

Falling Down . . .

[Continued from page 4]

Just when the other sparrows had quieted down, this has to happen. "SHUT UP," came out of my mouth. The little thing then gets up, comes over to me, looks in my eyes, like I was its friend, sits down on my brand-new Gore-Tex ground cloth, and gets under my sleeping bag due to the windy conditions.

"Man, I raised chickens for twenty years! They poop every hour! No way is my new ground cloth going to get messed up! No way!" I uttered silently to myself.

I did the only logical thing I could do. After lifting my sleeping bag to expose it, I took my left hand and "gently" backhanded it three feet away. Honest, I didn't hurt it, well maybe I hurt its feelings if birds have such things.

It crumpled like it did for the first five minutes after it fell down. I felt horrible. How could I do such a thing to something that was only looking for love, comfort, and warmth.

What had I done? For the first time on this walk something truly needed me and I pushed him away. My mission, my sleep, and my ground cloth were all more important than his little life.

As I walk across America like a needy little bird, stumbling and falling down, I'm constantly "backhanded." I'm constantly rejected in one way or another, and now with my first chance to share the love of God with something needy, and I blow it.

Dear Heavenly Father, dear God in Heaven, please forgive me. I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry . . .

The little bird picked his head up, marched right back to my ground cloth, looked up at me, and got under my sleeping bag to keep his body warm for a second time.

I didn't sleep very well that night because I didn't want to squash him. How would I have felt if I'd found him cold and dead the next morning because I rolled over on him?



Praise God for second chances as he was safe when I lifted my sleeping bag up the next morning. Yes, there was a pile of loosey goosey poop next to him on my ground cloth.

After taking the baby bird's photograph I laid in bed staring at the pipe he had fallen out of the day before. All of a sudden there was new dirt and dust and another bird falls down out of it. He was just as unsuccessful flying as the first one.

The second one was larger and didn't wait for five minutes trying to figure out if he was dead or alive. He immediately rose up and started, "TWEET, TWEET, TWEET" and I didn't mind. My new friend got out from under "our" sleeping bag and started tweeting again. The two of them met in the middle of the poopy floor with such joy and happiness. At least it looked like joy and happiness to me as they high-fived with their beaks. It was like instead of not seeing each other for twelve hours, it had been decades of being split up.

They returned to "our" ground cloth and I took their picture complete with two piles of juicy poop that continue to stain my ground cloth a year later.

Is God Great or what? There is hope and second chances for even old, ornery, selfish people like me. I truly need that hope. We all do.

Till the next time

In Christ's love,

Don

Miles to date: 10,949

Money picked up along road:
\$711.74

Unsolicited money given by
motorists: \$1,364.03

Doings at Wayfarers' House



By Marsha Mazza

Wayfarer's House has been through a face-lift this past year with our new kitchen. It is a delight to work in there, especially when 5 of us are diabetic and learning new healthful recipes. A nurse and nutritionist from Union Hospital have taught a class and educated us about this condition and we've all learned about good things to eat. The windows have all been replaced, and vinyl siding covers the exterior, thanks to another grant from the MD Affordable Housing Trust. The house is looking beautiful and is much easier to keep clean. We're hoping to blacktop the driveway soon too.

What is really important at WH is what goes on inside these walls. The relationships we have with each other here change our lives forever. Our relationships with each other reflect our relationship with our Higher Power/God. We often talk in our community meetings about our relationships and how they define our "spirituality."

Shelby is the mother of Zachary who is a parenting example to us all. She has dedicated her life to her son who has autism. She has read and studied all she can on this condition with the intention of helping Zach to live to his greatest potential. She has taught us better ways to communicate with him and we have learned what a sweet, intelligent and delightful child he is. He's taught us to be patient, and he is fun. Shelby's guidance comes from her strong faith in God.

When we've had groups visit WH over the summer, Shelby has been one to talk with them about why she came here and what life is like here. She wants these kids to know that all homeless people are not mentally ill, substance abusers, or criminals; many have had homes and just find themselves financially strapped. They love their children and teach them well. Shelby and Zach will be moving into their new apartment this week. Congratulations to them and I hope we are friends for a long time!

So often when problems, like homelessness, arise, we try to find that "thing" that happened; what went wrong? What traumatic event led to

[Continued on page 11...]

Our First Fall Gathering . . .

[Continued from page 1]

Tickets for the event are \$40.00 per person, and this includes a buffet lunch with Maryland crab cakes, beef tips, side dishes, and desserts. Except for the cost of the meal, all costs are being underwritten or donated by volunteers, so that everything raised will go directly toward the work of Meeting Ground with and among the persons and families of our community who are experiencing homelessness.

Churches, community organizations and businesses, and individuals are also being invited to purchase an ad in our printed program for the event. Prices range from \$25.00 (quarter page) to \$100.00 (full

page). Donations are welcome for our Silent Auction.

If you have an item or service to donate to the silent auction, please contact:

Tracey McCaw

410-658-4640

TLMcCaw@zoominternet.net

Tickets and information can be obtained

by calling: **410-275-2936**

or by e-mail:

info@meetingground.org

or by mail: **PO Box 808,**

Elkton, MD 21922

Seating is limited, and we urge everyone to purchase tickets early.