



NEW HAMPSHIRE EPISCOPAL NEWS

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A diocesan edition of *episcopallife*

New Londoners are New Orleans-bound

NEW LONDON — At least seven (and maybe 10) St. Andrew's parishioners are forming a mission trip to New Orleans to work in Katrina relief efforts.

Judy Ackroyd and Janet Miller Haines are coordinating the initiative, which will continue the work of gutting of houses with the help of shovels, crowbars and hammers. Other jobs include putting up wallboard, insulating, painting, even gardening. Less strenuous roles involve driving vans to various locations to deliver supplies. There's also a medical team and a legal team that goes out to help folks fill out forms for financial assistance.

The St. Andrew's group will be in New Orleans Nov. 10-16.



ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, BERLIN

Calendar note

The 2008 Historic Episcopal Churches Engagement Calendar is available at \$15.95, plus 10 percent shipping from National Episcopal Historians and Archivists, 509 Yale Avenue, Swarthmore, PA 19081. There are 53 churches, including Berlin.

Upcoming Events

Oct. 28-Nov. 1 Walking in the Light,
Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua

Nov. 2-4 Children at Worship~Congregations
in Bloom, St. Paul's Church, Lancaster

Nov. 10 Diocesan Convention, St. Paul's
Church, Concord.* 7:30 a.m. coffee/check-in;
credentials table closes 9 a.m. Convention 9-4.

Nov. 16-17 Province I Convocation,
Doubletree Hotel, Westborough.

*Convention delegates are asked to bring Pre-
convention Journal (red book) to convention.



THE JESUS GUY

SEAN TRACEY PHOTO

St. John's filmmaker's doc debuts

By CATE McMAHON

St. John's parishioner Sean Tracey left his everyday life as an award-winning producer of TV commercials to follow a dream: making a documentary. The result is *The Jesus Guy*, a film that had its New Hampshire premiere Oct. 11, at the New Hampshire Film Festival at Portsmouth's Music Hall.

The documentary follows the life of a young preacher as he travels around the United States, bearded, barefoot, wearing a homespun robe, and carrying only a prayer book. "What's your name?" is the response the preacher makes to those who ask his name and it becomes his name, to the dismay of some who hear him as he quotes the scriptures and witnesses to the love of God.

This preacher captivates many, young and old, and turns off others, much as Jesus did. His is a Christian message, and while not sectarian, this is a man who prizes the Eucharist and the Communion Table.

For all his eccentricities, *What's your Name* appears to have his feet on the ground. He notes, for instance, that people seem to be inspired by him because of his resemblance to images of Jesus, not because of what Jesus actually looked like. He presents himself as simple, and detached from all material goods, following the New Testament instructions to take no money, shoes or a second tunic, and go tell about the Kingdom of God. In 16 years, he actually walked across 47 states and 13

foreign countries as an itinerant, shoeless preacher.

The Jesus Guy is a small masterpiece. It's beautifully filmed by Tracey using a single camera and minimal equipment. There's a great flow — segments are gently defined with a person off-camera reading a relevant passage from scripture, or there's a bit of music, including portions of the Ave Maria sung in Latin by *What's Your Name*.

The documentary is balanced and open-ended; the viewer can decide what to take and what to leave. The film shows the preacher's conversations with a young woman who is pregnant and manages to become joyful about a new birth, even though she will be alone, and with a bunch of prep school boys who guess that *What's Your Name* is doing what he does because of "emotional problems." The preacher's front porch visit at a home for the mentally-disabled will captivate viewers with the residents' down-to-earth candor. *What's Your Name* runs into trouble here and there with some church figures, though not all. A bishop in Alabama believes he's 'substantial,' but a diocese in Camden gives him the cold shoulder. Police officers in Wildwood, N.J. can't seem to figure out what to do when they have a conversation with him. They are sure he needs a permit. As Tracey is filming him outside a house, *What's Your Name* challenges the police in polite terms and they are flummoxed.

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View from Blackwater Bluff — Charles LaFond

WEBSTER – Blackwater Bluff is a small farm that juts out over the edge of the meandering Blackwater River just below the dam of the same name, not far from Canterbury's Shaker Village. This small farmhouse built in the mid-1800s is where I'm making my new home, after having left a monastery in Cambridge, Mass. The farm has a pottery and a bit of forest, so it's a good, quiet place to call home.

Most of my old friends know me as a city dweller! They look at me funny and say, "What do you do there?" implying that I was foolish to choose a house on a dirt road in the woods.

I say I am busy "becoming." And it is true. I am trying daily to become God's hope for me. Sometimes I fail miserably and sometimes I can just barely hold my own. And sometimes I can see that I am changing – becoming converted into the likeness of the One who created me.

"Stewardship" – the word gets a bum rap in church. It gets tarted up with all sorts of misplaced anxiety and misspent efforts of design and program. Some people, in a fit of frustration, will say they want to erase the word from the church's vocabulary and start again. But I like the word. It tells the truth that what we have is not ours and that what seems to be ours is really a gift given by the real "master." Even so, I sometimes resist the notion of stewardship because I want to pretend that what I have come from me and is mine to do with as I please. But that is a lie.

Like most people, I've found that moving into a new house involves buying stuff. And I like to buy stuff. As a result of purchases at outlets and 50 percent off tables I'm on buyer lists, and now I'm being flooded with catalogues as the Christmas sales season approaches. Television is doing the same thing – playing on my insecurities to get me to buy things. "Am I good enough? Am I loved? Am I handsome? Am I liked? Am I impressive enough?" When the answer bubbles up from a sad place as "no," then I go shopping. I anesthetize myself with small and useless purchases.

But on my better days I am and want to be a child of the living God who created me and formed me and continues to form me. The ads

The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond is stewardship officer of the New Hampshire diocese.



HOME AND POTTERY OF CHARLES LAFOND

on TV are lies. The loneliness is lies. The implication that things will make me happy is a lie.

What is true is that we are deeply loved by a God who gave us all we have. What is also true is that God delights in our enjoyment of what we have. As I live my story, it is lived as a Christian – created in the image of a God whose primary way of being is as creator, a lover and a giver.

So I too must be a creator, a lover and a giver. As a potter I love to create. As a friend I love to love. But sometimes I need help being a giver. I count on the life of the church to help me in my becoming a better giver.

I think Blackwater Bluff is where God will do some of God's best and hardest work on my soul. Becoming is hard work but it is wonderful work, too. I take heart from the words of author Frederick Buechner who speaks about 'telling secrets:

"...I have come to believe that by and large the human family all has the same secrets, which are both very telling and very important to tell. They are telling in the sense that they tell what is perhaps the central paradox of our condition – that what we hunger for perhaps more than anything else is to be known in our full humanness, and yet that is often just what we also fear more than anything else. It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are – even if we tell it only to ourselves – because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier that way to see where we have been in our lives and where we are going." Telling Secrets (New York: Harper & Row, 1991, pp. 2-3.)

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Toward the end of the film there is a totally unexpected reunion of the preacher and his father, arranged by a woman who provided housing and food for the preacher over a period of time and who was concerned about what she thought was depression on his part. All in all, it's a film well worth seeing.

Sean Tracey had looked forward to doing a documentary for a long time. One reason he hesitated was because he needed a subject that would hold an audience for the duration of a film. He found that subject in what various news media referred to as the 'Appalachian Apostle,' the 'Barefoot Evangelist,' the 'Jesus Guy.'

After putting it off, Tracey finally sent an intern to try to locate *What's Your Name*, and the trail led to Pennsylvania. He presented his proposal and the barefoot evangelist agreed to be filmed. Over a period of three years, Tracey traveled with *What's Your Name*, for consecutive days, up to a week at a time. He walked wherever the preacher walked, at a distance, and he said he'd sometimes find himself 10 or 15 miles from where his rental car was parked.

Tracey's discipline and spare, unobtrusive approach paid off: there are great images of *What's Your Name* walking barefoot during an evening sleet storm, and the evangelist stopping to sit on the grass to remove a thorn from his foot. Tracey also catches a feisty conversation in a bar where one patron becomes very annoyed that *What's Your Name* won't reveal his "birth name."

The film is peppered with a series of reflections by women who hosted *What's Your Name* during his travels. They speak of how their lives changed for the better, but also reveal their frustration with the preacher. One resolves her dilemma by crediting God for the liberation she experienced with *What's Your Name*'s ministry – he's just a human being, she said.

The film premiered at the Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival Sept. 30 to a large audience. *What's Your Name* and Sean Tracey, the director, were there for an intense question and answer period after the film, followed by a SideTalk panel discussion.

To Tracey's delight, *The Jesus Guy* was an official selection of the New Hampshire Film Festival which just screened the film in his hometown of Portsmouth. He said the film will be on the Festival Circuit for about a year, including a chance to be featured at Sundance, whose participants will be chosen this month.

Once that's completed, Tracey will consider how best to distribute the film. In the meantime, those interested in seeing the film can contact ariane@seantracey.com or call his Portsmouth office at 427-2800. Several churches and synagogues have already expressed interest in screening the film. More information is available at the film's website, www.thejesusguy.com.

Sean Tracey is a graduate of Brown University where he majored in religious studies and philosophy. He also studied sculpture and electronic music composition at Rhode Island School of Design. He has performed professionally as a jazz pianist and trumpeter.

Tracey produced the video that was commissioned by the diocesan bishop search committee, part of the package sent to potential candidates. He also produced the video of Bishop Robinson's institution as Bishop of New Hampshire in March, 2004.

The Episcopal Church Wants YOU, and Some Others Whom You Know!

The Joint Standing Nominating Committee of General Convention is seeking applications from persons willing to be nominated for five elections that will take place at General Convention 2009, to be held in Anaheim, California, July 8-17. Applications must be received on or before Feb. 1, 2008.

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To learn more about what is expected for each assignment, to learn how to apply, and to get a copy of the application form required, visit Committee's website <http://tinyurl.com/2dv9fr>. The site is available in French, Spanish, and English.

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