

# ***The Peace Press* – December 2006/ January 2007**

## **Getting Centered**

### **Listening. For those who cannot speak for themselves**

by Elizabeth Stinson, Director

*I can't run no more  
with that lawless crowd  
while the killers in high places  
say their prayers out loud.  
But they've summoned, they've summoned up a thundercloud  
and they're going to hear from me.*

*There is a crack, a crack in everything.*

*That's how the light gets in. – Leonard Cohen*

We celebrate the change in power with a hope for government accountability, accountability to the families, both here and in Iraq and Afghanistan... losses both military and civilian. We must hold this window of hope and push it open. We can take this closed system that is collapsing within itself and force it to operate as an open, transparent and accountable system, and end this war.

The next, most necessary piece of our work has just begun: to regain habeas corpus, to dismantle the fascist Military Commissions Act, known as and operating as the "torture bill." We work to support the necessary voice of the people in their response to truth. What a wondrous shape may it take for all of us... this necessary commitment to being an agent of change?

The diversity of articles submitted from the community for this issue of the *Peace Press* to address social justice reminds us again of our different motivations and reasoning.

This month, I was stopped and my heartbeat changed by the statement from one of the Palestinian mothers who walked with 200 other women into a stronghold and violent situation to rescue their sons and husbands who were trapped... by Israeli gunfire. "These are our sons... what does the world expect us to do?"

I was so moved by this statement. I have no idea what I would have done had it been my son, but I could imagine the terror that motivated this mother. Her statement forced me to look at all sons and daughters who are at risk around the world because we do not have leaders who are capable of diplomacy.

Our children, all our children are at risk until we, with our votes, our bodies, our resources and our sensibilities, insist on leaders who are capable of diplomacy. Leaders who value all life. Leaders who do not vote for the use of violence against civilian populations.

As we work regionally and nationally on issues that impact us internationally, it is made painfully clear to me that, in a way, all that has taken place may be what finally and painfully unmask the intentions of our government. For decades I have watched the apologies for past misdeeds used as a shell game while elected officials attempted to appear compassionate though they were suppressing another population at the same time.

We should not be shocked by what desperate mothers around the world will do to save their children, but we must continue to be shocked by our complicity with the endangerment of children by our leaders.

I am grateful to Hereditary Nuxalk Chief Qwatsinas, one of the indigenous elders who tried very hard to train me in the art of what he referred to as "listening." For Qwatsinas that means listening to the glaciers and to the salmon and the smyusta (mountains) that surround his valley where he lives in British Columbia. Each smyusta represents one of the five types of wild salmon.

Qwatsinas teaches us that we must work for peace every day for those who cannot speak for themselves – the children, the birds, the fish and the trees. His quote is contained in the beautiful cards designed by River Jukes-Hudson that are for sale at the Center.

I want to thank all of you who contribute to the activities at the Center and work with us to create a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

## **After the Elections: Negotiating the Next Steps in Iraq**

by Kathie Guthrie, Friends Committee on National Legislation

The midterm elections this week were, more than anything else, a referendum on the failed US war and military occupation of Iraq. The people of this country have spoken. The voters in this country are saying they will not sacrifice the lives of their loved ones for a failed war in Iraq.

The results of this congressional election will force a change in US policy in Iraq. But what kind of change?

The president today accepted the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. But changing the Secretary of Defense will not change the administration's policy. The stated policy remains: "victory in Iraq."

The problem is not the people in office, the problem is the policy. At a press briefing Wednesday afternoon, President Bush acknowledged the need to "adjust" US implementation of his policy in Iraq, and then added he still believes the US can still "win" a military victory in Iraq. The president has not accepted that his policies have made the US part of the problem, rather than part of the solution in Iraq.

The US still has 150,000 military troops in Iraq. The violence is escalating and spreading throughout the region. The president is planning to ask Congress next February, according to press reports, to approve another "emergency" supplemental appropriation of \$160 billion in funding for the US war and military occupation.

Now it's up to Congress to demand that the president change course in Iraq. The goal should be to end the US war and military occupation in Iraq. That goal will have to be embraced by both parties to be successful. Congress and the president need to accept the reality that no possible outcome will be a victory for anyone in Iraq. The best that can be done now will be to limit the damage, reduce the lethality of the conflict, and prevent a failed state by removing one of the biggest problems there, i.e. the US military presence.

The mid-term elections will send new leadership to Congress. But neither the Democrats working alone nor the Republicans working alone will be able to force a change in US policy toward Iraq. Bipartisan cooperation will be essential to exercise congressional power sufficient to check the misguided executive branch.

We at FCNL believe Congress needs to develop a strategy to withdraw US military forces and to end the US military occupation. Withdrawal of US military forces is a necessary, prior condition for ending the war, but it is not a sufficient condition. Members of Congress from both parties have spoken out against the current US strategy in Iraq. To be successful, any new congressional initiative will have to be a bipartisan effort for a US policy that:

1. Sets a date certain for US military withdrawal;
2. Brings the armed Iraqi nationalist resistance to the negotiating table;
3. Simultaneously starts up a regional process – including Syria and Iran – to support and stabilize Iraq; and
4. Provides US underwriting for Iraqi-led reconstruction.

As Quakers we're opposed to all funding for war. But we know that Congress will continue to pass "emergency" supplemental appropriations for the US war and occupation in Iraq. At a minimum, members of Congress from both parties should condition any additional funding for the Iraq war on this four-point plan for an expeditious US military withdrawal.

## **Peace and Justice in the Holy Land**

by Rebel Fagin

There can be no peace where there is no justice. Justice requires living in truth and compassion. One area in the world where this needs to be done and can be done is in Israel/Palestine.

A little historic background: In 1947 UN resolution 181 created a homeland for Jews with the formation of Israel. A war followed and concluded with an armistice agreement in 1949 which created borders between Palestine and Israel in the West Bank and Gaza. This border is called the Green Line.

Since the six-day war of 1967, Palestinian lands within the Green Line have been occupied by Israeli military forces. This has resulted in decades of violence and terror. The solution is simple; follow UN Security Council Resolution 242 requiring Israel to respect pre-1967 borders, and UN Resolution 194 allowing Palestinians the right to return. These already existing resolutions honor borders and offer just solutions for the refugees.

Palestine can never achieve peace as long as it resorts to random acts of terrorism like suicide bombers. Nor can Israel achieve peace by building a wall within Palestinian lands. There needs to be justice: It is unreasonable to demand that Hezbollah disarms while not saying the same about the occupation forces of the Israeli Defense Forces.

Most Americans are astoundingly ill-informed about issues concerning Palestine. This is no accident.

“In general it is pure hypocrisy to criticize the exercise of Israeli power while welcoming Israel’s contributions towards realizing the US aim of eliminating possible threats, largely indigenous, to American domination in the Middle East region. The historic practice over many years has trained Israeli leaders to assume that US “opinion makers” and political elites will stand behind them whatever they do and that even if direct reporting is accurate, as it generally is, its import will gradually be lost as the custodians of history carry out their tasks.” (Chomsky).

The government's primary tool of control is the mass media. The DVD *Peace, Propaganda, & the Promise Land* shows a comparison between BBC and various US media reporting the same stories. The BBC is truly balanced while the American reporting is not. The American reporters sounded like they were talking to kindergarteners and their language was full of pro-Israeli double speak. Occupied territories became neighborhoods; invading occupiers became defenders of neighborhoods.

A tabulation study of reports of deaths in the occupied territories was conducted by If America Knew, looking at ABC, CBS, and NBC from September 2000 to September 2001 and all of 2004. During the first year of the study 165 Israelis and 549 Palestinians were killed. ABC reported 305 Israelis to 327 Palestinians or 185% of Israelis and 60% of Palestinians. CBS broadcast 202% of Israeli deaths and 54% of Palestinians, while NBC reported 138% of Israeli deaths and 35% of Palestinians deaths. With children it gets worse, with a 10:2 ratio of accuracy. This means that the deaths of many Palestinian children go unreported while the deaths of Israeli children are repeated. These statistical syllogisms are combined with photos of rock-throwing Palestinian children and weeping Israelis suffering from the most recent suicide bomber. No analysis – only emotional manipulation. Americans aren't stupid, we're ill informed.

It's through the media and the most powerful lobby in Washington, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), that Israel goes unchallenged. When Israel invaded Lebanon, not even progressive Democrats like Conyers, Lee, or Kucinich could vote against them. Israel gets more US foreign aid than any other country, \$11 million weekly. They have between 200 to 300 nuclear weapons and piloted the use of uranium 234 (DU) bunker buster shells. Those weapons come from here. You and I pay for them. To help achieve peace for both Israel and Palestine, we need to reduce military funding for Israel. We need to honestly help them work with each other to achieve peace through mutual respect, justice and disarmament. What happens in Palestine/Israel is pivotal to global security.

Sources: *Fateful Triangle*, by Noam Chomsky © 1999 South End Press. Off the Charts [www.ifamericaknew.org](http://www.ifamericaknew.org). Videos: *Peace, Propaganda & the Promise Land* © (2004) Media Education Foundation. *I Know I'm Not Alone* ©(2006) Michael Franti. CD: *An Issue of Justice* by Norman Finkelstein © 2005 AK Press.

## **Justice for Immigrants**

### **The Work of the Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County**

by Luis Kong, Ed.D.

*"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."* Helen Keller

The Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County (CIRSC) has followed this sentiment by educating, proposing and mobilizing the immigrant community in defense of their civil and human rights. The Committee's strategy is to approach our local actions as part of a larger pro-immigrant movement building. The committee advocates for a comprehensive immigration reform that focuses on keeping immigrant families together, creating a fair path to citizenship for residents and legalization for undocumented immigrants, de-militarizing the border, upholding civil rights and civil liberties and full protection for immigrant workers. How did we get started?

In February of 2006, Davin Cardenas from the Graton Day Labor Center convened a meeting of the founding group that included the Instituto Sanchez Mendoza, Graton Day Labor Center, MEChA of Sonoma State and several community organizers to find ways to inform the immigrant community about the Sensebrenner-King Bill (HR 4437), an anti-immigrant Bill that would make criminals of undocumented immigrants and those who help them. H.R. 4437 was passed by the House of Representatives in December 2005.

On March 12, this group organized an information forum on H.R. 4437 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Windsor. There were over 350 participants from several Catholic churches, Graton Labor Center workers, Peace and Justice Committee of our Lady of Guadalupe and many community participants. I developed a curriculum for a teach-in on H.R. 4437. Dolores Huerta attended the forum. The Forum participants called for vigils, marches, labor stoppages, letters to representatives, to continue with informational forums, town hall meetings, radio programs on immigrant rights and community leadership development. The need to form a coalition arose after this forum.

In the following weeks, the newly formed Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County (CIRSC) helped the United Farmworkers Union with their March 26 march. At the Corby Labor Center, the Committee organized a community forum and organizing meeting with over 100 participants to begin to build the infra-structure for a working organization. Plans for an April candlelight vigil in Roseland were started.

On Monday, April 10th more than 3,000 people demonstrated at the candlelight vigil and march in Roseland. Many came to show their support for the National Day of the Immigrant. For the first time in the history of Roseland, people lit candles and marched in an unbroken line on both sides of Sebastopol Road from Dutton to Stony Point. Families and children, old and young peacefully marched into the street to make their presence felt in their own neighborhood.

On May 1st, the Latino community came out of the shadows into the streets and fearlessly marched together in solidarity against anti-immigrant Bills. Nationwide, millions of marchers join a Day Without Immigrants and El Gran Paro Nacional Americano 2006 (the Great Walkout of 2006). The Committee organized what has become the largest march and rally in the history of Sonoma County. The collaboration of many allies including the United Farm Workers Union, with the assistance of dozens of volunteers and of Spanish language radio stations and the Santa Rosa police made this Labor Day march and rally possible. More than 10,000 people marched peacefully for immigrant rights to the center of Santa Rosa. Water and more than 3,000 sandwiches were donated by businesses. This historic march for immigrant rights will be remembered as part of the history of Santa Rosa.

After the May 1st march the Committee has continued to organize informational forums on the Senate Bill (S. 2611) passed in May 2006. Forums were presented at Cali-Calmeac Charter School in Windsor, the Glaser Center with No Más Muertes from Tuscon, AZ; the Roseland School auditorium, Resurrection and St. Joseph Catholic Churches, and the Tae Kwon Do Multicultural Center in Santa Rosa, among others.

The Committee has registered voters and distributed Voter Guides in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog to hundreds of immigrant voters in it's Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote 2006 campaign. A Voter's Forum was held at Catholic Charities with more than 40 participants.

The fight for justice is the fight for peace. Peace requires a constant effort that involves the conscientization of the people most affected, a critically reflective education, dialogue and participation through social action. It also requires collaboration and a great deal of discipline. Our next campaign is for Santa Rosa to become a City of Refuge for immigrants and to develop a training for community leaders.

The Committee has made a significant impact in the education and mobilization of immigrants and their allies in Sonoma County since its inception nine months ago. We will continue to educate and inform the larger community as well as develop immigrant leadership for the long haul. The Committee's valuable work was made possible by the support of many community leaders who volunteered their valuable time for immigrant rights. Thank you. ¡SI SE PUEDE!

## **Intellect, Energy and Direct Action: Introducing the Youth Against War and Racism**

by Nate, of YAWR

The Youth Against War and Racism is a radical student organization focused on bringing an end to the militarization of our community/ies, supporting the growing immigrants' rights movement and promoting racial equality, all of which are invariably linked.

YAWR is under the umbrella group of the United Resistance of Petaluma (formerly the People's Revolutionary Organization), which also include the groups Copwatch, Food Not Bombs of Petaluma, and Students for a Democratic Workplace. YAWR seeks to bring change through a variety of tactics, including, but not limited to direct action, education, and counter-recruitment work. The group was founded after numerous protests: direct actions were organized on March 20th, 2006 when students in Petaluma shut down downtown Petaluma by sitting in a main downtown intersection, and on several occasions when recruiters have come to the Casa Grande campus, as well as demos at the recruitment station, most recently in October.

YAWR is a part of a wide section of people disillusioned with the mainstream anti-war movement in it's symbolic action, and would like to open up more space for action that directly confronts and disrupts business as usual – such as at UC Santa Cruz recently and in San Francisco before and at the very beginning when the war started, as opposed to permitted marches and protests which have been largely ignored by the Bush administration.

We view the Peace and Justice Center as absolutely essential, and we 110% support the work that the members of the PJC do: we view getting people out of the military and working with conscientious objectors as absolutely essential to this movement. Regarding the latter, we put on a movie night at Casa Grande High School for the film "The Ground Truth." From the veterans themselves, it is about what the Iraq and Afghanistan wars really look like and their hidden costs.

We are very interested in working with other high school groups in Santa Rosa, and it is one of our goals to form a solid coalition of all the high school peace groups in Sonoma County. We are initiating our own "opt-out" form campaign at Casa Grande and Petaluma next Wednesday at the movie night by giving students "opt-out" forms to distribute during the following week on campus, and having kids take them home and return them the next day to us.

I think our action on October 5th, (in solidarity with World Can't Wait), was successful. We shut down the Army recruitment station for a few hours and we showed the community once again that youth, the main targets of recruiting, are opposed to recruiting. Counter-recruitment is one tactic that has been, and will continue to make real advances in stopping the war machine.

As far as future actions go, we are still in the planning stages for a very massive event for March 20th, 2007. URP has been actively involved in immigrants' rights issues and actions, and its members are part of the Immigrants' Rights Committee of Sonoma County. Latino students had the second largest walk-out in Casa Grande's history around May 1<sup>st</sup> last year, the largest being the walk-out right before the Iraq war started. People of color and students of working class backgrounds are not given many options, and recruiters are targeting these youth. It's crucial that we find ways to combine these struggles, because together we will be unstoppable.

*For more information, the group can be contacted at: [theunitedresistance@gmail.com](mailto:theunitedresistance@gmail.com)*

## **A Mandate for Peace**

by United for Peace and Justice coalition

By all accounts, the 2006 mid-term elections were a referendum on the war, and the results were crystal clear: The voters overwhelmingly want peace.

For the antiwar movement, this election was a huge victory. By voting out pro-war candidates and making Iraq the central issue in the elections, we have translated antiwar sentiment into political power and made ourselves a force to be reckoned with. Congratulations to all of you who have contributed so much to bring us to this point.

But this is only the first step. Now comes the more crucial one: We must make sure that our new Representatives implement the will of the people and get our troops out of Iraq. We must keep the pressure on.

### **No Honeymoon for Congress**

We need to be in touch with our Representatives right away – especially those who ran on an antiwar platform -- to let them know that the peace movement expects them to take immediate action to bring the troops home. Our friends at the new Mandate for Peace campaign gathered outside Rep. Pelosi's office in San Francisco on November 9th to demand that she speak up for the antiwar majority. Let's keep the momentum going.

1. Find your Representative's contact information:

If the incumbent was reelected in your district, you can find his or her contact information through [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org).

If you have a newly elected representative, you'll need to act extra quickly to contact them. Use Google, GoodSearch or another internet search engine today to find the campaign website and/or campaign office for your Representative-elect – most will be shut down in a matter of days.

2. Call or write your Representative right away to congratulate them on their victory and tell them that you're counting on the newly elected Congress, in its earliest days in office, to pass

legislation requiring the prompt removal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and to discontinue funding for military purposes in Iraq except the safe withdrawal of all US forces.

Ideally, you should also request a face-to-face meeting with your new member of Congress, which is one of the strongest ways to communicate this message. If you do, be sure to bring participants from various constituencies in your community who share your opposition to the war. Do an online search beforehand for any polls that show the strength of antiwar sentiment in your community, and bring detailed information from the National Priorities Project about the staggering financial cost of the war to your area. If you do meet with your Representative, please send a report back to [congress@unitedforpeace.org](mailto:congress@unitedforpeace.org).

3. Send a personal email to friends, neighbors, and coworkers in your Congressional district and urge them to contact your Representative with a similar message. Include the contact information you've found through your online research.

4. Forward this action alert widely, to people all around the country, and post it on websites and blogs.

There can be no honeymoon for this new Congress. People are dying in Iraq every day, the chaos worsens, the costs continue to escalate. Join United for Peace and Justice and our friends and allies in the Mandate for Peace Campaign in making sure that the clamor for peace at the polls turns into real action for change.

*United for Peace and Justice is a coalition of more than 1300 local and national groups throughout the United States who have joined together to protest the immoral and disastrous Iraq War and oppose our government's policy of permanent warfare and empire-building. [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org).*

## **Clean Money and Fair Elections, Proposition 89 – Where to next?**

by Bonnie Allen

In spite of progressive wins nationwide, ballot initiative results in California included defeats for some of the most popular progressive initiatives. No defeat was more ignominious than that of Proposition 89, the Clean Money and Fair Elections initiative that would have ended the political reign of big money in Sacramento. Prop 89 captured just 25 percent of the vote statewide and, even more embarrassing, just 30 percent of the vote in progressive Sonoma County.

Proposition 89 proposed severe limits to donations to political campaigns and limits to corporate treasury donations to initiative campaigns. Most important, it allowed “Clean Money” reform—voluntary publicly financed election campaigns, establishing a public fund for candidates who showed grassroots support and accepted no private money for their campaign.

In Arizona, where Clean Money reform is in effect, both gubernatorial candidates ran “Clean.” Think of it: two candidates whose platforms had no big-money strings attached.

Why did such an essential reform gain so little support, or even attention in California? (The night before the election, the majority of the people accepting leaflets on Prop 89 had no idea what Prop 89 was.)

Newspapers, which owe their existence to corporate advertising, predictably opposed Prop 89. Still, most progressive voters don't allow newspapers to shape their opinions. Why

did progressives jump on the bandwagon for local initiatives but largely ignore the structural reform that would have made passing progressive initiatives so much easier?

Part of the problem was opposition from the California Teachers Association and some other big unions. This in spite of countless newspaper editorials intoning that Prop 89 gave unfair advantage to unions!

For better or worse, the leadership of the CTA, the ninth largest contributor to political campaigns in California, evidently felt that the current pay-to-play system gave them more power than they would have had if they had to depend on the voters for support. (Many individual teachers, however, did support Prop 89.)

Many Californians bought the opposition argument that the proposition--55 pages!--was confusing and poorly written. Yet experience has shown that reforms, in order to be loophole proof, have to be packed with arcane legal language that covers all the bases.

Few people knew that the opposition to Prop 89 included every moneyed interest and its lobby in California: big oil, big insurance, the drug industry, for-profit healthcare groups, and chambers of commerce.

Some progressives declined to get on board because they felt the sponsors (the California Nurses Association, California Clean Money Campaign, League of Women Voters and others) didn't make a big enough commitment to local organizing.

This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: Lack of local commitment means less local organizing, less local fundraising, less money available, and fewer paid organizers, leading to less local commitment.

Some progressives said the campaign did too little, too late. Yet Clean Money—both the legislation (AB 583) and the initiative--has been on the agenda for three years without capturing significant progressive support. Some said they would wait until there was an initiative on the ballot. After it was on the ballot, they waited some more for the organizers to come.

The California Clean Money Campaign, which sponsored the legislative effort, is still in the game. The next effort will most likely sidestep the campaign limitations part and focus solely on the public funding part.

Will grassroots progressives provide the momentum for the next campaign, or will we wait for the momentum to gather before deciding whether to commit ourselves?

The larger question for the progressive community is, do we need to rethink our priorities and start focusing on the root causes of political problems? Perhaps Clean Money is not the answer to the endemic corruption in our political process. Should we be talking more about what that answer is?

*Bonnie Allen is the North Bay Working Group coordinator for the California Clean Money Campaign.*

## PJC & COMMUNITY SECTION

### **The New Social Contract**

by Susan Lamont

*“Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go.”* – T.S. Eliot

The Board of the Peace & Justice Center has a vision. It's a vision of a world created on a compassionate model. It's a vision of a world guided not by “us vs. them” but by “we're all in this together.” That vision will eventually take written form. It will be titled “The New Social Contract.” For now it's a work in progress.

Over the next couple of years, we'll be addressing many of the crucial issues affecting this nation and this planet: the environment, health care, education, civil liberties, economic democracy, community, fair trade, racial equality, harm reduction and peace. We'll work within our local peace and social justice community to create a positive document. The New Social Contract will be designed to give hope.

The concept was introduced in July and has been discussed every third Thursday evening of the month at the Center. Previous meetings have been used to help flesh out the concept and the processes.

The first topic, to be taken up in November, is peace and the end of war, militarism and empire. At an earlier brainstorming session, meeting attendees discussed many pieces of this puzzle. They include non-adversarial problem solving, non-violence, the UN, treaties, corporations and the role of the media, to name a few.

The first task will be to give voice to the vision of peace. Board members Jack Wikse and Eszter Freeman will be facilitating the discussion. Each person will be given a chance to speak on the subject and can approach it from one of a number of levels: the individual, the family or local community, the society or culture, the civilization, and the philosophical/metaphysical.

Later we will be seeking ways in which these visions of peace can be made real. We'll look to successful models from the past, as well as the present. We'll draw from the work of other groups. We'll seek out the help of members of the local community who are already working on this subject.

Eventually, a smaller group of people will meet to turn this information into a document which can be shared with the broader community and the world. It is hoped that it will serve as an inspiration for other groups – something they can add to and pass on.

So many believe that war and violence are the ways in which humans will always deal with their differences. The New Social Contract is being created to flesh out the vision so eloquently expressed by the Not In Our Name Pledge: “A new world is possible and we pledge to make it real.”

There will be no December meeting because of the holidays. Discussion will resume on Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at the Center at 7 PM. Please join us.

## **Elizabeth Stinson Receives Agape “Long Haul Peace Prize”**

*The San Francisco based Agape Foundation for Nonviolent Change presented the Long Haul Peace Prize on September 21, 2006, honoring a Northern California peacemaker who has made a sustained effort to create peace in their community, nationally, or internationally. The Long Haul Prize recipient will excel in inspiring others, sustaining progress, and achieving a measurable impact. The recipient was Elizabeth Stinson.*

Long-time human rights activist Elizabeth Stinson has been the Director of the Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County since November 2001, where she organizes and supervises the Center’s many programs, volunteers and direct actions. She also works with local high schools to provide youths with alternatives to joining the military. Ms. Stinson developed a program called HOPE (High school and college Outreach Peace Education) to train students to question and to counter the military recruiters on their campuses. Currently, at least five campuses have established counter-recruitment groups thanks to her efforts. Ms. Stinson has won this prize for her work assisting people who want to leave the military. Since the start of the Iraq war, she has helped more than 400 individuals to leave the various branches of the armed services. Ms. Stinson also served as Global Human Rights Observer from 1988-1996 and was a liaison to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization for the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota (Sioux Nation) tribes.

*All of us here at the Peace Center are very proud of Elizabeth. Servicemen and women from around the country call here to Sonoma County for her help to get out of the military. Elizabeth is standing up to Bush’s war by saving one person at a time from death, injury and post-traumatic stress in Iraq.*

## **Peace Pole Dedication – Until we change ourselves, nothing can happen**

As the result of dedicated work by the Center’s Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day Committee, a peace pole was dedicated in Santa Rosa’s Courthouse Square on September 21, 2006. The words “May peace prevail on earth” are written on the pole in 12 languages.

The highlight of the event was the singing of “The Song of Peace” by students from Luther Burbank School. One hopes that those children will carry the words of the song in their hearts throughout their lives and will pass them on to others.

Many words were spoken at the dedication by those who worked on the project, including the following by Therese Mughannam Walrath:

“It takes some faith to believe that what we are doing here today, dedicating this peace pole, touches those for whom it is intended, those who live in the war-torn regions of our world, in Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Beirut, and Israel, among others. I believe that the peace pole is for us. A vibrant, beautiful, eye-catching, artful, and sacred symbol for us. To remind us, each time we look at it, drive by it and catch a glimpse of it, to remind us of our connectedness to others in the world who are suffering – suffering from political strife, bad government, curable diseases, poverty as a result of unjust economics, brutal occupations. And being a Palestinian, I think especially of my own people today, the people in whose midst I was lucky to be born, and the holy land from which my family and countless others had to flee.

But how are we and what we are doing today connected to all that? A good question. As so many of you know, it seems that no matter how hard we try to change unjust situations

in our world, things keep getting worse, day after day. We keep saying to ourselves it can't get any worse in Iraq, or Palestine, or in our own government, but it does. And often we feel on the verge of despair about it.

Well, maybe, just maybe, the change that is necessary, without which no other change can ever take place, is the change that needs to happen in each of us as individuals. It's hard to talk about that, because it gets too personal, and yet it's the only thing we have the power to change. In reality, we can write letters to the editor until we are blue in the face, and many of us do and are to be commended. We can call our elected officials, even our revered president and record our comments of outrage and disagreement with him, we can join protest marches every week. But until we change ourselves, nothing happens, nothing can happen.

Jesus said the most revolutionary and transforming statement ever said, in my opinion. Love your enemies. Love your enemies. Simple and to the point, yet the hardest and most transformative work we can ever do.

Love your enemies. That could include our partners, our children, our neighbors and co-workers, the homeless all around us, brown-skinned people, including me, anyone different from us, especially those across the globe with a different perspective or religion. Love your enemies. It's our only chance for peace to prevail on earth. May peace prevail in our hearts, in our families and communities. May peace prevail on earth."

### **Ehren Watada update**

The nation's first commissioned officer to refuse deployment to Iraq said he was disappointed by the Army's decision last week to proceed with a court-martial against him but reiterated that he believed he did the right thing in opposing the war.

As the nation honored its military veterans Saturday, Army 1st Lt. Ehren Watada said he believed his refusal to lead his soldiers into what he viewed as an illegal and immoral war was fulfilling his duty to them and the Constitution he pledged to uphold.

"I am at peace with my decision because I feel that from the beginning I made it according to my conscience and my duty as a soldier and officer," said Watada, who is stationed at Ft. Lewis, Wash., about 50 miles south of Seattle. "The reason I'm standing up is that no one else is speaking up for the troops dying every day – not to mention the 600,000 Iraqis who have died.

"I'm willing to accept the punishment, whatever it may be," said Watada, whose case has sparked widespread debate over a soldier's duty to follow orders versus conscience.

*Excerpt from article by Teresa Watanabe, LA Times Staff Writer, November 12, 2006. See the article on Ehren Watada in the Oct/Nov Peace Press.*

### **Petaluma Living Wage Ordinance Enacted**

by Ben Boyce

On Monday, November 6, 2006, the Petaluma City Council passed the Living Wage ordinance, marking a significant step forward for the movement for economic justice in the North Bay. The key features of the ordinance are a mandated wage of \$11.70 an hour with medical benefits (or \$13.20 without) for employees of the City of Petaluma, for-profit

businesses with contracts of more than \$10,000, and firms receiving economic development assistance of more than \$100,000. The wage is indexed annually to the CPI (Consumer Price Index). Employees covered by the ordinance shall receive 22 days off per year for sick leave, vacation, or personal necessity. Any employer subject to the ordinance must comply with state law and remain neutral if employees attempt to form a union.

A firm's history as an employer, along with cost and quality factors, will be considered by the city when awarding a contract. The complete revised ordinance and a fiscal impact report are posted at [www.livingwagesonoma.org](http://www.livingwagesonoma.org).

The Living Wage Coalition (LWC) is a project of NEWS (New Economy Working Solutions), a public policy research and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting greater equity and fairness in the regional economy through policy research, public education, leadership training, and community organizing. The LWC believes that implementation of living wage ordinances is an important tool for improving the wages and benefits of a limited number of low-income workers. We have passed ordinances in Sebastopol (2003) and Sonoma (2004).

The Petaluma Living Wage victory is an important foundation for the ultimate objective, which is to pass a county-wide Living Wage ordinance, as part of a Bay Area campaign to establish a regional wage norm. The ordinance will impact 2,500 jobs in the Petaluma redevelopment district, and could help shape the economic development of the City of Petaluma towards a high road, equitable growth path. Implementation of living wage legislation in Petaluma, the county's second largest city, will unquestionably impact other City Councils as well as the Board of Supervisors.

The Living Wage Coalition campaign has been endorsed by the North Bay Labor Council, Sonoma County Housing Advocacy Group, the Sierra Club, Sonoma County Conservation Action, Sonoma County Democratic Party Central Committee, Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center, Sonoma-Lake-Mendocino Building Trades Council, Petaluma Progressives, and Petaluma Tomorrow. We are also endorsed by a broad-based interfaith social justice alliance, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (Sonoma CLUE), which represents six major religious denominations, Pax Christi of Sonoma, and three Catholic lay social justice ministries in the county.

*Ben Boyce is the Living Wage Coalition Coordinator*

## **Bike Project update**

by Marsha Banks

The time has come for me to return to Guatemala and Chiapas to buy and distribute more bicycles. I am pleased to let you know that we have given out seventy bicycles in the past three years. Through your generous support, families of hard working campesinos in the coffee fields have been given a bit of freedom. They can now buy and sell goods further away from their pueblos, where the goods are often less expensive. The men can also save the rising cost of bus fare or the long walk to work.

On my last trip to Chiapas, I realized that many women are now supporting families, as many of their husbands have gone north to look for work. I have decided that this trip I would give the bikes to some of these women. They will all have a rack on the back, as well as a basket on the front. This will allow them to not only carry groceries, etc., but also transport a child or two. But mainly, this will provide much needed transportation to get to and from work.

Most of us drive cars and can only imagine what it would be like if we didn't have our cars for even one day. It would mean taking a bus, walking or depending on friends and neighbors. This is what it is like for many of the world's working mothers and fathers. A bike to them is like a car to us. Freedom. It is not necessarily a way to pollute less – it is a matter of survival in an impoverished economy.

I have been fortunate enough to buy and distribute each bike, and to see the joy on the faces of every recipient is overwhelming. I only wish that each of you could share in this experience. One way that you can be a part of this very worthwhile project is to give whatever you can towards the purchase of new bikes. Any amount will be greatly appreciated. You can send your tax-deductible donation to the Peace & Justice Center. Don't forget to write "Bike Project" in the memo on your check so that it will be credited to the project. If you would more information, please call me, Marsha Banks, at 707-523-4843.

## **The Inspiration of Gordon Yates**

by Alice Waco

Gordon Yates decided to guide us from another place when he left on September 15, 2006.

Gordon has been with the center since its beginning, always there to do the calendar, open locked doors and educate us on so many issues in his own quiet way.

Gordon is best described by his dear wife, Annabelle: "I just loved him – his humor, interests, social consciousness, intelligence, aliveness, ..." and she continues on, describing the man she loved for over 72 years. Their son, Conrad, once when young, asked his mom: "How can you love daddy?" Her reply: "because he is a man of integrity."

Many of us remember his wisdom and wit in the epigrams he wrote for the *Peace Press*. Others remember standing with him Friday evenings at the vigil in downtown Santa Rosa. I get to remember him as the official person at Bill's and my 25th wedding anniversary, accepting the renewal of our commitment, using his title of Captain of the Ship, as his authority.

Bill McGee was his buddy and I saw the influence Gordon had on Bill, drawing him to live a life of simplicity, a life Gordon knew so well. He gave up driving 20 years ago and we all knew him as the man on the bike. He wanted to stop the "plague of cars." He first lived on a sailboat, then converted an old fashioned small garage into his tiny home.

Gordon kept a diary on index cards, always found in his shirt pocket, and his legend will be passed on to his next and next generations. One of my favorite quotes from Gordon is: "Don't waste your time putting yourself down. Others will do it for you." With all his knowledge of the grim reality of our times of war, Gordon was always positive and we each were recipients of his warm smile.

Gordon is truly our mentor. When he worked at the nuclear test site in Nevada, someone made him aware of the nuclear industrial complex. He not only quit immediately, but wove his life around learning what was going on and taking action to stop it.

"Thank you, Gordon," we say it again and again. We will miss him but we will find him again in each of us.

## Film Review: **The Revolution Will Not Be Televised**

by Niki & Rebel Fagin

We knew this film was important when it disappeared from American shelves. We got ours out of Britain through eBay. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* is a 75 minute documentary that captures pivotal events from 2002 in the administration of Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez.

As the film opens we see floods of people out in support of the very accessible Hugo Chavez. He walks through crowds of loving faces, shaking hands, singing songs and listening to the concerns of his people. This is in juxtaposition with US media outcries against Chavez as a communist dictator. Watch the media here.

From April 10, 2002 through April 13 the wealthy few of Venezuela used their media ownership in conjunction with help from Washington to overthrow Chavez. They strove to make him look like an out-of-control killer. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* documents this from the street level. We see Carmona's government chillingly dissolve democracy, and use the media to say that everything is under control. The people on the streets of Caracas demand that their constitution be followed. It is inspiring to watch this commitment to democracy as the people insist on the return of President Hugo Chavez.

Chavez comes off like the president we wish we had. He gets kidnapped, and the people shut the country down to get him back. Could you imagine people doing that for Bush? Look to the faces of the Venezuelan people. There's an honest patriotic love captured in the faces of the crowd that can not be bought – it must be earned. When their constitutional government is overthrown they weep, they growl, and they fight back.

We feel that this film was removed for its inspiration and its naked exposure of CIA style plots that will surely be replicated in the future.

*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised is available at the Peace & Justice Center library for check out and at Box Office Video in Sebastopol as a rental.*

## **A Beginning: International Day Of Apologies And Reconciliation**

by Laure Reichel

The Japanese will apologize to the Chinese and Koreans

The Chinese to the Tibetans

The Hindu Indians to the Moslem Indians

The Turks to the Armenians

The Indonesians to the Timorese

The Australians to the Maoris

The Russians to the Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Chechnyans

The French to the North Africans and Vietnamese

The British to the Indians and Africans

The U.S. to the Native Americans and American Africans, Filipinos, Latin Americans, Cubans, Afghanis, Iraqis, Haitians, etc. . . , etc. . .

The Catholics will apologize to the Protestants

The Protestants will apologize to the Catholics

Both will apologize to the Jews

The Israelis will apologize to the Palestinians and the Lebanese  
The Sudanese Arabs to the Black Sudanese  
The Sunnis to the Shiites  
The Shiites to the Sunnis

The rich will apologize for exploiting the poor  
And all those who are guilty of demeaning another human being  
will come forward because it is good.  
They will talk to each other and offer redress.

We will apologize to our children,  
our parents, our neighbors.  
We will apologize to each other  
For causing pain, letting it happen,  
And people will bring flowers to the neighbors they have offended  
And a council of wise men will be appointed  
To teach respect of self and others.

We are all guilty.  
There are no innocents.  
Something we said  
Or did not say when we should have.  
Something we did  
Or did not do when we should have.

The gains will be the riches of our common humanity, our common ancestry. . .  
Then the dialogue can begin.

*by Laure Reichek, October 2006 (Laure can be reached at [joshua@dslextrême.com](mailto:joshua@dslextrême.com))*

*Laure Reichek is a survivor of the invasion of France by Germany, a long-time anti-war/anti-aggression activist, and worked with Petaluma Progressives and Petaluman's Against War.*

## **PJC Position on Investigation & Prosecution of President Bush & on Iraq**

To Our Peace and Justice Family:

At it's November meeting, the Board of Directors of the Peace and Justice Center made the decision to support the following actions on behalf of peace, integrity, and justice for the peoples of the world. They are:

The Peace and Justice Center will support and encourage Congress and the Senate to follow a path to investigate the reasons for impeachment of President George W. Bush. The Peace and Justice Center will support and encourage criminal prosecution of Mr. George W. Bush and all others in their part in the war crimes that have been committed over the past several years, and the resultant acts against humanity including the many violations of the Geneva Conventions.

The Peace and Justice Center will support and encourage all peoples to push for the United States moving swiftly out of Iraq, returning the soldiers to their homes in the United States, and using the monies that are being spent for this war on basic human needs for the peoples of the United States as well as the reparations due the civilian populations whose human rights have been violated by the Bush policies.