

Getting Centered  
**The Media and the Bloggers**

by Elizabeth Stinson, Director

The focus of this special issue is “media”. Because the corporate owned media plays such an important role in the implementation of the Cheney/Bush agenda, the Center is dedicating this issue of the *Peace Press* to the state of media today. Understanding media objectives is critical to the understanding of how we arrived in this political quagmire and even more importantly, how we can work to get out from under the blanket of lies and deception that moves daily to manipulate the American consciousness.

The Internet, a largely decentralized way of linking many computer networks and retrieving data almost instantly, is dependent on a centralized master file that decodes its address scheme. That master file is under California’s Icanm jurisdiction. Icanm answers to the US Commerce Department. Disagreements over control of the internet had threatened to overshadow the UN summit International forum, with countries such as China and Iran pushing for an international body under UN auspices to oversee the net.

The US had stood firm against this, arguing that it would stifle technological advances and increase censorship of the internet by undemocratic regimes. Icanm will keep its current responsibilities for overseeing domain names and addressing systems, such as country domain suffixes, and managing how net browsers and e-mail programs direct traffic. According to BBC, the 170 nations taking part in the negotiations agreed on the creation of an Intergovernmental Forum to discuss all internet issues, such as spam, viruses and cyber crime. Pre 9/11, nations with UN support had pledged to make the net accessible to all by 2015. But *worldwide only 14% of the population is online, compared to 62% in the US.*

I learned many things in Crawford, Texas, not the least of which is how important the internet bloggers are to the peace movement. The “bloggers” work day and night to counter misinformation and release new information that corporate owned media moves to censor. We relied on the “bloggers” in Crawford and the movement continues to rely on minds like Gary Rhine, of Kifaru productions to courageously disseminate information that corporate owned media ignore.

It was the “bloggers” that made sure Cindy Sheehan’s voice was heard and her presence and that of many other family members in the ditch were not ignored, it is the “bloggers” who continue to let us know the undeniable truth of the continued mishandling of Katrina victims and it is the “bloggers” who keep us informed about the Guatemalan population of flood and mudslide victims that the corporate owned media ignores. And last, but not least, it is the “bloggers” who keep an unrelenting access to issues and actions alive via the US dominated internet. When we were “hacked” at the Crawford Peace House, the “bloggers” were able to tell me within minutes who had hacked us, and from where and the impact of what the hackers had done, and even more important, what to do about it.

The war is also being fought and stimulated with gross misinformation online. Active duty soldiers in Iraq are searching online for information about how to seek separations, upcoming deployments and real information about the growing awareness of the endless loss of life and lack of strategy in Iraq. They are also feeding the movement information about their losses, realities and needs.

These are needs that the government continues to ignore. Bring the Troops Home Now! The call is getting louder, the momentum is growing and crossing party lines. Let’s be

part of the energy that brings an end to the misuse and abuse of the military under the Cheney/Bush regime.

## **Go Local** **The Role of the Press in a Time of Crisis**

by Stephanie Hiller

Without the independent media, we would probably never have known about the perils of global warming, peak oil, Diebold voting machines, depleted uranium, the untested truths about genetic engineering, the unique powers of the Sonoma County Water Agency and many other issues of pressing local and global significance. Like the truth about the Bay of Tonkin incident used to justify the Vietnam War, these stories have come to us through the hard won efforts of journalists and activists working to expose the buried truths about our era through various independent channels, from local presses to the internet.

These efforts are necessary and valuable because the local press has all but disappeared in this country.

Every city once had a local paper (or even two) with a city editor who sat behind that desk for years and knew what was going on in his community. If the paper reflected to large degree the role of vested interests in the spheres of politics and business, they were local politics and local business.

No more.

While the staff of papers like the *Press Democrat* is local, the ownership is national. Our "local" paper is owned by the *New York Times*, itself owned by one of five media conglomerates that control all the news that is broadcast in this country and on television channels throughout the world. Those multinationals also produce most of our consumer goods, and they are heavily invested in two industries crucial to the war on terror: oil and bombs.

Progressive intellectuals claim the role of the press in a democracy is to serve as a watchdog to public institutions. David Barsamian spoke at Sonoma State University on October 27 about this moral imperative. The press is not supposed to go along with the ruling regime, covering its dirty tracks and broadcasting its lies, but has a responsibility to rake through the muck to uncover the hopefully untarnished truth.

Since the 19th century, the independent press in this country has also served as a forum for the underrepresented grassroots, whether it be labor, the poor, immigrants, people of color, or women, whose voices are the last to be heard, even today. The absence of women's voices – and women's coverage – throughout the media, whether mainstream or independent, is noteworthy, and a great loss to the community. Only a few women are published in the pages of noted journals like the *Nation* or *Mother Jones*. News of women's activities, which are widespread, barely gets coverage anywhere. This exclusion must be striking to any informed citizen. Surely women are not a focus group, and neither are we a minority. How is it that the media that would protect democracy yet continues to exclude women?

Aiming to represent those minorities which do not benefit from privilege in a society where white male power holds sway, independent media is typically challenged by lack of

sufficient financial support. Mass media never ignores opportunities to compete with small publications, and the few that remain are under constant pressure.

Ironically, these media, which aspire to inclusively, actually restrict their coverage to disenfranchised groups. Many people are not represented here, especially middle class white people, Christians, business, and Republican interests in general.

Perhaps because of its oppositional relationship with the majority, independent media faces dissension within its own ranks. The case of KPFA is a telling example. Ever since Pacifica opted to become corporate, the first public radio network has been riddled with internal conflicts that threaten to bring it down.

Despite these pressures, the independent media, enhanced by the internet, continues to do a remarkable job of bringing out the truth, as witnessed by Project Censored's annual compilation of underreported stories that have appeared in independent journals. It has been the small presses who have exposed the cruel facets of the horror show currently perpetrated by our own government, and the endless cover-ups designed to keep us in the dark.

We fight an uphill battle, but our word is getting out, as it must. Today we are engaged in a critical struggle to stop the war machine – that octopus whose tentacles engulf all our social institutions, whether business, medicine, law, religion, or governance – before it destroys the world. All the major institutions of society are subject to this corruption.

To fill the gap left by independent city newspapers, a new form of journalism has come forth to take its place; this community journalism attempts to reflect the concerns of its own community. In Sonoma County we are fortunate to have quite a number of these papers, including *Sonoma West*, the *Russian River Monthly*, the *Forestville Gazette*, the *Petaluma Post* and many others. *We the People* speaks for the gay and lesbian community, *Women's Voices* for the women's community, and the *Business Journal* for business. The *North Bay Progressive*, which I help produce, attempts to conjoin local news coverage for the progressive community with selected reports from the international independent media. Community radio and TV stations are an important part of this web. As the octopus tightens its control over our institutions, community media will offer the best outlet for the people's voice. Not everyone can get on the internet, but everyone can pick up one of these local papers to see reflected there activities that have a direct bearing on their lives. In our county these concerns always include environmental issues and the state of our healthcare and our schools.

Supporting local independent media goes along with buying locally and generally keeping our resources circulating within our communities. When the dollar crumbles, as it must, and energy shortages bring on the inevitable crisis, local papers will continue to broadcast the real news of our situation, reflecting as much as possible our diverse viewpoints, and continuing to provide an invaluable resource for proposing and testing pragmatic solutions as we move out of crisis toward the creation of a new world.

*Stephanie Hiller is Managing Editor of the North Bay Progressive and publisher of Awakened Woman, a women's news source on the internet at [awakenedwoman.com/](http://awakenedwoman.com/).*

## Creating Progressives, One Passenger at a Time

by Susan Lamont

Recently, my car had to spend a few days in the shop and I needed to rent a replacement. I was given a late model sedan, much spiffier than what I'm used to. I turned the radio to KPFA for the duration. When I returned the car, I needed a ride to the repair shop. A man, along with his 10 or 11-year-old son, also needed a ride.

We were driven together in the car I had rented. As we got in, the KPFA Evening News was just starting. The lead story was of the indictment of Lewis Libby for perjury. The rental agency employee turned up the volume. The young boy in the back seat asked what perjury meant. His father explained it.

We were stuck in Friday evening traffic. The driver increased the volume again and then again. Everyone listened intently to a news story that went on for at least 10 minutes. That's about double the entire news broadcasts on most radio stations, which consist mostly of sports and weather anyway.

No one in the car seemed to notice that this was not what they were used to. They were riveted to the radio, hearing even more than would appear in the morning newspaper.

We're told that mainstream radio and television news has been dumbed down because our citizenry can't handle or isn't interested in anything more challenging. The passengers in that rental car, including a young boy, might beg to differ.

## Free Press in the US

by Rebel Fagin

In a fascist state, the military is used to control people. In a plutocracy like the United States, propaganda is used to control people. The tool of thought control is the media. Media control in America is subtle. It does not involve a secret cabal, nor is it a conspiracy. It is a system and can be understood as such.

Freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press. Four broadcasters – CBS (Westinghouse), NBC (GE), Disney (owns ABC), and Murdoch's Fox – control television in America. This small group of wealthy, white Christians police thought in America. What falls within these boundaries is called "objective" and anything that goes beyond is called "subjective" and therefore not to be taken seriously.

Junk news (runaway bride, Michael Jackson, etc.) is used to distract us from the important stories that affect our lives. The first reports of the Downing Street Memos were buried on the next to the last page – a sure sign of its importance.

To protect their interests, these broadcasters employ five filters on the news.

The first filter is *ownership*. Not only are the owners of media from a small, corporate elite, but so are their employees. Those who report against their views are soon unemployed.

The second filter is *advertising*. The ads must not offend the ruling class and should help create a culture where personal consumption is the reason to live.

The third filter is "*experts*." Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) reported that of 1,530 guests on Nightline in over 865 programs, 92% were white, 89% were male, and 80%

were professionals, government employees or corporate representatives. These men become our trusted experts. Theirs are the only opinions that matter.

The fourth filter is *news shapers*. More and more public relations experts are spinning stories for the benefit of their clients before the stories are given to reporters. This makes reporters lives easier and ensures that stories will coordinate with advertising values.

The fifth filter is *flak*. Most reporters quickly learn which stories to pitch and which ones to ignore. When they don't learn, punishment follows as an object lesson for others. For their story on rGBH, a genetically engineered hormone, investigative reporters Jane Akre and Steve Wilson will never work again.

But there is hope, and that hope lies in participation. Honest reporting, like democracy, is not a spectator sport. Alternative press, Free Mind Media, Pacifica radio – these are our models for truth in reporting. We must learn not only whom to trust, but how to critically examine the news that is presented to us. We have to grow up enough to be responsible with the truth if we really want to live in truth. Otherwise, “pass the chips. I think the ‘9ers are on.”

Sources: *War, Lies and Videotape*, by Lenora Foerstel, 2000; *The Chomsky Reader*, by Noam Chomsky, 1987; *The Corporation*, by Achbar, Abbott & Bakan, 2004; *Manufacturing Consent*, by Achbar & Wintonick, 1992; *Fear & Favor in the Newsroom*, by Northwest Passage, 1996; *Weapons of Mass Deception* by Danny Schechter, 2005.

## **Media Reform Needed for a Continuing Democracy**

by Peter Phillips

The First Amendment of the US constitution, guaranteeing freedom of the press, was established to maximize citizen cognition of critical issues in society. It was understood clearly by the founders that Democracy could only be maintained through an informed electorate.

A daily newspaper, along with the major TV networks, ABC, CBS, NBC, as well as CNN, MSNBC, and Fox, are the major sources of news and information for most Americans. News stories and the invidious entertainment segments from these corporate sources generally have similar themes and common frames of understanding. This concentration of access to media sources leaves most Americans with very narrow parameters of news awareness and an almost complete lack of competing opinions.

Important questions that impact most Americans are generally ignored. Why are 45 million American without health care? Why is poverty increasing in the US? What happened to the safety net of social programs for the disadvantaged? What are the underlying reasons – other than oil – for continued occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan? What is the truth behind global warming and extreme weather conditions? Where have all the living wage jobs gone? Why is minimum wage now at 60% of its value in 1968? Who got rich in the 90s and kept the money? Who owns the electronic voting machine companies? What happened to Building 7 at the World Trade Center?

Each of these questions and many more directly affect nearly every American and their personal motivations to participate in the democratic process. Yet the corporate media usually choose not to address these important issues in any significant way. Instead, they are keeping us on top of the Peterson murder case, celebrity marriage/divorce news and the threat of new terror attacks.

By not addressing relevant issues facing everyday Americans, the corporate media are weakening democracy in the US. Close to half the eligible voters in the country do not vote in elections. Most non-voters believe their vote matters very little. Therefore, they do not make the effort to distinguish important issues between candidates nor do the corporate media do it for them. Non-voters often see little difference between the two primary political parties and tend to believe that voting is a waste of time.

The corporate media agenda of maximum profits undermines the public purpose of a free press by creating the fiscal necessity for cutting costs and increasing the entertainment content. Ratings and audience share translate to higher advertising value and higher profits. This structural arrangement of corporate media results in an electorate who perceive few personal reasons to get involved, not just as voters but as activists for political issues as well.

Media reform is a topic seldom covered by the corporate media themselves. Instead corporate media's main message to Americans is "shut up and go shopping." We must demand that a diversity of independent news sources be maintained in every city. And we must seek public support for locally-controlled grassroots independent news agencies like KBBF, KRCB, & KPFA radio, local cable access TV news, and the *North Bay Progressive* newspaper. Democracy is too precious to lose.

*Peter Phillips is a Professor of Sociology at Sonoma State University and director of Project Censored, a media research organization.*

## **Support Our Local Progressive Papers**

by Elaine Holtz

It's the holiday season again. What do we do for the holidays? We shop. Every year I find myself thinking, "I am not going to do this anymore", only find myself doing it one more time. But this year, I'm beginning to think of ways I could do it differently.

We are a consumer society and, unfortunately, consumption is what keeps the wheels turning. We not only consume products but also need services. I have begun to understand that when I invest in the local economy and its people, the revenue and profits are filtered back in our community.

If I spend my dollars with people who have a local business and share my basic philosophy, I am both supporting the community and assuring my belief system has a voice.

When I began to see that my dollars have impact, I looked further into how I could make my dollars work in a way that is more in tune with my values. I explored the various publications in our community that are against the war and are for reproductive choice, education and food, shelter, clean air and water and health care for all children.

I looked at the *Peace Press*, *The North Bay Progressive*, *We the People* and *Fetch* (a publication which gives animals a voice), and looked at their advertisers. I found a variety of services, small retail establishments and locally owned super markets, all in need of my support. If they do not generate revenues, they will be unable to advertise and if they cannot advertise, the publications that I believe in so strongly lose their financial support and may not survive.

I found businesses that offer alternative ways to invest and markets with organics and fair trade handcrafts and coffee. I found alternative medicine, nutrition, and green realtors. I

was amazed when I saw the variety of businesses that were making an effort to let us know who they were and were willing to support our values. I began to see that in supporting these people with our dollars we are keeping the progressive idea alive.

I want to thank all those advertisers for putting their advertising dollars into this publication and all the publications that support our values. And before you spend any money, I encourage you to evaluate for yourself our local advertisers and to take your dollars to those establishments.

To those businesses who are not advertising in these local publications I want to encourage you to think about where you are putting your dollars. What are the publications you are advertising in supporting, and what values do those dollars support?

And to everyone, I wish you a joyous holiday season, filled with good health and peace of mind. Remember: support our advertisers because they are supporting us and, in turn, your values will continue to be published.

*Elaine B. Holtz is the producer of Women's Spaces and Advertising Manager for the North Bay Progressive.*

## **GE-Free and the Media**

by Dawn Pillsbury

It's all about frames.

When I came onto the Yes on M campaign as media coordinator, I knew it would be a tough job. I've been a reporter in Sonoma County for five years and know how closed-minded the staff of the big daily are. For years I attended the same meetings, interviewed the same people on county issues. I wrote my story, then read big daily's story. "I thought we were in the same meeting, but I don't know that we were on the same planet," I often told my co-workers.

But Measure M was supported by hundreds of farmers, the best local food businesses. It was opposed by a couple of cranky farmers and an insurance company. How could we lose?

The staff of big paper have certain mental frames: progressives are unrealistic hysterics; anything that even appears to impede business is misguided; nothing the Farm Bureau says is really a lie, never mind the evidence.

It does not matter what facts and figures you fling at a person if they have a mental frame that excludes those truths. Those facts and figures will just bounce off. I can tell a reporter all day that our opponents were taking money under the table from chemical corporations, which explained why none of their staff costs were showing up in their campaign expense filings. But those facts and reports banged into the "The Farm Bureau doesn't lie" frame and off the truth went into the circular bin.

But our opponents told the reporters lies they could hear: Measure M supporters are anti-farmer, anti-business, don't understand the necessities of agri-business. That they could hear, so that's what they printed.

Most of Sonoma County's media are run by open-minded, fair journalists. Our real, local publications from the *Independent Coast Observer* to the *Windsor Times* gave us a fair

shake, and often an endorsement. But the big daily is the opinion leader in our county. So our opponents told them lies, the paper printed the lies and our opponents picked those lies back up, strengthened with the credibility of a *New York Times* publication. So voters were convinced or confused, and we lost.

A lot of progressive organizations have to deal with that big daily to get their message out. A lot of them run into the same barriers. Remember that your message is only as credible as the message-bearer. Your organization probably has some businesspeople in it. Ask them to act as your spokespeople to the newspaper. Remember: if the paper can misquote you to make you look bad, they will. Craft your message carefully, and when you're giving an interview, talk slowly and breathe. Remember their frames and craft your message to fit through it. Rely as much as possible on our small, local papers and newsletters. They're hard-working and stressed, but they can hear you. Measure M's best coverage was in those small papers.

Measure M supporters gathered for a big meeting in mid November to discuss the big question, "What next?" Check out the answer to that question and figure out where you can plug in at [www.gefreesonoma.org](http://www.gefreesonoma.org) or leave a message at (707) 823-4410.

## **Protecting the Right to Online Dissent**

by Debra Birkinshaw

Dissent may be patriotic, but are we still protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution when we communicate online? With the recent incarceration of the Chinese journalist Shi Tao, in part based upon evidence provided by the Internet Service Provider Yahoo!, we should be concerned about our privacy and safety.

On October 26, 2001, President Bush signed the USA PATRIOT Act into law, giving invasive powers to both domestic law enforcement and international intelligence agencies. This act eliminated the checks and balances that gave courts the ability to review surveillance tactics, and thus prevent abuse by the act.

With the impending "sunset clause" on the PATRIOT Act, Senate Democrats threatened to create a filibuster in an effort to block its extension. A subsequent deal was reached to make permanent 14 provisions of the law that are set to expire at the end of the year, with two provisions – related to records from businesses, libraries, and wiretaps – requiring review in 7 years.

In a formal letter, a bipartisan group of senators said the tentative deal had caused them "deep concern" because it did not go far enough in "making reasonable changes to the original law to protect innocent people from unnecessary and intrusive government surveillance." The letter was signed by three Republicans – Senators Craig, Sununu and Murkowski – and three Democrats – Senators Durbin and Salazar, and Mr. Feingold.

Even as the alarm is raised and action is taken, it doesn't go far enough in protecting our right to online dissent. Section 212 of the Act authorizes any electronic communications service provider to disclose communications if it reasonably believes that an emergency involving "immediate danger of death or physical injury to any person" requires disclosure. The government is now targeting US citizens who engage in dissent, by terming them 'domestic terrorists'.

Section 802 of the Act infers that an act of dissent committed within the United States can be considered a federal crime – domestic terrorism – if it "appears to be intended" to "influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion," or "to intimidate or coerce a civilian population." This provision applies to United States citizens as well as aliens.

Online blogging and signing of petitions and letters of complaint to government officials can be considered as acts intended to attack or illuminate a particular government policy; thus, dissent now falls under the definition of domestic terrorism.

As an example, Doug Thompson, founder and publisher of Capitol Hill Blue, discovered that he has been deemed "an enemy of the state" in a document of his activities assembled by the FBI and the US Department of Justice. "Much of this information was gathered through what we call 'national security letters,'" his friend in the Justice Department said. "It allows us to gather information from a variety of sources."

Doug is apparently a "person of interest" who has "written and promoted opinions that are contrary to the government of the United States of America." He notes that the information will be kept on file indefinitely. "President George W. Bush in 2003 ordered the bureau and other federal agencies to not only keep information, but place it in government databases that can be accessed by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies."

If it could happen to him, it could happen to any one of us. What can we do about it?

Organizations working to protect our right to free speech include:

ACLU – the American Civil Liberties Union, 707-765-5005, [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

BORDC – Bill of Rights Defense Committee, [www.bordc.org](http://www.bordc.org)

EFF – Electronic Frontier Foundation, which specifically targets online dissent. We should support their efforts. [www.eff.org](http://www.eff.org)

The Peace and Justice Center will be hosting a "Support Alternative Media Forum" Thursday Night, January 19<sup>th</sup>. Join the Peace Center, subscribe to the *North Bay Progressive*, and support the local chapter of the ACLU.

*Sources include: Truthout, 9/22/03 and 11/1/05; www.capitolhillblue.com, "Enemy of the State".*

## **End the Death Penalty**

by Patrick Band and Millie Barnet

The ACLU of Northern California recently took on as their major project the death moratorium bill (AB 1121) and the exoneration of all three men scheduled to be executed at San Quentin before March of 2006. The Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County has joined them in support of this bill.

With over 635 people on death row in California, it is time to look at and understand what's wrong with the death penalty. The ACLU presents 6 talking points:

- \* The death penalty kills innocent people.
- \* The death penalty punishes the families of the victim.
- \* The death penalty wastes taxpayers' money.

- \* The death penalty is not a deterrent.
- \* The death penalty has always been administered in a discriminatory fashion.
- \* America is the only democratic, industrialized country which still executes its people.

By the time you read this, the State of California may already have executed Stanley "Tookie" Williams.

On October 11, 2005, the US Supreme Court ruled against Tookie on his final appeal and set his execution date for December 13. Thus they disregarded 9 of the 24 Ninth Circuit Court judges' assertion that the District Attorney at Tookie's trial employed "reprehensible and unconstitutional" racist tactics, using animal-in-a-jungle metaphors to refer to Tookie and to the South Central environment in which he lived. This landmark ruling means that minorities can now legally be rejected from juries based on race.

Stanley "Tookie" Williams, former head of the LA Crips and 6 times Nobel Prize nominee, has been on Death Row in San Quentin for more than 20 years.

"Redemption", featuring Jamie Fox as Tookie, recounts his life, and the compounding effect of race, class, oppression and poverty leading to gang lifestyle.

Tookie has received more than 150,000 letters from youth around the world, who turned their lives around after reading his children books, such as *Gangs and Wanting to Belong*, *Gangs and Self-Esteem* and the internationally acclaimed *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*.

Isn't it time to join the rest of the world's leading countries and just say "No" to the death penalty?

If you read this in time, send a letter to Governor Schwarzenegger [governor@governor.ca.gov](mailto:governor@governor.ca.gov), or fax 1-916-445-4633 to urge our California Governor to spare Tookie's life.

### **Resources at the Peace Center**

The Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County is a highly valuable resource to our community. Come in and take advantage of these important offerings:

Draft Registration Counseling/Selective Service

Conscientious Objection

Documentation of CO Claim

Military Recruitment Practices

Delayed Entry Program (DEP) Information and Separation

Youth Legal Rights

Book, Periodical, and Video Library

Access to and a meeting place for numerous Sonoma County peace groups

Organizing for vigils, marches, demonstrations

Community events email bulletin board

Bi monthly *Peace Press*

Workshops and talks on peace and justice issues

A place to interact with progressives and share ideas

Informational web site: [peaceandjusticesonomaco.org](http://peaceandjusticesonomaco.org)

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### **Thursday Night Programs**

by Jan Jackson

Miles Everett and I have just completed our first year of scheduling and hosting Thursday nights at the Peace and Justice Center. We have put forth a concerted effort to mix film showings with speakers, and have done our best to cover timely topics. We have greatly enjoyed this task, but are disappointed in the turnout: typically 2 to 10 people.

We have decided to take a vacation in December and resume the programs in January, after which we will decide whether or not to continue. During this time, we would welcome input from any members of the Peace & Justice Center on ideas for increasing participation. Please call Miles (431-7274) or Jan (573-8189). We also have a mail slot at the Center: the Alliance for Democracy.

### **KBBF Elects New Leadership and a New Perspective**

by Caroline Bañuelos

KBBF (Bilingual Broadcasting Foundation, FM 89.1) was established in 1973. Founded during the Chicano movement, it was the first public radio station in the United States, owned and operated by Chicanos.

According to the bylaws, in 1976 the Board of Directors developed a statement of goals that was consistent with the original founders. This included the coordination and facilitation of efforts to advance the political, social, educational and economic conditions of the Chicano community. Fast forward to 2005 and quite a bit has happened in between to change the focus of the station. On September 4 of this year an election was held and fifteen new board members were elected. This new board consists of Latinos from all over the Americas including Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, and the United States. This is significant because they reflect the change in demographics among Latinos in Sonoma and surrounding counties. Latinos are a unique and diverse population. One of the challenges for the new board is finding the balance between honoring the goals and philosophies of the founders while at the same time celebrating the inclusion of the entire Latino community. The new board seems to understand this dynamic and the need to bring the entire community together.

When talking about his vision for the station, Omar Medina, newly elected board member and President of KBBF, would like to see the station even more rooted in the community. "I would like KBBF to be more integrated with the community by addressing the issues facing the community. KBBF should be a voice for the community that comes from the community."

Some of the other challenges facing the board, not unlike many non-profits, are cash flow problems, lack of new funding sources, and the need to expand membership. "The new

board is committed to bringing financial stability to the station. This will enable us to address the infrastructure of the station as well as allow for creativity in programming," says Medina. The board, having just been elected in September, lodged a major and successful membership drive during the month of October. The drive generated many new members and tapped past members, to help build the station again and create new interest in the needs of the station and what it has to offer the community.

Molly Goss, a new board member and chair of the programming committee, sees great potential in this area as well. "We'd like to continue to provide entertainment and music, but we'd also like to offer even more information and resources to the community. We'd like to see a bigger emphasis on allowing people to express themselves so that KBBF is a place where everyone has a voice."

Consequently, the new board faces many obstacles as it attempts to bring stability, creativity and openness to the community. However, the energy level is high and the board seems poised to address these challenges head on.

*Caroline Bañuelos is a newly elected board member of KBBF and the CFO.*

### **Free Mind Media: Sonoma County's Jewel of a Resource**

by Danielle Burlison-Craft

Free Mind Media's Mission Statement: Free Mind Media is a non-profit, collectively run community center. Our mission is to be a dynamic source of independent and alternative media, to spark debate and discussion, and to provide a physical space for people to come together and work for greater social justice.

Gone are the days of carting around and storing endless crates and boxes of books to progressive events, farmer's markets and local schools in the infamous veggie-oil powered VW bus. You may have seen them out there, the predominantly young, self-proclaimed radical media voice in Sonoma County. As of May 2005, Free Mind Media has opened a community space right here in Santa Rosa for all to enjoy and use to network and keep the social justice movement marching forward toward the world we all envision!

Free Mind Media began roughly three years ago with approximately 10 volunteers who shared common visions – to provide the often hard-to-find alternative media sources that are so needed to keep us educated on world affairs and social issues, the information that the right wing movement would like to keep hidden and silenced. As many of us have come to understand the painful truth about who owns and operates mainstream media in American Society, more and more of us are constantly seeking the truth.

Free Mind Media not only provides a retail space to purchase new and used books, CDs and other forms of media that most stores can't or won't carry, the space also serves as a meeting location for groups to come together for discussion, social events such as art shows or informational meetings as well as providing internet access. Free Mind Media members feel that "access to information is empowering and that exchange of this information is a necessary step in building a just and fair world." In addition, it is very clear that Free Mind Media will not compromise the group values for profit, a quality that is rare and valuable in our often financially-obsessed culture.

Progressive media is so incredibly important in this day and age. As civil rights and access to information are threatened by our current and growing regressive administration, it

is increasingly crucial to support groups like Free Mind Media and all of the powerful work they are doing in our community. So, the next time you are feeling inspired to expand your consciousness, contact Free Mind Media, purchase some holiday gifts and invite them to your next event or demonstration.

Free Mind Media is located at 546 Pacific Avenue in Santa Rosa (near SRJC in the old Peace and Justice Center building). Phone (707) 579-1605 or visit them on the web at [www.freemindmedia.org](http://www.freemindmedia.org).

## **Media Newspeak**

by Rebel Fagin

It's hard to keep up with the many lies and media manipulations of the Bush administration. Understanding their use and misuse of words, as well as what is implied and what is left out, is crucial to understanding their hidden agenda.

Take a look at the language they use in this current Newspeak dictionary. Feel free to add to it.

*Bosses:* The phrase "union bosses" sounds like thugs pushing helpless workers around. So how come they talk about union bosses and never about corporate bosses? Are we to believe that corporations are inherently more democratic than unions?

*Collateral damage:* The deaths of civilians and the destruction of civilian property in the prosecution of war. While most Americans recoil at the thought of civilian casualties, few are concerned with collateral damage.

*Communist government:* Any government that uses its resources for the benefit of its own people.

*Democratic government:* A government that uses its resources, including its people, for the benefit of US or multi-national corporations.

*Damaged units:* US military casualties. If these units die while in transfer out of Iraq, they are not included in the US Iraq body count.

*Extralegal:* Illegal. For example: The extralegal actions of paramilitary forces.

*Free market:* An economic system which provides state subsidies to multinational corporations and eliminates local competition, creating a greater gap between the wealthy few and the underprivileged many.

*National interests:* Corporate interests.

*National security:* The military protection of corporate interests overseas.

*Paramilitary forces:* Death squads used to terrorize the poor.

*Reforms:* Especially from Schwarzenegger, reforms mean cuts in government funding for human services.

*Stability:* The maintenance of socio-economic relationships where everyone knows their place and stays there quietly.

*Transfer tubes:* Military coffins. The public is less alarmed when they read that damaged units were returned in transfer tubes, than when hearing that soldiers' bodies were coming home in coffins.

*Terrorists:* Any nationalist resistance to US military or economic forces.

When you follow mass media, you'll discover that the distortions are not just in the definitions. The implications are equally as important.

In a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article giving a timeline of the Joseph Wilson/Valerie Plame story, the author wrote that Joseph Wilson went to Niger and "chatted" with people to find out the truth about Sadaam and yellow cake. The use of the word "chatted" implies that there was no serious discussion and that Wilson's report can be dismissed.

An article in the *Press Democrat*, about fighting in Haiti, informed us that "UN soldiers and gang members traded gunfire." The use of "gang members" completely discredits the resistance of people who oppose the illegal overthrow of their government.

An Associated Press article quoted George Bush as urging "Latin Americans to reject efforts to reverse democratic progress." The article went on to say that he was referring to Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez. The impression it meant to convey is that Hugo Chavez is a Communist dictator, not a democratically elected president.

The Bush administration's use of language would do George Orwell and Lewis Carroll proud. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less." – *Through the Looking Glass*.

### **Progressive Television Programs on Channel 72**

One of the best independent media resources in Sonoma County is the Community Media Center on Mendocino Avenue in Santa Rosa. It is the home of community cable access Channel 72. It also offers training in creating videos and hosting independent television programs.

Two local women, Elaine Holtz and Mary Norman, trained at the Media Center and now produce and host two regularly televised programs on Channel 72.

The goal of the programs is to create progressive television by interviewing local activists, artists, and cultural workers, by discussing timely issues such as the Iraq war, and by bringing special attention to the important political and cultural work that women are doing to nurture our local community and the broader society.

Elaine and Mary work as a team, often using an interview format. Elaine's program features the work of local women. As part of her programming, Mary promotes activities at the Peace & Justice Center.

Elaine's program, *Women's Spaces*, is shown on Wednesday evenings 9:00 to 9:30 pm and Thursday afternoons noon to 12:30 pm.

Mary's program, *Voices for Social Justice*, is shown on Monday evenings 8:30 to 9:00 pm and Tuesday mornings 11:30 am to noon.

Elaine and Mary welcome your feedback via e-mail. Please contact them if you are interested in being on a show: [marynorman@earthlink.net](mailto:marynorman@earthlink.net) or [elaineholtz@yahoo.com](mailto:elaineholtz@yahoo.com).

## In The Time of Triage

by Jack Wikse

\_\_\_\_\_ In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport was transformed into the Airport “Triage Center” where over 20,000 sick, wounded and homeless people were treated. “Triage” is a medical term, from the French “trier,” meaning to sort. CNN reported that at some point, medical teams had to “black tag” patients – to separate those who could not be saved from those who could benefit from care. Fox news reported a “triage line” inside the Astrodome in Houston. Triage is becoming a part of everyday media language.

\_\_\_\_\_ Triage has been a theme in contemporary ethics since the 1970’s when Garret Hardin argued that given the scarcity of world food resources, emergency food aid should be provided on a triage basis. This is “social” triage. Hardin argued that those who could not survive without aid should not be given aid. He termed this “lifeboat ethics.” The most wretched of the earth were expendable. Recently, Peter Singer, a Princeton “bio-ethicist,” predicted that the traditional view of the sanctity of human life will collapse in the next 35 years under pressure from “scientific, technological and demographic developments.” This standpoint was made manifest in the media presentation of the poorest of our American poor being treated as expendable in the face of Katrina. Getting used to such images, we are seeing the erosion of the expectation of humane, shared security among us. After the recent hurricane in Florida, an elderly friend of mine there is facing no food or power for the next two weeks.

The meaningful ethical justification involved in medical triage (the need to help those who will be able to survive a catastrophe) does not transfer to the more complex context of the inequality of global resource allocation. Even in war, the choices made as to who will live and who will die go beyond medical criteria. In WW2, when penicillin was scarce, men who had syphilis were treated in preference to those who were wounded in battle because they could more quickly return to the front (cf., Richard Rubenstein, *The Age of Triage*). And today, thanks to the “Patriot Act” and our fetish for homeland security, we can no longer distinguish war and peace, domestic and foreign policy. There is no line we can draw between those who are expendable in Iraq or in New Orleans. Along side the media euphemism of collateral damage, teaching us not to look too closely at what we’re doing, we are being accustomed to media images of social triage that remind us to look out for number one. Got water?

### **Book Review – *Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream* by Robert Jensen, Peter Lang Publishing, 2004**

by Susan Lamont

It’s not uncommon for students at the University of Texas at Austin to approach journalism professor Robert Jensen and ask him in hushed tones if he is a liberal. He professes horror and exclaims that he certainly is not. He tells them he is an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, socialist radical!

With those credentials, it is amazing how often his opinions appear on the op-ed pages of mainstream newspapers. In *Writing Dissent*, Jensen explains how he does it and tells us that we can do it too.

Though Jensen is a strong supporter of alternative media, he believes that “as long as the majority of Americans get the majority of their information from the conventional mass media sources, it will be important for radicals to exploit the opportunities that exist to use these media to try to expand our movements and reach new people.”

Jensen believes that mainstream media operate from two primary unstated assumptions: that capitalism is the only viable economic system and that American foreign policy is always benevolent. It is the role of the radical to challenge these assumptions and any other manifestations of conventional wisdom and hold the powerful accountable.

Journalists are generalists, not specialists. We usually know more about the subjects that interest us than they do. The secret is to give them new information without directly challenging them and accusing them of bias. Never tell them that they are under the control of the state-corporate-military nexus.

Jensen begins his book with a discussion of radical analysis, followed by an explanation of the way media work in the United States. It is important to learn to work with, not against, the media as they exist – like it or not. He analyzes the op-ed structure and style and explains how to work with editors.

The subsequent chapters illustrate different angles for writing your op-ed and getting published. Each contains several examples of op-eds by Jensen that were published.

In “Piggybacking on the News”, he asks “How does a writer find openings for timeless truths that are politically important?” He tells us to look for the “current news hook” that will let us present a few “big ideas.” The WTO meeting in Seattle in 1999 provided the perfect opportunity to write “Corporate Power is the Central Issue.” A statement by then-governor George W. Bush that he had been “chosen by God” led to “Idea that US is God’s Chosen is Dangerous.”

Jensen also covers the alternative press, which he considers vitally important. First, when it preaches to the choir, it validates us and our beliefs. Second, because we can’t all do independent research, it informs the choir.

Jensen concludes with an explanation of why he writes. His reasons are many, but they boil down to this. “I write because I hurt, and because I see others hurting... I write to keep the world from melting in front of me.” Whatever your reason, this book will help you get that radical idea into print.

**“I know I’m Not Alone Either, Michael”  
A conversation with Michael Franti**

by Danielle Burlison-Craft

The experience of sitting down face to face with Michael Franti wasn’t nearly as intimidating as I expected it would be while I sat waiting, watching the Palestinian dance troupe scurrying through the halls of the Santa Rosa Veteran’s Hall. Maybe the fact that he was sitting, rather than standing up, towering over my small frame, helped ease the nervousness. He was also casually barefoot (as usual) and approached me as an old friend and colleague – ready to discuss his new film, our children, graffiti art and Odwalla’s new Purple Superfood smoothies.

Michael Franti is a Bay Area celebrity musician, activist, father and most recently, a film-maker. His latest project is a documentary film entitled, “I Know I’m Not Alone”, in which he takes on the controversial issues of the war in Iraq and the ongoing conflict in Israeli-occupied Palestine. We sat down to discuss the importance of his film and the slow progression of “wiggle room” in today’s political environment.

“People are very inspired by the film,” says Franti. “But, making the film was very difficult. We are at war right now *and* I took on the issue of Israel and Palestine. You just say those two words and BOOM! It’s like a powerful explosion.”

Franti spent over a year editing “I Know I’m Not Alone” in order to get all of the perspectives covered, focusing mostly on his own experience of visiting war torn Iraq and Palestine.

“You could have a film with two hours of bombs dropping and show *that* perspective of war or you could have a two hour movie about the dinner you have in a restaurant during a war. My perspective is that there is a light that we can move on to. I was trying to show in this film some of the examples of how we can see this light.”

One recent example of this light is Ariel Sharon leaving the Likud Party and starting his own. Franti pointed out that “For somebody who is very right wing militant to say, ‘I am going to break away from the hard line of the party’ is big! It gives a lot of people who may be on the fence the opportunity to speak up. It gives them some wiggle room.”

Franti and I agreed that Sharon’s move wouldn’t necessarily immediately improve the conflict in Palestine, but that it is movement and movement is a positive thing. “We aren’t going to have our ideals. Palestinians won’t have their ideals and Jews in Israel won’t have their ideals, but there can be a middle ground. That is what I am interested in working toward and that’s what I hope my film inspires- that there is an opportunity within the conflict to move.”

When discussing his recent tour around the US, for film screenings of “I know I’m Not Alone”, I asked Franti about how well he and his film had been received in some of the more conservative areas of “Middle America.” He assured me that his experience has been nothing other than positive and that he plans on showing the film in Iraq as well as Israel after he is done with his US tour.

“You know, I think in our country today, there is a big switch. People don’t want the war in Iraq. Seeing that only 37% of people here support Bush... Wow. That doesn’t just happen because he f\*cked up on a few things and people are suddenly waking up. It

happened because millions of people sat down at their dinner tables and talked to their families about it. Millions of people sat down in the streets and protested and raised their voices about it.”

In the end, when the Superfood was gone and we had shared laughs about our children trying to rebel against our radical parenting, Franti helped reassure and inspire me. He has confidence that when we can move away from the fear that the US government and Israeli government prey upon, opportunities for change and movement arise.

“Don’t ever think that anything you do is too small. There is a light out there.” He says. I couldn’t agree more. Thanks for leading us to the light, Michael. See you in the streets.

There will be a screening of “I Know I’m not Alone” in Sebastopol in late January. Check out [www.spearheadvibrations.com/tourdates.cfm](http://www.spearheadvibrations.com/tourdates.cfm) for more info.

*Danielle Burlison-Craft is a full-time single mama, a graduate student at New College of California, board member at the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center, Food Not Bombs volunteer and a founding member of Free Mind Media, the Sonoma County Mama Collective and is Elizabeth Stinson’s number one fan. To give her a massage or chocolates, please contact her at [o\\_dani\\_girl@yahoo.com](mailto:o_dani_girl@yahoo.com)!*

## **Disinformation Blues**

by Phyllis H. Meshulam

Woke up this morning,  
couldn’t see any light.

Woke up this morning,  
Couldn’t see any light.

Was it disinformation?

I swear it was night.

The government will tell you

What’s terror, what’s not.

The government will tell you

What’s terror, what’s not.

Put your trust in them,

give it no thought.

When the government kills people  
then it’s all right.

When the government kills people  
then it’s all right.

Executions and bombings,  
no end in sight.

If you’re looking for the truth,  
look between the lies.

If you’re looking for the truth,  
look between the lies.

I’m looking under  
rubble in my mind.

## **Two Decades of Free Alternative Media Publication**

by David Anderson

In June of 1984 the Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County came into existence. The founders started a newsletter for the Center which, over the next two years, evolved into the *Peace Press*. To bring an alternative voice to Sonoma County, it was decided to distribute the *Peace Press* free to the people of the county.

Almost 20 years and thousands of volunteer hours later the *Peace Press* is the oldest continuous alternative publication in Sonoma County, bringing us news about the US military industrial complex that the corporate media will not print. People reach for the *Peace Press* for information on issues of military recruitment in our schools, military intervention around the world, as well as actions you can take to counter the violence from Sonoma County to Washington D.C. The *Peace Press* has been the place to learn of problems and alternative solutions to problems, such as homelessness, violence against women, racism, affordable health care, environmental racism, nuclear disarmament and proliferation, freedom of speech and many other issues of social justice and nonviolence.

In this time of illegal wars and a criminal administration running our government, the alternative media is our lifeline of information about what is really happening and how to get involved to change the policies. The *Peace Press* is a vital element in the alternative media world of Sonoma County. We stand tall and speak truth to power, to counter the government propaganda you find in the echo chamber of the corporate media. Show your support for the volunteers who work long and hard to bring you the *Peace Press*; become a member of the Center. Only through your membership dollars is the free distribution of the *Peace Press* possible.

Take action, become a member TODAY! Fill in the form below and mail it in with your contribution. And consider a membership as a gift for a loved one. Thank you for your involvement.