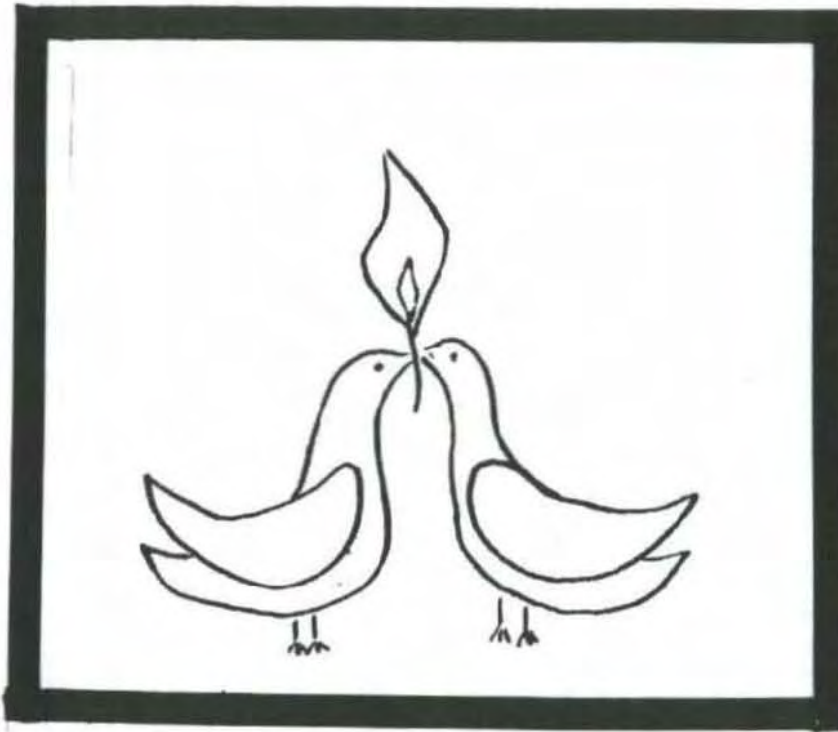


The COMMON FLAME



The wedding newsletter written and published
by Laura R. Yeomans and Richard R. Renner.

This issue includes, "Directions," "The
Perfect Gift" and much more.....

July 21, 1982

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THE PERFECT GIFT!

The perfect gift for Laura and Richard is your witness and celebration of their marriage. Of course, many of us have been affected by our Madison Avenue culture, and with the first wisper of wedding bells, reflexively wince with anxiety about a gift.

We believe our wedding is a ceremony rooted in the community of our loved ones. Your celebration with us, not gift anxiety, is the best foundation for our lives together. We are well provided for, these are fortunate and exciting times for us, and we sincerely ask you not to worry about gifts. Our energies can be so better used elsewhere.

Speaking of which . . . , we would like to mention a few organizations which can put our money to important causes. We mention these, though, only for those of you who still have an urge to spend a significant amount of money.

Part Of The Solution (POTS) is a home in the Bronx, New York City, for the most caring and talented homeless young people we have had the pleasure of knowing. It is also the home of Jesuit Father Ned Murphy, the priest who is officiating at our wedding. Father Ned, unable to satisfy his calling by working in a Times Square youth crisis center, nor by regular arrests at nuclear weapons facilities, also opens his home to these special people. POTS was just founded last year. They are still paying for their house, and they are opening a soup kitchen in a nearby storefront. Tax deductible contributions can be sent to Father Edward Murphy, S.J., POTS, 223 Bedford Park Blvd., Bronx, NY 10458 (212) 933-6526.

Translating Values into Action

CALC chapters gather people of different faiths, enable them to translate their religious and ethical values into action for peace and justice, and send them back to their faith communities equipped to motivate and lead others.



Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) is organizing religious people nationally to be an effective witness for feeding the hungry, creating world security without nuclear weapons, and for human rights. Founded by Dr. Martin Luther King and others to catalyze church action on Vietnam, it now has over 20,000 members and 40 local chapters. CALC's national office is at 198 Broadway, Room 302, New York, NY 10273-0088. Tax deductible contributions may be made payable to CALC Foundation.

The State Project Office of ACTION for Battered Women in Ohio Coalition (wow! what a name) is the educational wing of a coalition of shelters in Ohio. It provides training, materials, and support for 42 shelter directors and boards in Ohio. I highly recommend them to you! Mary Jo Ginty, the director of the project, was very helpful to me as a struggling new director of Transitions, Inc. State Project Office of ACTION, P.O. Box 02550, Cleveland, OH 44102.

In case you're worried about all the money you will be saving from all this tax-deductibility, the Appalachian Ohio Public Interest Campaign (AOPIC) has just been founded to coordinate church, labor, and community actions on issues affecting poor and working people in Southeast Ohio. AOPIC has just hired a pair of young energetic co-directors (who will marry each other on August 21st in Blue Rock State Park!) whose first task will be to raise enough money to keep the Campaign alive through the winter. Contributions may be sent to AOPIC, P.O. Box 2612, Athens, OH 45701. If you wish, make tax-deductible contributions payable to the Industrial States Policy Center.

A gift to any of these organizations is certainly more valuable to us than the usual wedding fare. It will relieve your wedding gift anxiety, channel your energies to the higher pursuits, and avoid practical problems of objectionable non-union, Nestle, or Campbells products. The very best gift, remember, is your witness on August 21st that we are married, and your celebration with the community of our loved ones.



"LAURA" FOR BEGINNERS

We were sitting in a circle introducing ourselves, Friday evening, Nov. 16, 1979. My mind was focused on understanding what I planned to do that next Monday - sit my body down with this community as a witness that nuclear omnicide is a sin. I was focused on myself; finding my own sense of moral commitment; letting go of my selfish expectations, the noise of the Bronx; trying to join Christian community.

We were sitting in a circle, as the Kairos Community - Father Ned Murphy, Sister Ann Montgomery, Father Dan Berrigan, Cathleen Watkins, Guy Berube, and "Laura Yeomans, I'm a community organizer working against bank redlining in the Bronx....." Suddenly, I wasn't focused on myself! She seemed committed to social justice and an active faith. And she lives in the Bronx! I'll have to get to know her, maybe we can take the same subway home tonight.

Sure enough, we could. Father Ned Murphy sat between us the whole way. But the next night he couldn't ride back with us. She complained that as an organizer her free time was in the morning when her other friends worked. "Maybe we can get breakfast together." And just before my stop I remembered to ask for her phone number (she wasn't listed when I checked.)

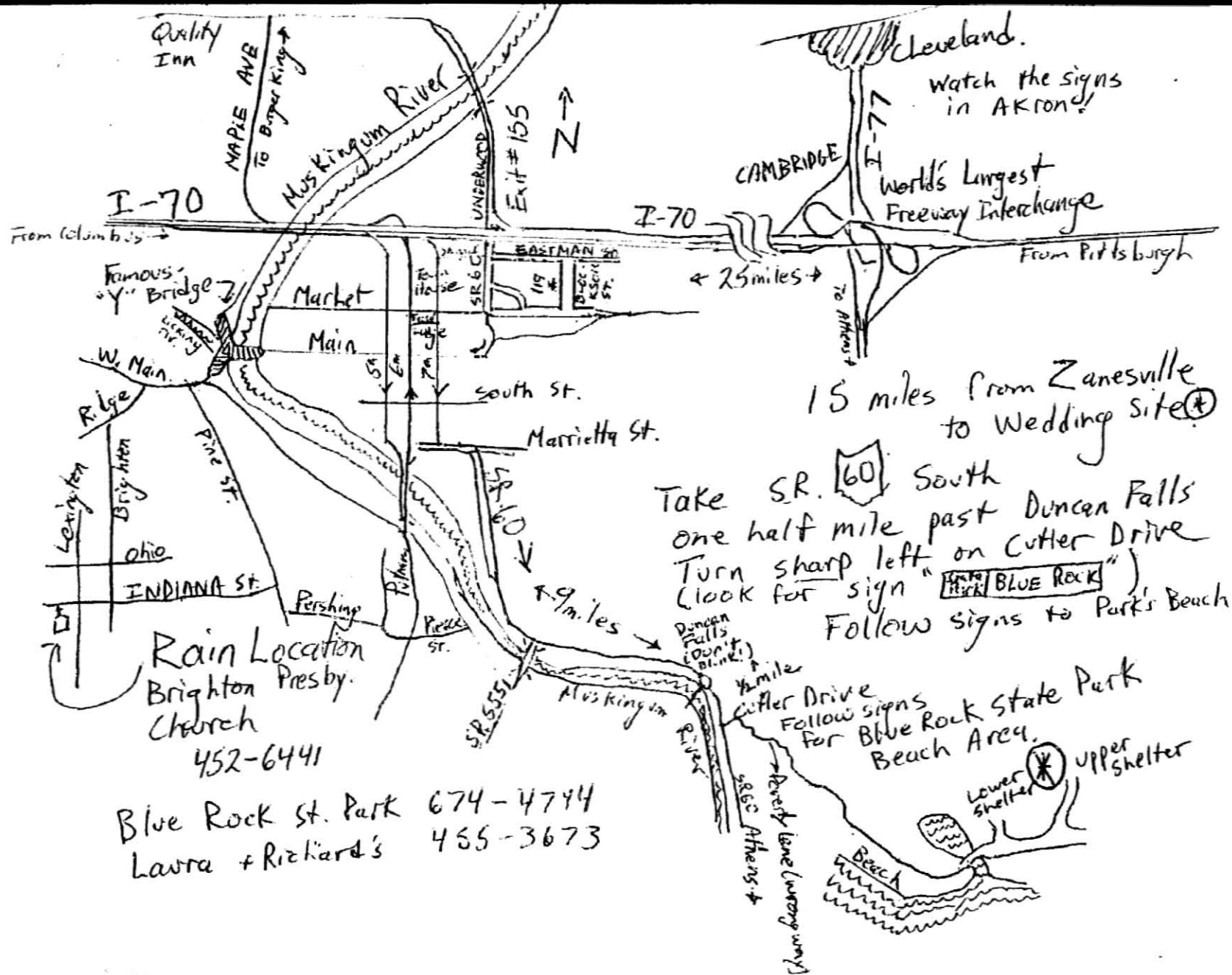
It took us a long time to get to know each other. On our first date, I made Tom Davidson's millet casserole. She hated it, and wouldn't tell me so. I tried to hold her hand and it nearly ended our relationship. (How did she expect to get breakfast together when I can't even hold her hand?!)

Well, it wasn't exactly "Once upon a time.... they lived happily ever after." We took a lot of time to discover our differences, to understand them, and then to either work them out, or accept them, . or keep trying to work them out. But through all that talking our relationship became a special friendship.

February 1980, was the turning point. I went to my first community organizing meeting. Laura's chapter celebrated their first anti-redlining agreement with a Bronx bank. Laura was doing what I dreamed of doing after law school. On Valentine's Day we went ice skating at Skyrink in Manhattan. She held me very close. "How strange, I thought," for someone who still won't kiss me." I had dinner at her apartment and met her roommates, Kristina, three cats and Eileen Pentel. And on the last day of the month, Laura's sixth birthday, I finally made breakfast for her! But I had to walk the 1½ miles to her apartment at 7:30 AM to do it!

(continued on page 10)

DIRECTIONS



(continued from page 7)

Somehow gradually we seemed to be sharing all the different parts of our lives. That summer though, something mysterious happened underneath the functional part of our lives. It wasn't just the New York City summer air. I think it had something to do with both of us experiencing the best of ourselves. Laura had become the lead organizer for the Bronx Citizens Alliance. She was hiring and training new staff, planning new campaigns on the energy crisis, educating and empowering her community. I was the staff for the Religious Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival. Draft registration was announced and I was working on a statement in opposition by national religious leaders. The Democratic Convention was coming to town, and I was working on a media strategy for the People's Convention in the South Bronx. Laura and I were both doing what we most wanted to do, and I think that meant we had so much more to give.

By that fall, we both had a sense that our relationship would go on forever (But I'm too young for forever!) so... more talking. With senior year, and the advent of job hunting, life became at once more serious and less certain. The job search would last until next July, and I had little idea how much would change when I started a job. So I couldn't say I'd marry Laura. We took two rounds of counseling sessions, and both showed us that we cared enough to make our relationship last. But she wasn't committed to the Big Apple,

so I began the bar review in Ohio with cheapie (but unionized) air tickets for every other weekend! Finally in July we both got jobs in Zanesville, and our lives just seemed to fall together.

Life together in Zanesville has been only a little bit less hectic than in New York. We expected bliss - we should have so much time together. After all, Zanesville didn't even have a peace group! But we found there are good people and hard problems everywhere. Our time was soon eaten up by the needs of battered women, poor people and new found friends. Zanesville, proudly now has a peace group, the Muskingum Area Peacemakers. Laura and I now have a sense of what will keep us going forever, a shared vision of social justice, a community of peace and breakfast together daily!



GETTING TO KNOW RICHARD

Forty Bronx community people filled the room. Mr. Neulist, Pauline Wilson, May Rush, Richie Gans. Richard was there too, ready to help in our meeting with four Citibank officials. Citibank was withdrawing branches out of our neighborhoods and investing only a little into our neighborhoods.

We invited Richard over for dinner. Kristina taught Eileen and I how to make spinach crepes with mushroom sauce! After Eileen and Kristina excused themselves, we sat by the cardtable on the sunporch and talked and talked. Would I like to dance? Yes... Our first kiss.

I enjoyed visiting Richard's apartment in the Bronx. A ballgame in the street, construction work underway, women hanging out of windows. Five flights up. Casey barks from next door. Patrick comes rushing out off to Lehman Collège. "Richard? Anyone home?" Yep, Richard was home and about 50 cockroaches. "They don't hurt anything, Richard explained, " Bugs have rights too!"



BLOCKADE THE BOMBMAKERS

On June 14th we joined 1,600 demonstrators to blockade the consulates of five nations with nuclear weapons. This action was lawbreaking in the spirit of fidelity to law. We called the nations with the greatest nuclear weaponry to submit to the law of life; the right of every human being to live. We were part of the demonstration because we want the superpowers to work for disarmament. We want our children to have a chance to live.

At 8 A.M. we joined the protest with the Kairos Community beside the Chinese Mission. (Kairos is an ecumencial peace group in New York City. Richard and I met for the first time during one of their planning sessions for a civil disobedience action.) Over 50 people blockaded one side of the mission. At 8:20 A.M. police officers read us our rights and placed us under arrest. Demonstrators were loaded onto city buses and taken to a Harlem police precinct. By 11 A.M. we were back in the Bronx. Ned Murphy, the Jesuit priest who will marry us, was arrested at the same time.-



"Above all, the people. I like to believe that people, in the long run, are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days, governments had better get out of the way and let them have it!"

—President Eisenhower
August 31, 1959



"Fluff," our first child, arrived on May 8, 1982, weighing in at 7 ounces and 14 whiskers.



Come to
Laura + Richard's
Wedding

Saturday, August 21st
5 P.M. , Blue Rock
State Park

Bring your swimsuit for an after reception dip.
RAIN LOCATION: Brighton Pres. Church (see map)

Laura R. Yeomans
Richard R. Renner
119 Blocksom St.
Zanesville, OH 43701
(614) 455-3673

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