



*I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word - Martin Luther King, Jr*

# Loaves & Fishes

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by the people of Meeting Ground and BorderLinks

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## Remembering Bobby Gordon: 1946 - 2004

### It Began with Blackbirds

by Carl Mazza

This story starts with an ending. Bobby Gordon, our much loved Program Coordinator of Clairvaux Farm, died on July 4. For the Meeting Ground community, this event closed an amazing chapter of our common life. At the end there was a crowded memorial service on our pavilion at the Farm. Folks came from as far away as Indiana and Tennessee, and Don Vermilyea interrupted his *Walk Across America* to come from Montana by bus to be there.

Folks from all walks of life spoke movingly of the difference Bobby made in their lives. Retired professionals stood at the same lectern with young people who had no home – all paid tribute to the influence of a remarkable soul. It didn't take much to imagine Bobby sitting with us, his large frame perched on the edge of a folding chair with his hands cupped on top of a cane propped between his legs. He must have listened in amazement to hear that a blind and very weary homeless man could have had such a

profound impact on his world and the lives he touched. Thus it ended.

Yet, this extraordinary story began without fanfare on a darkening October evening in 1999. Bobby and Deb Gordon with daughter Shana, drove for the first time down the stretch of road leading to Clairvaux Farm. By the last light of the setting sun they saw that the way was covered by a huge cluster of blackbirds, becoming airborne in waves as their car ran the gauntlet. Shana viewed it as a friendly sign that at long last the family was home.

The small, clanky Honda Civic had been their abode for six months. Blindness, the result of macular degeneration, had robbed Bob and his family of their livelihood as well as their housing and eventually all hope for the future. Life in their vehicle for such a long time was increasingly humiliating and demoralizing.

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### Rick & Jean's Challenge

All at Meeting Ground are excited and grateful for Rick and his election as Moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Also, for the wise choice of Jean Peacock as Vice-Moderator! Their election is particular joy and a special grace for our community.

In the mid-1980s Meeting Ground was a Sanctuary Community, assisting refugees from Central America who were struggling to find safety for themselves and their families. We partnered with Jim Corbett and

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*See also, "Rick's New Adventure" on page 5*



## Jon Walton to Speak at our First Fall Gathering

On October 2, Meeting Ground will initiate a new program which we hope will be an annual event. Our "Fall Gathering: Luncheon and Silent Auction" will be held at Schaefer's Canal House Restaurant in North Chesapeake City, Maryland on Saturday, October 2 at 11:30 a.m.

The feature of the program will be a presentation from a unique perspective which will educate and inspire. We count it a great privilege to have Rev. Jon Walton as our speaker. Jon is Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in New York City, which is 20 blocks north of the former



**Ticket information on page 9**



World Trade Center, and only two blocks from St. Vincent's Hospital.

His first Sunday as pastor was September 9th, 2001. Two days later he stepped out of the building to see the horrific spectacle of the Twin Towers on fire and crashing to the ground. The congregation itself lost six of its members. Grieving and searching families gathered in its sanctuary, and the church became a gathering place for the Spirit: "If we thought we were alone," said Jon, "that we had to endure this trial or walk this hard way or bear this sorrow without any friends, we were wrong. The whole world crowded into our sanctuary." At the gathering, he will speak of his experiences, and how the aftermath of 9/11 has affected the most vulnerable in the city.

This event is designed to bring our community together in a unique way, and to give partners and potential partners a chance to share the ongoing philosophy of Meeting Ground, and to help in its development. Part of our objective is educational and inspirational, and part is to strengthen and extend our supporting partnership.

The Silent Auction is the fund-raiser aspect of the event, and it is being sponsored by the Board of Directors. There will be a large assortment of items for bidding, ranging from private computer instruction sessions, beach vacation weekends, gourmet meals, antique collectibles, and gift certificates for a variety of goods and services.

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