River. The east end of the Skid Road area of this project flanks the park.

Transition Projects Inc (TPI). See also *Burnside Projects*

Located at 475 N.W. Glisan Street, Portland, TPI has been in operation since 1969, originally under the name Burnside Projects Inc. "The mission of Transition Projects is to serve people's basic needs as they transition from homelessness to housing." [quote from Transition Projects Inc Web site in 2008] <http://www.tprojects.org/>

Twelve-Step meeting. See *Twelve-Step Program*

Twelve-Step Program

Originally an alcohol addiction recovery program based on the "Twelve Steps" of Alcoholics Anonymous. The steps are listed here because alcohol addiction and recovery play a significant role in the grand majority of the stories of this project.

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and

to practice these principles in all our affairs.

A Twelve Step meeting is a meeting based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and whose purpose ultimately is recovery from addiction, whether from chemical dependency or any number of other addictions.

See also *Alcoholics Anonymous* and <http://www.aa.org/>

#### **-U-**

##### **Union Gospel Mission**

15 N.W. Third Avenue, Portland.

"Since 1927, Union Gospel Mission has been 'Feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbor...' Union Gospel Mission was founded by 40 area churches to assist the needy and hurting in Portland. Today, Union Gospel Mission remains true to that vision through offering meals and Christian outreach to the homeless and needy and providing addiction recovery [ . . . ]." [from Union Gospel Mission Web site in 2008] <http://ugmportland.org/>

##### **University of Oregon Hospital**

Part of Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, and not to confuse with the County Hospital (also part of OHSU) to which many indigent men from Skid Road were referred by Kate. See *County Hospital*, and *Oregon Health and Science University*

##### **University of Portland**

Catholic university in north Portland, founded and run by the Congregation of Holy Cross religious order. <http://www.up.edu/>

#### **-V-**

VA. See *Veterans Administration*

Vatican II. See *Second Vatican Council*

##### **veil (religious)**

Distinctive head covering of many women religious. Made of fabric and not covering the face, a veil is part of a religious habit and is of specifications peculiar to each religious order. The wearing of veils (and habits) is now optional for many Sisters.

vespers. See *Divine Office*

##### **Veterans Administration**

VA or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/>

##### **veterans check**

Monthly pension or disability compensation check from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for qualifying individuals.

##### **Veterans Hospital - Portland**

Located at 3710 S.W. US Veterans Hospital Road, Portland, and now called Portland VA Medical Center, this institution is connected by sky bridge to Oregon Health & Science University (see glossary entry) with which it also shares staff.

##### **Virgin Mary**

The mother of Jesus Christ.

##### **Voice of the Faithful**

"Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) arose in 2002 in response to shocking revelations in the life of the Catholic Church: widespread clerical abuse of children; silence of clergy in the face of known or suspected abuse; and the moral, governance and pastoral failures of Catholic bishops in response to abusers and survivors alike. In the face of such breaches of trust, VOTF emerged from the determination of Catholic laity to find their voice and to claim their proper role in the governance of the Church." VOTF's stated goals are: "To support survivors of clergy sexual abuse, To support priests of integrity, [and] To shape structural change within [the] Church." [quotes from Voice of the Faithful Web site in 2008] <http://www.voiceofthefaithful.org/>

##### **vow (of a member of a religious order)**

Solemn and binding promise made to God, deliberately, freely, and publicly. In the context of this project, the reference is to the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience (also called the Evangelical Counsels) that are made by men and women religious. The primary intended result of taking and remaining faithful to one's vows is to come closer to God than the individual would otherwise. Poverty involves basically forsaking ownership of all property (which is owned instead by one's religious Community). Chastity is basically forsaking marriage and children, as well as deliberate commitment to chaste living. Obedience is basically commitment to obey one's religious superior.

#### **-W-**

##### **Washington Plaza Apartments**

1129 S.W. Washington Street, Portland.

##### **Western Hotel**

Southwest Second Avenue, Portland, between Burnside and Ankeny, abutting south side of Holm Hotel. See also *Holm Hotel*.

"Adjoining the Holm [Hotel, which was located at 9 S.W. Second Avenue, and to the south of the Holm] [...] was the Western Hotel. The Western had been closed before I arrived on Skid Road because it could not meet city codes. It was later remodeled and [...] used for low-income housing. While the Holm and the Western had separate street entrances, you could go through to one small area of the Western from the third floor of the Holm. Brent, who was the night clerk of the Holm, occupied this small area. At the time I began on Burnside, the lower part of the Western was occupied by gypsies. They often stood in the doorway as an invitation to have one's palm read." [from "Beginnings" story]

"The Western [...] was later renovated with studio apartments for low-income housing. You had to be admitted by someone releasing the lock. The four floors opened onto a courtyard that was open to the sky and uncovered. This open area was surrounded by walkways on all four sides that led to the rooms. You could look up to the open sky or down to the level below." [from Nick's story]

Westside Health Clinic (Center)

426 S.W. Stark Street, Portland. Part of Multnomah County Health Department. Provides low cost, sometimes free healthcare services to low income populations, including homeless individuals. Operates large HIV clinic.

White City

Town in southern Oregon, about ten miles from Medford, and location of the VA (Veterans Administration) Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (formerly the VA Domiciliary).

"The VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (VA SORCC), as VA's only free standing Rehabilitation Center, serves as a regional and national resource for underserved special populations, e.g., homeless, chronically mentally ill, and substance abuse, providing quality residential treatment in psychiatry, addictions, medicine, bio-psychosocial, physical and vocational rehabilitation. [...]" [excerpt from mission statement of VA SORCC Web site in 2008] <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=146&dnum=ALL&map=1>

[following quote from Todd's story]

"A lot of the men from the street used to go down there during the winter months because they would have a bed and meals and it would be better than the streets. The domiciliary was like an old soldier's home; I mean, this is the way they used to refer to it. It was like a nursing home or a retirement home, where a veteran could go for help and rehabilitation; and, in those days, if they had the room, he could stay. I don't think there were requirements other than that he wanted to be there and he wouldn't drink. They later put in a detox unit and an alcoholism treatment program of some kind, encouraging the men to go to AA and things like this; but before this, if a person started drinking, they would ask him to leave and give him a ticket back to wherever he had come from. Also, Veteran's [the VA] used to pay for a man's ticket to go there if he wanted to go but didn't have the funds, which was the case a lot of times if he wasn't yet drawing a pension or disability. I believe that those who received a Veteran's income gave up part of it while they were there, because they were getting their room and board free. I don't know what the capacity was exactly, but I think they could accommodate quite a few hundred men. They had every activity for these people: crafts, games, films, entertainment, even a golf course (but they did not have a swimming pool). The men slept in kind of alcoves — areas partitioned off, but not up to the ceiling. They had a bed, a stand, and a chair. They had to have army neatness — you went through the facility and everything was just shipshape. They had a hospital for those who were ill. A lot of people there were in wheelchairs, were disabled, and a lot of them were older."

Willamette National Cemetery

Located at 11800 S.E. Mt. Scott Boulevard, Portland, this is a veterans' cemetery operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Willamette River

Major Oregon river flowing approximately 187 miles from Eugene in the south through Portland in the north and emptying into the Columbia River.

wine sores

Infected areas on the skin of alcoholics thought to be due primarily to a combination of prolonged nutritional deficiencies and poor hygiene practices rather than to the wine itself.

"With the men's heavy drinking and lack of protein, they develop what are called "wine sores." The capillary system is so fragile that it doesn't heal easily. The sores become deeper and deeper with infection, and they may scab over." [from Nate's story]

"Anybody who got an infection and was drinking a lot would be malnourished, wouldn't have enough protein, and usually would be slow to heal. If he had a cut or a wound or an ulcer on his leg, for example, it would become deeply infected, and the wine sores (as they were called) that developed would scab over and not heal underneath; he would think the sores were healing because they weren't open or draining." [from Casey's story]

World AIDS Day Mass of Healing

A Mass held on World AIDS Day, December 1st, at which those who are in need of healing — especially individuals with HIV disease or AIDS — come forth for special prayers and support.

-X-

-Y-

-Z-



**Appendix II**  
**KATE ST. MARTIN CHRONOLOGY**  
**(Biographical Time Line)**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Event</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1921        | July 2. Is born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, of American parents. First two years in grade school are in Catholic parochial school.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1929        | Moves to Skagway, Alaska, as small child, due to father's job as U.S. immigration officer. Attends third through seventh grades in public school in Skagway.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1931        | July 4. Is severely burned when clothing catches fire from sparkler. Recovery is month and a half to two months. No skin grafts. Some exercises to straighten right arm. Would have had skin grafts but there is no facility short of Seattle, which would have been too much of a boat trip to be a reasonable option at that time (there was no airport in Skagway).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1933-1934   | Spends eighth grade year as boarder at St. Mary of the Valley School in Beaverton, Oregon. School is run by Sisters of St. Mary of the Valley.<br><br>Her parents want her to get into Catholic school by eighth grade in order to be better prepared for entrance into Catholic high school the following year. Her father had put in for a work transfer, so family knew it would be moving soon but didn't know to what city. Skagway has no Catholic schools, and since one of Kate's friends is in Beaverton as a novice in St. Mary of the Valley convent, Beaverton seems a reasonable choice.<br><br>Father and family are eventually transferred to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1934.<br><br>The last thing Kate ever dreams of becoming at this time is a nun.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1934-1935   | Ninth grade in Victoria, at St. Anne's school. (One family residence in Victoria is at 1130 Woodstock, where she remembers still to the present day the wonderful fragrance of jasmine at that home.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1935-1936   | Returns to Beaverton, entering St. Mary of the Valley convent as postulant.<br><br>After eight and a half months, is asked to leave due to immaturity. Fifteen is too young in Kate's case to embrace community life and to live in, what for her, is such a restrictive environment compared with what she had been accustomed to at home. She experiences some difficulty following rules. The rule of silence except at recreation times, for example, is particularly challenging for her. As a result, she is frequently getting into trouble and is eventually asked to leave.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1936-1940   | Finishes high school in Victoria. During this period, in 1939, her sister, Peggy, is born. This is important event for Kate, who now is eighteen.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1940-1943   | Re-enters St. Mary of the Valley as postulant.<br><br>Is postulant for one year and novice for two years.<br><br>At that time, women who entered religious life had little choice about what their future would be in terms of what preparation and assignments they would be given. While she is postulant, Kate is asked, "Kathleen, how would you like to teach music?" Her response is that she wouldn't! At that point she is told, "We're not given choices in religious life," and that she will be prepared to be a music teacher.<br><br>In 1941, as first year novice, takes her new name, Sister Mary Elphège. Elphège is her father's first name.<br><br>Is sent to St. Boniface School in Sublimity, Oregon, to teach piano to students from first grade through high school. Does not feel qualified to teach piano. This remains point of stress for Kate throughout her music-teaching days. She does, nonetheless, what her superiors ask her to do. |

- 1943-1946 In August, 1943, enters three years of Temporary Profession after pronouncing First Vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. She is now a Professed Sister. During this period, in 1944, her sister, Bernadette (Bernie), is born. This, too, is important event for Kate, like birth of first sister, Peggy.
- 1945-1946 Continues teaching piano at Sublimity convent. For one of these years, teaches violin, too.
- August 15th, 1946, makes Final Profession, and takes vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for life. Teaches music in Sublimity for several months and then is transferred to Stayton, Oregon, where she continues teaching music for remainder of school year.
- 1946-1947 Transfers to Verboort, Oregon, to teach piano.
- 
- [Steps to becoming a religious in Kate's days and in her religious order:  
 1. *Postulant* for six months to a year. Wear habit that is special to postulant period.
2. *Novice* for two years. First year called canonical year. During second year, start or continue with education or training in field Order wants you in, or, in any case, start helping out in field (with supervision). Wear habit special to novitiate period.
3. *First Year Profession*. Take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for three years. Wear official habit of the Order. Start working independently. Continue working toward degree if necessary, going to school during summers.
4. *Final Profession*. Take same three vows for life. Receive plain gold ring as a sign of commitment.]
- 
- 1947-1948 Transfers to Our Lady of Sorrows parish in Portland, and continues teaching music (piano and singing). Requests to teach academic subjects in classroom and work toward education degree at same time. This is partly in response to her, by now, six-year inner struggle and frustration as a music teacher. Her request is granted.
- 1948-1949 Moves to St. Mary's Home for Boys in Huber, Oregon. Is house-mother of cottage and teaches singing in classrooms.
- 1949-1950 Still at St. Mary's Home for Boys. Teaches fifth and sixth grades — all subjects — and continues as house mother of a cottage. During same period continues working toward degree in education.
- 1950-1966 Teaches at many schools in Willamette Valley throughout this period, both in urban and rural locations. Is assigned to new school every year, more or less. Studies at same time for education degree. During this period, serves two years as boarding school mistress, principal, and part-time teacher at St. Mary of the Valley, in Beaverton.
- 1955 Bachelors in Education from Marylhurst College (now Marylhurst University), in Marylhurst, Oregon, about 10 miles south of Portland.
- 1965 Masters in Education, with emphasis in guidance and counseling, from University of Portland.
- 1966-1967 Is nurse's aid at Maryville Nursing Home, Beaverton, to determine if wants to go into nursing.
- 1967-1969 Student in nursing at Portland Community College, while continuing as a nurse's aid at Maryville on weekends and holidays.
- 1969 June. Passes state board exams and obtains Associate Degree in Nursing. Is now registered nurse.

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1969-1970             | Gets hands-on experience at County Hospital (presently part of Oregon Health & Science University), Portland. Works on infected surgery floor weekdays, and at Maryville Nursing Home on weekends. Hospital takes indigent patients, some of whom are from Portland's Skid Road area. This is Kate's first encounter with Skid Road population.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1970                  | Summer. Contacts Fr. Gil Lulay, priest featured in article "Priest Runs Skid Road Hotel." He is operating Burnside Hotel, alcohol-free residence for homeless men on Portland's Skid Road. Gil is Fr. Jim Lambert in the stories.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1970                  | August. Begins volunteering on Skid Road one day a week at Blanchet House, on one of her days off, and having frequent contacts with residents of Burnside Hotel and Fr. Lulay.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1970                  | 1st space in which to work is at Blanchet House, in small office next to manager's office.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1970-1971             | Along with two other recipients, receives Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce's J. Arthur Young Award for community service, which includes several hundred dollars which she uses as seed money for her nascent new ministry.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1970-1982             | Is involved with Harmony House, a grass-roots alcoholism recovery program in Portland. Initially she is volunteer and board member. For a while she is at same time board member and salaried counselor; then eventually salaried counselor only.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1970-1972             | Continues at Maryville Nursing Home.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1970-1972             | Volunteers on Skid Road until finds paid employment. Extends initial one day a week of volunteering to two days a week (using her two days off), and then to three days a week. Continues to work the other four days as nurse at Maryville.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1970                  | Volunteers to help doctor who is conscientious objector and is using a little room in a storefront on Second Avenue as a small "clinic" for individuals on Skid Road. This modest space was located somewhere between S.W. Ankeny and N.W. Couch Streets, on west side of Second Avenue. Kate's recollection is that the clinic lasted only a few months, until doctor's volunteer work as a CO ended.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1971 or 1972          | 2nd space in which to work on Skid Road is Last Chance Café. Sits at table in back part behind a curtain, and sees whoever needs to see her while they are there to eat. Is still wearing veil and modified habit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1971 or 1972<br>-1981 | 3rd space in which to work on Skid Road is Matt Talbot Center. Center opens in 1971 or 1972 as low-income residence for men on Skid Road and remains operating until some point in 1981. Office at Matt Talbot is what Kate goes to when her use of space at Last Chance Café ends. Her services at Matt Talbot are always as volunteer, and include nursing, referrals, and housing. She functions partly as nurse, partly as social worker, partly as counselor. Works at Matt Talbot until it closes. After Matt Talbot fire 1/13/77, which damages also part of her office there, Kate works temporarily out of Estate Hotel across the street until the Center is repaired and reopens. |
| 1972                  | Makes request to work full time on Skid Road and move to St. Andrew convent in Portland to be closer to her work on Burnside. Her religious order gives consent for her to be on Skid Road full time if she can find paying job there.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1972-1974             | Gets job at Hooper Detox in Portland, a detoxification center located at that time on S.W. Pine Street between Second and Third Avenues. Works first as outreach nurse, then as evening staff nurse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1972                  | Is one of four recipients of Beaverton Elks Community Project Awards Contest. Her award is for work with Skid Road alcoholics, and includes \$300, which she uses also as seed money for her ministry.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1973-1974             | Her religious community does not appear to be comfortable with her working on Burnside, and she is not comfortable with their discomfort. She feels she can continue to work on Burnside with support of Holy Names Sisters (Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary), so she transfers to their order on two-year trial basis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

- 1974 May 31. Her father dies from cancer at age seventy-four.
- 1974-1982 Works at Harmony Houses as salaried counselor.
- 1975-1976 Moves to convent at The Madeleine parish, Portland, where all the Sisters are Holy Names Sisters, because she wants to get to know more of them now that she is one herself. In 1975, pronounces vows according to the constitution of Holy Names order.
- 1977 Winter. With Sr. Mary Bertoli (by 2008 a well-known tissue paper artist), moves to Harmony House on S.E. 20th and Taylor Street when city has big storm and power outage and The Madeleine convent loses power. Move is upon invitation by then-manager of Harmony House, because that particular house no longer meets code requirements as halfway house. Lives there about a year. Some women in need are welcomed to stay at the house with Kate & Sr. Mary.
- 1978 October. Article appears in *U.S. Catholic*, "I Wish I Could Serve 'Em Like My Sister Kate," by Roger Repohl, N.S.J.
- 1980-1985 Residence called Brady House, in northeast Portland, is donated to the Order, and Kate and Sr. Clare Murphy move in and are caretakers.
- 1981 Matt Talbot Center closes permanently.
- 1982-1992 Provides nursing services at De Paul Center for Alcoholism Treatment, Portland. Also provides counseling and gives lectures on health issues.
- 1983 Receives Jefferson Award for Public Service "for outstanding public service benefitting our community." Award is sponsored by American Institute for Public Service, in Washington, D.C.
- 1992-1998 Works again, this time as admissions nurse, at Hooper Detox Center, which by now is located in northeast Portland, immediately across Burnside Bridge and directly across river from Skid Road.
- 1994 Begins volunteer work at Our House of Portland, residential care facility for individuals with HIV/AIDS.
- 1998 Retires from paid employment, at age seventy-seven.
- 1998 Active in several volunteer activities at various times, including assisting at Our House of Portland and Catholic Charities/Bethany Center; tutoring English as second language to Hispanics; embarking on more than four-year effort to gain pardon for prisoner in Oregon State Penitentiary (a man who later stole from her and left town); training for and participating in protest march and rally in Fort Benning, Georgia in 1999 and 2004 as part of effort to close School of the Americas; bringing Communion to homebound couple regularly; and keeping in touch with some of the men from her Burnside days.
- 2006 August. At age eighty-five, and due primarily to effects of deteriorating eyesight, moves from independent apartment living in northeast Portland to semi-independent living arrangement close to her Order's mother house at Marylhurst.
- 2006-2008 Commutes to Portland weekly (frequently via public bus transportation) for both Sunday Mass at St. Andrew parish and volunteering at Our House of Portland. In addition, plans to regularly visit her Sisters who are in assisted living at Marylhurst.
- 2013 July 2. Turns 92. Happy Birthday, Kate!
- 2014 March 18. Sr. Kate St. Martin returned to the stars this date after complications from congestive heart failure.

Yours was a great life Kate, filled truly with joy from the very beginning to the very end. In my own life never have I met a more consistently and genuinely happy person. Always ready for a new day and eager for a new experience. Thank you dear friend for all the sweet memories and the numberless examples of love you left behind for those of us who remain. Long live our special love!

Until we meet again...

### Appendix III

## FROM THE INSIDE OUT

*The quotations that follow are excerpts from the stories and interviews of the present work unless noted otherwise. They are not in any sequential order, nor is any quotation presented with intended reference to the one that precedes or follows it. When more than one quotation has been pulled from the same unit, none has been placed next to the other.*

---

The first thing that comes to my mind, Ron, is that *people* were there. People superceded any of the other, apparently, for me. All the things that you named are part and parcel of a human being, a person whom God certainly loves unconditionally. I learned to love them for themselves. The smell and the dirt and the lice, which could be at times repulsive, or certainly unpleasant, you either forget or ignore or don't notice when you see a face, a human being, in the midst of it all.

[interview, Dealing With the Challenging Physical Reality of the Men and Their Surroundings]

~~~~~

"Troy, I'm going to leave and go to Mass in Time of AIDS. I will be praying for you, and I'll come back." He reached up and put his hand on my arm, almost as if to say, "Don't go." I turned and I started to cry and was leaving the room when Sherry put her arms around me and said, "Kate, they don't need you at Mass." So I went back in and put my hand on his head, and he died at that moment.

[story, Troy Westman]

~~~~~

...I would just want to be remembered as being a friend to those who have been such wonderful people, and are such wonderful people, in spite of the disease of alcoholism and their level of poverty and loneliness.

[interview with Kate (not by Ron) that was part of her 1983 Jefferson Award for Public Service]

~~~~~

I'm not there to change them; I'm there to accept them.

[story, Beginnings]

~~~~~

"You don't have to be afraid. God will make this crossing with you. People you love, who went ahead of you, are going to be there to greet you." I said an Act of Faith, Hope, and Love, an Act of Contrition, the Serenity Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and then, again, "God loves you." Then Dario died, still looking at me.

[story, Dario]

~~~~~

If his stomach bothered him, I'd give him Maalox. If he had a cold, I'd give him some cold medicine. Sometimes I would just listen to him and talk with him.

[story, Chris]

~~~~~

There's a lot of cruelty in the world, and it's hard to accept that. It's hard for me to know about it. This is where my faith comes in, in believing that in time there is going to be something good for these people who suffer and have suffered so much.

[story, Randall]

~~~~~

I always used to say that if I had trouble getting into heaven I'd have all these men on Skid Road pulling me up — and Gene would be one of them.

[story, Gene]

I did not attend Dale's funeral. There isn't enough time in my life or my schedule to be able to attend all the funerals or to visit everyone who's sick. I'd give anything if I had the time to be as attentive as I want to those who are sick, and to visit them, either in the hotels or in the hospitals, as well as to attend their funeral services. The only individuals I really keep up with are those I've known well or had a lot to do with. I'm hoping that when I can afford to retire I will still have the energy to do this, because this is what I want to do with my retirement time until I can no longer do it physically or mentally. But it is a deep regret to me not to have more time for everyone.

[story, Dale Stout]

I remember feeling angry when I realized that the owners [of some of the Skid Road hotels] were benefitting financially at the expense of poorly lit, poorly ventilated, poorly heated buildings that had been left to deteriorate.

[story, Ed & Gina]

If I ever didn't believe in an eternity, I certainly would have hoped for one for people such as Edwin, whose life was so hellish, with so little of anything in it for him. To me it was very sad to think that someone would have to go through life like this.

[story, Edwin]

In the beginning I felt very uneasy and never looked at anyone in the eye when I was walking on the streets [in Skid Road], because I didn't know what I was going to reply if they said something! But then, from those initial street encounters my ministry evolved into what it became.

[story, Blanchet House]

Most alcoholics that I've found, many of the people on the street, are really very gentle and sensitive people. And maybe this is why they are alcoholics, that somehow couldn't cope with the problems of daily living. [...] some of these people are subjected to so much, and your heart just really aches for them.

[Kate's words from what appears to have been a transcription of an interview that Kate provided in about 1976 for a slide-show presentation to the Holy Names Community by Sister Jean Madden, who was aware of what Kate was doing on Burnside and had asked if she could follow Kate around and take pictures.]

I think timing is a part of all this. I think God places certain people before us, and we can either walk around them, bump into them, or stop and have an encounter with them. I regret the times I have walked away from one of them, avoided eye contact, or walked around them [...]. And then I know there are others I have stopped for and become involved with in conversation and interaction, and those are the ones I'm going to feel much better about.

[story, Oscar]

Clarence was somebody I'd try to see often. He'd always thank me for coming; always thank me profusely for even calling. He'd say, "It just makes a bright spot in my life when you do this."

[story, Clarence]

In spite of the fact that I knew he was alcoholic, I said, "Troy, would you like to split a beer?" He said yes, so I put a couple of beer glasses and some Cheetos on a little table outside the door of the apartment, and then I split a can of beer. Up to this point that day, he hadn't really been able to eat anything that he wanted, but he was eating the Cheetos and enjoying them, and he drank the beer. Later, he told his friends from MacDonald Center that he never thought he'd be sitting drinking beer with a nun.

[story, Troy Westman]

I'm not always one for asking; I sort of *move* and go ahead and *do* something about the situations I encounter.

[interview, Intuition About the Right Thing to Do]

I feel honored to have known and been loved by this man. I will always be glad that I responded to his call that day and was able to get him to the hospital, and that he didn't die alone in his hotel room. To me this was another evidence of God's timing that I have so often experienced.

[story, Clarence]

I think you [Ron] said at that point, "Do you believe in hell?" and I said, "I'm not sure that I do." I feel that God loves unconditionally, and that if God created people out of love, [...] then God is capable of giving a choice for repentance and forgiveness to someone at the moment of their death, even if it's someone who has committed what we look at as atrocious crimes. Many terrible crimes are committed, I think, because of inability to cope or mental illness. I remember a long time ago thinking this as far as Judas was concerned — that there was forgiveness of his actions, even in spite of the fact that Jesus said at one point that it would have been better for this man if he had not been born. And I used to think, "Does that mean that Judas is never going to get a chance for eternity?" But I don't feel that. I just think that people are given a last chance to accept God's mercy and forgiveness. Even if, as they die, they don't seem to accept God's love, or they seem to disclaim the fact that there is a God, I think there is a moment of recognition and acceptance offered to them by God, that God loves and forgives them in eternal love and mercy, and welcomes them.

[interview, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and Limbo]

I think... that what has always helped me to continue doing what I'm doing is to know that someone whom I think is important affirms it.

[interview, Influence of Fr. Bert Griffin on Kate's Ministry]

...[Troy] was the one who taught me the "art" of dying. Some of the others who have died during my life were very special, but never when it came to life and death as it was with Troy. I have seen others die and I have found others dead on Skid Road, but just facing so much of Troy's last months with him was such a wonderful blessing and gift.

[story, Troy Westman]

As for not having a plan [when Kate first went to Skid Road in 1970], this is the way I function all the time. I go from moment to moment, from request to request, following through. There always seems to be something for me to do, and each day I am not always sure exactly what is going to come.

[interview, Neither Mission Nor Plan]

Once I started volunteering at Our House, I found that I wanted to spend more time with the residents because I found myself loving them very much. Sometimes I would read in the bios of some that they felt guilt about their sexuality, especially as they were coming to the end of their life, so I would talk to them about this and tell them that God loved them unconditionally.

[interview, Evolution of Ministry to Include Gay Men and Women, Including Those Living With HIV Disease and Dying from AIDS]

...I can be quick to judge — although I didn't judge down there on Burnside. I don't like to make judgments, because I don't know the person's circumstances. I don't know the person; I haven't walked in their shoes. When I find myself making a snap judgment of somebody, I say, "Now Kate, stop. Back up." It's an inner judgment that I sometimes sense in myself — that I could judge unless I stop myself. I mean there are things in each of us that we'd like to see changed and get rid of, and judging is one thing that I try to stop from doing. I don't do it very often, and I do it far less than I used to. But if I just see somebody in passing and make a snap judgment — somebody I am not getting to know — I think to myself, "You're making a judgment. You don't know this person, you don't know anything about this person. Why do you think this?" I don't like to even harbor the thought when it's somebody that I don't know.

[interview, Dealing With the Challenging Physical Reality of the Men and Their Surroundings]

My making referrals and recommendations had to build up because I didn't have any of that information when I started on the street — *nothing*. I was afraid to confront an alcoholic. I was afraid to talk to one! I didn't know what I could do down there; I had no idea. I went into my ministry as a blank piece of paper, and learned, little by little.

[interview, Kate Brings Services to the People]

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[...] they will come for over-the-counter medications, for dressing changes, for treatment, for blood pressure checks, for sutures to be removed, for appointments to be made, for transportation, for clothing, for food, for money, for housing, you name it. If anything is possible I will do it for them. And maybe that's what they hear, and so they will try. And it isn't too often that I have to refuse somebody or just tell them that I can't help them. But when I can't, if it's something that they need that can be done, I certainly can make the correct referral for them.

[Kate's words from what appears to have been a transcription of an interview that Kate provided in about 1976 for a slide-show presentation to the Holy Names Community by Sister Jean Madden, who was aware of what Kate was doing on Burnside and had asked if she could follow Kate around and take pictures.]

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The impact that all my experiences have had on me is that I have come to realize that every person that I ever meet, and all those I won't meet, are very much loved by God. They have their own special beauty and dignity. I began to feel that God loves all unconditionally. This is something that I strive and have strived to apply in my relationships with others, in my own limited way. And it doesn't always come that easily, because sometimes I find myself quick to make a snap judgment in my mind; it isn't done consciously, it just happens. Then I have to stop and go back and think, "Now wait a minute. This person is very much loved by God. I have no right to judge anyone."

[interview, Effect of Kate's Ministry on Her Growth as a Person]

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I think that every treatment program that people go to contributes to their future sobriety, regardless of some of the failures. I don't think it's any one place that really does it all.

[story, Jimmy]

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I have been with some when they died. I saw others shortly before they died, in nursing homes or hospitals, and I spent time with them... But I never was as aware of the wonderful privilege of being present as someone transitioned to eternity as I became after volunteering at Our House.

[interview, Evolution of Ministry to Include Gay Men and Women, Including Those Living With HIV Disease and Dying from AIDS]

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...when I started this [work on Skid Row], and even as I continued, I didn't have any expectations. I just wanted to be there, be a presence for the people, to do what I could, which was in a very small way at the beginning. But I didn't lay expectations on them and I didn't have any for myself at that point. I don't know that I ever would have, either. I just was always hoping that the men and women would make it, and that when they did have a good start, they would be able to continue their lives in sobriety, being clean and having something that gave them peace and some happiness, even in the sometimes squalor that was down there.

[interview, Burnout]

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This incident helped me to be aware that the men, whom I got to know only in the later stages of their lives, had a past, and that I occasionally was privileged to glimpse it. The families of skid row individuals were usually very important to them. The men loved their children but had often alienated themselves from them. The men had lost contact because they didn't want to embarrass their families anymore, or hurt or anger them, or because they had worn out their welcome with them.

[story, Nate]

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I think that our thoughts, our inspirations, our desires to do something that may seem a direction that we're taking *do* come from the gentle movement of the Spirit. I think the Spirit is behind the different moves that I make. I like to feel that my whole life has been directed by the Spirit [...]. I think the Spirit has led me to certain individuals and was behind my contacts with all the people who have been special in my life. The Spirit is a wisdom that prompts us. The Spirit is God — God, I think, working in people.

[interview, Presence and Role of the Spirit in Kate's Ministry]

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The hard part, always, was seeing people relapse and some dying from their choices and the consequences of their disease. I guess you have to let people make the choices that they make and suffer the consequences,

and that *does* hurt. That hurts *me* as a person to see somebody that I know have to go through that.

[interview, Burnout]

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And I think some of them have a very poor image of themselves and a very, very poor self-concept. I think they hear from some of the missions so many sermons that are on hell and damnation because of their drinking that this is so deeply instilled into them that it's hard for them to accept that God does love them and that they are important as people!

[Kate's words from what appears to have been a transcription of an interview that Kate provided in about 1976 for a slide-show presentation to the Holy Names Community by Sister Jean Madden, who was aware of what Kate was doing on Burnside and had asked if she could follow Kate around and take pictures.]

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...he said that he was very disappointed and depressed because nobody had come to see him for four days and he was getting pretty sick. I said, "Troy, I will try to see you every day that I'm in town. I go to Tacoma every Tuesday and I come back Thursday; I'll see you Tuesday morning before I leave, and I'll stop in and see you Thursday when I get back into Portland. And on the days that I work, Saturday and Sunday, I'll come after work."

[story, Troy Westman]

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I think it is still one of my regrets that working at De Paul [Center for Alcoholism Treatment] for those ten years from 1982 to 1992, as involved as I was, took away the kinds of visits and type of ministry that I really love, which is visiting the people and doing what I can for them, spontaneously, as the need arises — not just to work in one agency in one place (as was the case at De Paul), but to be a little freer than this. I missed this activity, even knowing that at that time there were many social services in the area that covered much of what I had done earlier, in the seventies.

[story, Les]

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To me, the way Gene's life ended was one of the kinds of miracles that takes place in the lives of some of these people; I mean the *timing* that I think God uses. In the case of Gene: my seeing him after our split; then his handing me the letters from his family to read; my getting the letters off to his family, saying there wasn't much time left; Vicky coming to visit; the girls coming — each of these individuals had had a chance to reconcile and spend time with Gene, and he with them, and then he was ready to pass on. There had been closure.

[story, Gene]

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I think my life has been blessed. To me — and I'll just put it all into one word — "ministry" has been and still is very enriching, and I have always felt that it was a special gift that God gave me. And the people in my life have been a special gift. I'm grateful for that, and I'm looking forward to seeing eventually, in eternity, those who have passed on. They were special and I certainly loved them, and I know that by many of them I was also loved.

[interview, Burnout]

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We had large three-dimensional Stations [Stations of the Cross — in the convent chapel, early on when Kate was a Sister of St. Mary of Oregon], and I remember when I'd come to the one where Jesus was nailed to the cross [...], I would stand where I could make eye contact with Jesus from the position he was in. And I always felt that I was contacting him in a special way at that point, and I would pray.

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

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And I really love them [the men on Skid Road]. I know I care for them and I know that they know this. I think one of the reasons that they're well aware of this is that no matter what condition they are in, whether they are sick, dirty, filthy, or whatever it is, they come and they know they are accepted and they know they will be helped regardless. It's not, "Go get cleaned up first then come back," or "Go get sober first and then come back."

[Kate's words from what appears to have been a transcription of an interview that Kate provided in about 1976 for a slide-show presentation to the Holy Names Community by Sister Jean Madden, who was aware of what Kate was doing on Burnside and had asked if she could follow Kate around and take pictures.]

I just knew I cared about people, and I never thought of why.

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

...I always blow God a kiss in the morning and at night. When I first get up I just go [demonstrates blowing a kiss].

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

...there is a tremendous amount of beauty, dignity, and worth in all of these people that have so little of anything. I think maybe the most important thing is to just be there and be a caring person for them.

[from Kate's acceptance speech, 1983 Jefferson Award for Public Service]

I tried to make myself aware — not that everybody that I saw when I walked down the street I saw as Christ — but I knew in reflection I was meeting Christ. When I would think about this, I knew that Jesus was there and I was serving him in the men and women. It wasn't a conscious thought all the time; but when I did take time for reflection or prayer, this would be the bulk of it.

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

I like to think, and I really believe, that those who loved you and have gone ahead [in death] are going to be there to greet you and welcome you with open arms. I'm sure, I know you're going to be welcomed and loved.

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

[...] accepting people for who they are and where they are and what they are is so important. I've tried to do that instead of trying to change people. But to me, each person is where they are, and they're precious [...]. They are precious. I may not see that, but I have to know that they are, and that they're very much loved.

[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

I regret in a way that my life is closing down, to where I can't do as much, and the time will come when all I can do is pray and hope. In the meantime, I want to do as much as I can for as long as I am able.

[from unused interview with Ron in January 2005]

I didn't know initially that he wasn't Catholic. And then when I found out that he wasn't, that didn't make any difference for me. I just kept giving it [Communion] to him [the Catholic Church does not permit giving Communion to non-Catholics]. I mean, he wanted God and God wanted him. I look at it that way.

[interview, Intuition About the Right Thing to Do]

My own feeling is that, if I'm on the wrong track [regarding her disagreement with some Church teachings], I'm doing the best I can and it will get straightened out when I see God in the final end.

[interview, Remaining Catholic While Maintaining Viewpoints That Conflict with Official Church Teaching]

- I didn't have any particular thing in mind.
- I had no idea of what I was going to be getting into.
- I didn't know where to start.
- I still wasn't sure what I was going to be doing...
- It wasn't planned; it just developed from one stage to the other...
- When I started meeting the men... I had no idea that I would be doing massive dressing changes and would need a place to work out of and the supplies to do this.

[interview, Neither Mission Nor Plan]

I don't know what drew me there [to Skid Road], but it was the people I met who kept me there.  
[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

I stayed with Troy for three nights, sitting in his room all night. Every now and then I would doze on the chair or get coffee because he was not responding much at that point. I would go over to him periodically and talk to him, pray a little bit, bless him, tell him that I loved him, and hold his hand. Towards the end, his breathing was labored, but he was conscious and his eyes were open. He looked for all the world like Christ dying on the cross; he was thin, and in his large brown eyes you could see the pain.  
[story, Troy Westman]

I've come to a much bigger realization of the values of other religions — Sufism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam. I've come to a deep appreciation of them [...].  
[interview, State of the World]

My experiences with alcoholics and gay and lesbian people have also changed me, in that I am more aware now that for many people there is still a lack of understanding and acceptance. The suffering that others have gone through has made me, I think, more compassionate, more loving, and a more accepting person, striving to love unconditionally all those who come into my life. I'm sure I don't do that as I would like to; I have a long way to go, and I probably won't reach it until eternity.  
[interview, Effects of Kate's Ministry on Her Growth as a Person]

When Oscar was in the hospital, I wish now that I had gone up to see him, that I had talked with him, that I had been some sort of comfort or let him know that I cared. I had never let him know that I cared for him in any way when he was in the hotel, yet this possibly never bothered him. It's probably one of many different times that I'm going to regret that I didn't do more [...].

[...] But I never thought about visiting Oscar at the time, except once or twice maybe. And it could be that maybe my schedule was too full or that I used that as an excuse. The fact is I didn't go see him and, for some reason (though he was not a well-liked person), I wish I had. [...] And while maybe he wouldn't have cared to see me, I think that when you're dying you're glad to see *anybody*; you do appreciate the visitor being a part of your life or showing you they care about you. So Oscar is another one of those I will regret not letting know he was important.

"Anyway, Oscar, I will meet you in Heaven, and we'll have a good old talk, and I know that you don't worry now about what happened."  
[story, Oscar]

...I just was a friend...  
[story, Bobby]

In the seven years that I've worked down here [the year is 1977] I have always felt that if only one person was helped it would have been worth a lifetime of my working down here. I know that I'm convinced that every minute that I have ever spent in the Skid Road area working with these people has been worth it.  
[Kate's words from what appears to have been a transcription of an interview that Kate provided in about 1976 for a slide-show presentation to the Holy Names Community by Sister Jean Madden, who was aware of what Kate was doing on Burnside and had asked if she could follow Kate around and take pictures.]

And more and more I feel in tune with nature, in the fact that... we're all connected about this... first beginning. Whatever God started everything from, we're all — whether it's animal, plant, worm, human — somehow created, grown, evolved from that original "first bang" or whatever it was that exploded, however God started creation, however long it took for things to form.  
[interview, Evolution of Kate's Prayer Life]

**Ron:** While I was working on the second revision, something that struck me was how much more reciprocal, engaging, deep, and detailed your friendships seemed to become with those individuals you helped in the later years of your ministry, particularly in the '90s. I'm thinking of Clay and Troy — just to name two from this period with whom you experienced deep friendship. I mean the *details* of Clay's life, Troy's life, the things you did with them, the places you went with them — doing your laundry with Clay, which would be unthinkable by a lot of people but you enjoyed it! These were deep friendships. And I'm

wondering if this seems true to you as well: that your capacity to form deeper friendships with people and in a shorter amount of time increases through the years.

**Kate:** One thing I know probably is part of this is that as we get older [...] we get richer, you know? Enriched by the spiritual experiences that we have. As I got older I felt freer, to be less restrained. In the earlier part of my ministry, I didn't go around the streets putting my arm around one of the guys that I was walking with, because I didn't have that freedom. I didn't feel that freedom within myself. I think a *freedom* within myself has developed and grown [...] and maybe the capacity to love.

I've always asked God, "Fill my heart to overflowing with your love so it flows into the hearts of others." And I've often felt, as I look back, that that came true.

[from unused interview with Ron in April 2002]



## Appendix IV

### A LOOK INSIDE SOME OF THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

From 1985 to 1989, Kate and I met at my house on roughly twenty occasions to talk casually about the lives and times of the men in the stories. During that period, I had no real goal in mind for the project beyond the simple thought that was stated at the start of the prologue, "Someone should know about this." I recorded our conversations on an old cassette tape recorder. Kate talked spontaneously and did not know in advance which of more than 115 men I would be asking her about. Nor did she prepare or use notes. She simply would talk on the spot according to what I would ask. Usually she would be coming to me straight from De Paul Center after a full day of work and visiting with one or more of her men on Skid Road. Each recording session lasted roughly an hour, after which we would go out to dinner. The sessions took place as Kate passed through ages sixty-four to sixty-eight.

During the sessions we would be just the two of us, the tape recorder, a sweet to share, coffee or tea and sometimes a beverage with more kick.

Somewhere in all of this my parents bought me something called a computer, and I began the long process of transcribing the audio-cassettes word by word, re-wind by re-wind, story by story, tape by tape, over the course of several years, as I had time. It was important to do the transcribing myself to assure transcriptions that were as faithful to the original recordings as possible, and that experience convinced me there is a discipline inherent in transcribing which, if rigorously adhered to, few without madness can survive.

Throughout the months and years that ensued, I explored various ways to organize and otherwise deal with the roughly twenty-five recorded hours of transcribed material and the project generally. In addition, many photographs, news clippings, and pieces of correspondence were incorporated which Kate had accumulated in a suitcase over the course of many years and loaned to me.

On a more personal note and as a comment on our relationship, it may be of interest to know that from the start of the project in 1985 until approximately the present, Kate and I have had contact roughly every few weeks. Almost always involving just the two of us, regular visits typically have been purely social in nature — usually going out to a coffee house just to talk, often going out to dinner, only very rarely discussing the project.

#### *identity of the men*

After much debate, and not knowing where using the men's real names might lead that would be regrettable later, I decided to protect the identity of not only the men by giving them fictitious names, but also of virtually all other individuals mentioned in the project, about 250 persons in all. As a result, there were roughly 500 names to manage in the system, half fictitious, half real. This was an intimidating challenge to work with and resulted many times in confusion and frustrating losses of time. And sometimes, if it seemed necessary in order to protect the identity of a man, I did not include this or that detail from his story — the name of the hotel in which he stayed, for example, a particularly revealing physical trait, a unique nickname, and so on. Consequently, with only the rarest exception the only correct names of individuals used in the project are those of Kate and myself. It would have been a particularly special joy to have used the real names of the men, and being unable to do so remains for me a particularly special regret.

#### *time lapses*

During the twenty-five-year course of the project, there were many periods when I did not work on it or I worked on it very little. Every lapse of time, however, seemed to bring with it the reward of a new idea to offer the venture. In 1996, for example, many years after what was supposed to have been the final recording session, Kate and I found ourselves at it again. She had come for a visit to debrief about the tragic death of one of her favorite Skid Road men. This turned into a three-hour recording session which led us into two major new stories and a discussion of how her ministry had expanded to include individuals with HIV disease and AIDS. And it was not until after 2001 that the ideas came to me both for the twenty-five interview sessions and for the excerpted audio segments from the original tape-recordings.

#### *the major revision*

During the nine months between July of 2000 and March of 2001 — fifteen years after the first recording session — Kate and I worked on a comprehensive and detailed review and editing of my transcriptions and initial efforts to organize the material. This was the only revision in which Kate participated, though she remained very available and helpful for the duration of the project. For several years after our joint review, I continued to edit the stories on my own, letting them stew and brew for months between edits, asking Kate for additional information as the need arose.

At the very first revision session, I remember that Kate began to change the style of English that had been used in the recordings, from conversational and casual to more refined and formal. Having been an elementary school teacher for twenty-five years prior to going to Skid Road, this was natural and understandable. However, since the language foundation on which the project rests is oral and Kate's

experiences on Burnside were anything but refined and formal, it was my belief that we needed to maintain the written narrative as close to the original recordings as possible. Doing so seemed more honest, would more faithfully preserve the flavor and spontaneity inherent in the recorded stories, and would only underscore the uniqueness of the experiences shared by Kate and the men. After convincing Kate of these matters that first day, the conversational style of English that had been used throughout the project recordings prevailed and has remained essentially untouched in the written stories. This is easily validated in the many audio segments that have been provided to the reader.

The editing focused primarily on what was necessary to support comprehension by the largest number of readers, and changes regarded primarily substance rather than style. During these editing sessions we concerned ourselves mainly with veracity, clarity, and logical positioning of paragraphs and grammatical elements rather than with continually reworked and always more polished language. Kate did not use a computer at any time as part of the revision process, nor did she take material home to work on; her changes came on the spot at each of our meetings, and each change never seemed to require of her more than a minute. Every effort was made to stick to the facts as these were understood and recalled by Kate. We did not employ embellishment, sensationalism, or exaggeration. Kate was always careful to use qualifiers as needed in support of the truth of her experiences — thus expressions such as "to the best of my knowledge," "as I recall now," "he told me," "I believe," and so on. Finally, new memories were added that would come to Kate as we reviewed.

These were the primary ways in which the integrity, character, spontaneity, and freshness of the original recordings were preserved, as well as the flavor of Kate's simple grassroots ministry and the feel of the lives and times of the men themselves.

For the first six months of this review period we would meet at my house roughly once a week for three hours each. Meetings the final three months were twice a week and also for three hours each.

#### *the interview sessions*

It was in 2001 during the last three months of reviewing that the majority of the interview questions were taped, also at my home. These were questions that had evolved gradually for me over the previous sixteen years. Recorded even more spontaneously on her part than the stories had been, Kate did not know in advance what *any* of the questions were going to be; she was given no time to prepare. It was the two of us and the tape recorder back together yet again. The final two interview questions were recorded in 2005 when they came knocking at my door inquiring about the development of Kate's prayer life over the course of seventy-five years and about her thoughts at the time on the state of the world.

#### *whatever*

Kate's use of the word "whatever" was perhaps the most frequent source of irritation for us during the project — both my hearing it again and again and her realizing that I would be stopping her again and again to push for details. And though she might deny it, she would often roll her eyes when I would stop her. I remember how a look of surprise would always come over her that I had noticed the roll, and *that* look of hers was usually followed quickly by an expression from her either of irritation or of dismay. Delightful moments to look back on; not exactly pleasant at the time.

Not to worry, though, for when we went to dinner to celebrate the end of the joint revision, I gave Kate a wall clock, along the bottom of which the manufacturer had arranged all twelve numbers in completely scrambled order and across the face of which had written the word "whatever." It was perfect and she loved it!

#### *differing fields of vision*

Kate never saw the project as hers or as ours, neither did she promote or encourage it; rather she simply accepted it unquestioningly as something I wanted to do. She supported me all the way and trusted that I saw something in it which she clearly did not. She could see easily that what we were doing might be of local interest, particularly to people familiar with Portland's Skid Road area or with her or the men. But seeing the project through the lens of universal applicability, both in its potential appeal to others and its value as a catalyst and model for change, was something I would feel the need to play up often when we would be together. Perhaps this was no more than an attempt on my part to peptalk myself and assure that I felt supported in my efforts. Yet I struggled with this difference in vision for the duration of the project, for it left me feeling to be alone; and sometimes I even resented the difference despite my ability to understand it.

In retrospect, it may have been precisely because Kate's actions on behalf of the men were so practical, real, and particularly *local* that the concepts of universal applicability and catalyst for change were simply not on her radar.

#### *getting more personal*

During the first many years of the project, Kate was reluctant to answer any of my questions about her personal life. She found it hard to talk about herself. She resisted, at times intensely, and the result for the two of us would be stress inevitably. To my requests to get to know *her* in addition to the men, she responded most frequently that no one would be interested in "that sort of information" or that it had "nothing to do with the stories." This was the situation from 1985 until 2001, the year of the interview sessions.

With the interview sessions, time, and our maturing relationship, Kate no longer seemed to mind

talking about herself for the project. She relaxed and no longer resisted. In fact, by 2009 she had several times let me in well behind some of the inner defenses that we all set up in our lives to protect us from those who pry without invitation. In short, she had come to trust me completely and unconditionally.

Over the course of this very long project Kate and I have become quite close. We have shared and continue to share a personal relationship that is at once affectionate, trusting, enjoyable, humorous, challenging, and deep. And I am sure that whatever length or duration one might assign to the definition of time, *that* long and probably more will our relationship endure. And I guess I mean forever.

-RT

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

To find out more about Ron Talarico, visit [www.rontalarico.com](http://www.rontalarico.com)

All net revenue derived from the sale of this book, after expenses associated with its development, publishing, and promotion, will be used for charitable purposes related to the Skid Road and HIV/AIDS ministries of Kate St. Martin, including but not limited to the areas of chemical dependency prevention and treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, health care, aging services, poverty, homelessness and housing, employment, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and peace and justice.

## OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR

### ***The Mouth Is for Talking***

A heart-warming true story of the effects of life-long marginalization on a woman and the efforts of one man to minimize its devastating consequences. As the story opens, Mary is a homebound octogenarian who by force of circumstances has become trapped inside a life of isolation and reclusion; Ron is a middle-aged stranger who comes into Mary's life from seemingly nowhere every Monday afternoon at three-thirty. The story details the delightful, affectionate, and deeply moving relationship that develops between the couple over the course of three years. The narrative unfolds against a backdrop of disruptive and discounting intrusions by Frank, Mary's youngest brother, with whom she still lives and whose resentment and put-downs she daily bears. The reader is led on a uniquely different journey through the world of Mary's profound patience and courage in dealing with both the adversity that has been brought upon her by a single misfortune in early youth and the social and emotional deprivation that ensue. Through the honesty, trust, and intimacy that develop over the course of a hundred and fifty visits, the lives of Mary and her new friend become forever changed.

### ***Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives***

(with Fran Hewitt)

- a publication of Portland Habilitation Center, Inc.

A resource manual for individualized program planning, this is also a training instrument for functional independence, and develops 1,100 skills into 27,000 component tasks in nine major subject areas. This work focuses on specific skills that need to be taught to individuals at various levels of functioning regardless of age or classifying label.

### ***Social Readiness Program***

(with Fran Hewitt)

- a publication of Portland Habilitation Center, Inc.

An individualized behavior management system that completes the Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives. This is a free-standing tool designed for daily use to systematically monitor, train, and establish maintenance of 64 "readiness" behaviors — behaviors that are assumed prior conditions to almost any performance task and basic social interaction. Originally developed for use with individuals with exceptional needs, the program merits consideration for use in regular classroom settings as well. Implementation is recommended in conjunction and simultaneously with whatever skill training an individual is receiving.

(For ordering information on the above works, visit: [www.rontalarico.com](http://www.rontalarico.com))

### ***Reflections on Life***

A collection of personal interpretations: [www.rontalarico.com](http://www.rontalarico.com)

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