

Peace Press, February – March 2005

Index of articles:

Getting Centered
by Elizabeth Stinson

Student MLK Oratories

It is Not Just a Dream, We Must Make it Real
by Jeni Turner, Piner High School

Mountaintop
by Madeline Mahrer, Twin Hills School

Cracks in the Wall (of army recruitment)
by Rebel Fagin

A World Pulled Apart
by Shirley Johnston

And a World Pulled Together
by Shirley Johnston

Shirley Chisholm: Profile in Courage
by Patrick Burke

Vote Rigging Prototype Designed in Florida
by John Byrnes

Labor news from Central America
by Victor Chechanover

PJC section

Scary Times: Part 2 of a History of the Beginnings of the Peace and Justice
Center
by Adrienne Swenson and George Romandy

No Mas! No More! Not In Our Name
by Susan Lamont

California Peace Centers Conference

Our Contribution to the War: War Tax Workshops

Bike Project Update
by Marsha Banks

Community section

GE Free Campaign Gathers Record Number of Signatures

The North Bay's Widening Wealth and Income Gap
by Marty Bennett

Getting Centered

by Elizabeth Stinson, Director

As we begin 2005, disheartened by 2004, and 4 more years of war and human loss, the toll continues to escalate.

Our hearts are forced to open wider to embrace the pain and suffering of the many tsunami victims. My thanks to everyone who contributed and facilitated the many antibiotics and medications sent to Sri Lanka with Kima Douglas and purchased locally by Dr. Hergenrather, organized through the blog of Gary Rhine of Dreamcatchers and posted on the P & J website... Thank-You.

Social justice work is being done in many fields and on many "fronts", "middles" and "necessary beginnings." We are busy and the work keeps from being overwhelming when we approach it with an open heart and many, many tiny steps. The time for sweeping change will come... keep your brooms ready.

Meanwhile, we congratulate the "GE Free" Campaign on their success in gathering 45,387 signatures for the ballot measure to launch a ten-year moratorium on growing genetically engineered crops in Sonoma County. Our congratulations to Daniel Solnit and all those who gathered signatures leading up to the December 20th deadline, guaranteeing the initiative will be on the ballot.

We congratulate all those who successfully negotiated themselves OUT of the military in 2004-2004. We know how hard it was on all of you and we are happy to have met you and your stories strengthen our resolve against the occupation of Iraq.

We are involved in the *HOPE: High School Outreach Peace Education* art and poetry slam. Students are invited to participate from high schools throughout Sonoma County. Local student artists and poets should contact the Center at 575-8902 if they would like to enter the competition. Prizes range from gift certificates to \$200, as well as participation in a community exhibit. We thank Taxes for Peace for their support of the HOPE project in 2004.

When we became peace and social justice activists, we brought to the work an unconditional regard for the dignity of all human life. It is that regard that fortifies us in the

face of human loss both from natural disaster as well as those disasters that are man made.

The Center is hosting the California Peace Makers conference in April of 2005. So far we have lined up dynamic speakers and trainers from Barbara Lubin of Mideast Children's Alliance to Marti and Luke Hiken from the Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild, There will be many other presenters and workshops available to fortify and inspire the movement in our work ahead.

We invite you to familiarize yourselves with the Center, with our many activities as well as with the many events presented by organizations affiliated with and meeting at the Center.

Peace and diplomacy in 2005...

It is Not Just a Dream, We Must Make it Real

by Jeni Turner, Piner High School

Former President John F. Kennedy once said, "We need those who can dream of things that never were." Perhaps the greatest American ever to dream was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He had a dream that transcended the racial, religious, economic, and gender boundaries that divide this nation, as well as the world. It is a dream of equality, justice, and peace for all humankind. Dr. King fought for a nation "where people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character", for a nation where peace reigns, and for a nation free from oppression.

But a dream is only a dream, without action, because it is action that breeds achievement. The achievements of King are due to his revolutionary form of action, non-violence. In his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, King said, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant." Dr. King understood that he was fighting an uphill battle, one that would have many setbacks, but he possessed the foresight to recognize that it was temporary.

To many people at the time, his peaceful protests may have looked like an ineffective attempt to change the world, as though simple peace was no match for blinding hatred and prejudice. King knew differently, and refused to stoop to the level of his oppressors. His peaceful methods in times of great difficulty are an inspiration, and they did end up changing the world. In 1956, Dr. King led the bus boycott movement, which ended racial segregation in the public transportation system. He organized a pilgrimage in order to pass civil rights legislation that gave African Americans the right to vote, to equal housing, and to equal education. A civil rights division was also added within the United States Justice Department. All of this was achieved non-violently.

Is this righteous dream still alive today? Honestly, I don't know. When I see people like Barack Obama, the senator from Illinois, I am led to believe that it is. His father was a Kenyan immigrant who came to America with virtually nothing, and found acceptance and a successful future for his family. Would the son of a Kenyan immigrant ever have been

elected to the US Senate, and be considered presidential material, without the work of Dr. King? I doubt it.

Barack Obama's work today greatly reflects Dr. King's dream. In his speech at the Democratic National Convention, Obama touched on one aspect that makes our country great; it is "a belief that we're all connected as one people. If there is a child on the South side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me. If there is a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for their prescription drugs, and has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer. If there is an Arab-American family being rounded up without benefit of attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties." He speaks of an undivided nation, the same nation that Martin Luther King spoke of.

But when I look at some of the decisions that have been made by today's political leaders and the American people, I am led to believe that the dream is not alive. That is why it is so important that we take on this dream of equality and peace. There is so much that everyone can do, but above all, we must use our voices to stand up, and then reinforce our words with action. Maybe it will take going against the social norms, the media, our peers, but it is worth it. Dr. King said that, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter", we must not become silent. We must not become silent due to despair, frustration, and we must never become silent due to fear.

America has made tremendous progress: every citizen old enough has the right to vote, public places aren't segregated, and children of every social, economic, religious and ethnic background have the right to a good education. But that is not enough, there is so much out there that still needs to be fought for, injustices are tolerated everyday. King's dream is the American dream, and one that is our responsibility to achieve. Dr. King had hope, hope when facing the unknown, hope when encountering unbelievable obstacles, and I know that as Americans we carry that with us today. It was Aristotle who said, "Hope is the waking dream", and because of that, Dr. King's dream is now our own dream to follow. A dream for this nation, a dream for this world. It is time that we made it real.

Jeni Turner won the high school award for best speech at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration, 2005.

Mountaintop

by Madeline Mahrer, Twin Hills School

When Martin Luther King died, something died in America. When he fell, something fell in America, and when he lay buried deep that something rested by his heart. That something was a dream; a dream that started out as something small, and became something big. A dream that was meant to be carried out to the American people, and to all others. So I ask you, bring alive this dream, pick up this dream, lift this dream off Dr. King's chest and warm the earth. For not only did he have the dream but so should the rest of the world.

"You must not harbor anger. You must be willing to suffer the anger of your opponents and yet not return anger. No matter how emotional your opponents are, you

must remain calm." Martin Luther King said this. But, not only did he say it, he meant it. And not only did he mean it, but he felt it, believed it, loved it, shared it and lived it with the American people. Not only with his mind, not only with his mouth, and not only with his heart, but with all of himself. He as a person did his best to help a troubled America. He may have been scared, but he was proud to be scared, for he knew only a real man could accept fear, and look it in the eye. A real man would not fight fear but embrace it. He stood up in front of America and told it, I have a dream; a dream of love, peace, and equality. America may not have been ready for his dreams but many followed him, for *he* was the leader of that time and the time to come.

Dr. King said, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." This was his dream, his hope, his want, his desire, not for himself, but for everyone. For all the Jews, all the Christians, all the Muslims, all gays, straights, women, men, and children, Asians, African-Americans, Latinos, and every other being. For it is only fair that we are accepted as a whole, and not as a half, third, or a fourth. This was Dr. King's dream, that everyone could be seen as a living, breathing human person, being.

Dr. King told the American people, "I've been to the mountain top, and I have seen the Promised Land." The problem was, once he reached the top, he fell to the other side, the overpowering hate of others taking advantage of the height he had gained. And now he waits, he waits for the American people to climb that mountain, he waits for them to see the glory, and he waits. He waits for everyone to seek out his promise, and to live in the land of the free and the brave. Now, I ask you as a people, to join together and make a person. And as a person, I want you to take one step toward that mountain, one step toward freedom, one step toward justice, and then take another. We may progress slowly; it may take a long time. But, I know if we can dream it, we can climb it until we will all reach the mountaintop, until we've all seen the Promised Land. But, this time we won't fall. We will walk down and greet Dr. King, standing there waiting, a smile on his face, because he knew if we could climb it, we could dream it.

So come with me, warm the earth, embrace fear, and come to the mountainside, where we will hear freedom ring. Because long ago not only did Dr. King have a dream but so did much of the world. So do I.

Madeline Mahrer won the middle school award for best speech at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration, 2005.

Cracks in the Wall

by Rebel Fagin

There are cracks in the walls of the war machine. The empire is breaking down from the inside. This does not mean that we can quit; au contraire, our work must intensify. We must work harder for we are starting to garner results.

I'm a union teacher at a public high school. In the late 1990's military recruiters trolled the halls, lunch quad, library, and career center up to sixteen days a month looking for victims. Kids come to school trusting adults. Recruiters are paid to lie. Thus the students are victimized through their known vulnerability.

Three years ago the Progressive Club of Healdsburg High, with a great deal of help from the Peace & Justice Center, began counter-recruitment tabling. Every time the Army, Marines, or Navy set up a recruitment table, we offer alternatives at our table. For the past two years the military limited their presence to once a month. This year it has been semi-monthly so far. I'm inclined to think that our presence has had some influence on their decision to seek fresh meat elsewhere.

And it's not just us. When resistance is imperative, rebellion becomes divine. Soldiers across the board are resisting the war in Iraq. Many have seen the war, and they're not going back. The Iraq Veterans Against the War say the best way to support the troops is to demand the withdrawal of all occupying forces. A 2003 Gallup Poll revealed that 20% of the soldiers felt that going to war in Iraq was wrong. Their families ranked the same question at 54%. Since then feelings against the war have only increased. Vietnam Vets Against the War have been aiding war resisters fleeing the country for Canada. Legal channels have been jammed with delayed entry recruiters attempting to change their status. The lies these young men and women were told and the reality of Shock & Awe Warfare have created a psychological gulf. What they were told, liberating Iraq, and what they are doing, blowing up children doesn't match. The wounds people are receiving are not flesh wounds; people are losing limbs. In Fallujah, napalm, nuclear weapons (DU), and poison gas were used against civilians. My friend's son just came back from Iraq with tales of multiple suicide attempts amongst the ranks. With the psychological disconnect going on over there, Delayed Stress Syndrome will be the Agent Orange Syndrome of this Iraqi War.

We must support the troops. To help in the resistance, start with Iraq Veterans Against the War www.ivaw.net, Military Families Speak Out www.mfso.org or the GI Rights Hotline at 800-394-9544. The sources available here at the P & J are excellent. We can not allow the Bush Junta to sacrifice our children on an oily altar of profit.

Sources: Mother Jones, November/December 2004, Project for a New American Century, personal experience and interviews. Rebel Fagin is a long-time peace & justice activist and a member of Radical Ions and the Progressive Club.

A World Pulled Apart

by Shirley Johnston

Communication would have massively reduced the horrifying loss of life in the tsunami that followed the December 26 2004 megathrust quake.

The quake struck just before 8 am off the coast of Sumatra. An hour later, as the true magnitude of the quake registered, the people at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii realized that a tsunami in the Indian Ocean was an imminent threat. "We started thinking about who we could call," geophysicist Barry Hirshorn told the *Honolulu Advertiser*. "We talked to the State Department Operations Center and to the military. We called embassies. We talked to the Navy in Sri Lanka, any local government official we could get ahold of." By that time the tsunami had already scoured the coastline of Sumatra and over 100,000 people were dead.

Indonesia has only one sensor capable of giving early warning of a tsunami. It had not been connected to a phone line since 2000 and was reportedly damaged by a lightning strike several weeks before the Dec. 26 quake. In any case, it is located off Java and would not have provided adequate warning to the west coast of Sumatra where the tsunami struck.

In Thailand, seismologists were aware of the Sumatran quake almost immediately. Thai Meteorological Department officials, gathered for a policy conference, convened an emergency meeting. The danger of a tsunami was discussed, but without sensors in place to indicate if a tsunami was actually on its way the meteorologists decided not to risk annoying tourists with a false alarm. "Business would be instantaneously affected... We could go under if [the tsunami] didn't come," Thailand's newspaper of record, the *Nation*, quoted one meteorologist as saying.

Another seismologist in Thailand called government offices and radio stations to no avail. But on one beach a ten-year old British girl who had recently done a school project on tsunamis recognized the sight and sound of the encroaching wave and was able to warn her family and fellow sunbathers in time to flee to safety.

An hour before the tsunami struck, Madras air base received an urgent message from the base on Nicobar Island. "The island is sinking and there is water all over." The chief at the Madras base instructed his assistant to alert New Delhi. The assistant faxed the home of the official who used to be minister of science and technology—but not the man currently holding the post. No warning was issued for Madras or other south Indian towns, and thousands of people died.

None of the countries in the path of the tsunami issued an official warning, leaving millions of people at the mercy of the approaching waves.

A monitoring system that could have saved virtually every life in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka, not to mention Somalia, and reduced the death toll in Sumatra, would be relatively cheap to build. A scientist quoted by the *Los Angeles Times* estimates that a state-of-the-art system covering all the world's oceans could be set up for as little as \$150 million. Sea-level gauges cost as little as \$5,000; better ones cost \$20,000. But sensors alone are not enough. They have to be linked to round-the-clock monitoring stations with trained scientific staff. The public has to be educated how to respond to a tsunami warning.

"The failure to establish such a system is bound up with shortsightedness, inertia and outright contempt—especially on the part of the major powers—for the lives of the oppressed masses of southern Asia," writes Peter Symonds in an article on the World Socialist Web Site. Both Japan and the United States have spent millions on a string of state-of-the-art tsunameters and monitoring stations in the Pacific. Before the tsunami struck neither country offered to pay for the network's extension to the Indian Ocean. This

even though geologists recognize that the Indian plate is moving northward at the rate of 5 cm/year—a gallop in geological terms—and that coral records indicate the last megathrust quake in the area occurred in 1833. Geologists estimate that these quakes are likely to recur about once every 230 years.

And a World Pulled Together

by Shirley Johnston

If the tsunami disaster represents the failure of high tech communications to connect the world, the response represents the ability of ordinary people connected by the Internet to treat the world as one family.

Daniel Susott was snorkeling off the coast of Thailand when the tsunami hit. Although his boat lost its mast, he and his entire party managed to struggle to shore where they rapidly recognized the true extent of the disaster.

Susott, a self-described physician-philanthropist-actor-operatic tenor, whose relief work in Southeast Asia stretches back to work with the United Nations Border Relief Organization in Cambodia after the fall of Pol Pot, flew to Sri Lanka to offer his assistance. Dr. Susott has worked with and holds great regard for Dr. A.T. Ariyaratna, founder of the Sri Lankan Buddhist aid and development organization, Sarvodaya Shramadana.

On Dr. Ariyaratna's advice, Susott traveled across the island to Batticaloa in the Tamil-speaking region of Sri Lanka where he found doctors in desperate need of injectable antibiotics to prevent gangrene and other infections. He put out an appeal on his web-site, a running commentary of his life and travels, part family photo album, part travelogue, part community newsletter. Daniel Susott's community is the world.

Kima Douglas, a nurse who has previously worked with Susott's World Family Foundation, responded. She would fly to Sri Lanka and bring the needed medication if the money could be raised to purchase it. She would travel at her own expense so that all of the money raised could go to helping Sri Lankans injured in the disaster.

Gary Rhine is a documentary filmmaker who recently produced a set of exercise videos for Native Americans, "Rez Robics for Couch Potato Skins," which he distributes free through his non-profit corporation, Dreamcatchers to help combat adult-onset diabetes. He responded to Douglas' request for fund-raising by contacting everyone he could think of "family, friends associates, blog-readers..." Rhine hosts Rhino's Blog, a weblog devoted to "political activism, commentary and satire." His extended web family responded generously, raising \$20,000 in less than two weeks.

Elizabeth Stinson, director of the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center, has known Gary Rhine since their days on the Cheyenne reservation. As a therapist working with abused and traumatized children, she was particularly concerned with the child victims of the tsunami disaster.

Children have short legs and cannot run fast; children are light of weight and easily swept away; children are curious and rush to collect fish stranded by retreating water, only to be trapped as the waves crash in. One-third of the victims of the tsunami are believed

to be children. Many more are orphaned and an almost incomprehensible number are homeless. 800,000 people in Sri Lanka alone are homeless.

Stinson knows how vulnerable children are, and how far-reaching the impact of a devastating event can be on children's lives, not only immediately, but into the future. She did everything she could to get the word out of the need in Sri Lanka for injectable antibiotics. She posted Rhine's appeal on the Peace and Justice Center website further extending the network of friends united by a passion for respect, spiritual wholeness and social justice.

Starr Hergenrather, Peace and Justice Center Board member, and high school drama teacher who recently directed Sebastopol High School's production of "The Laramie Project," and her husband, Jeff Hergenrather, a physician and social activist, have been part of this community for a long time. "We all go way back," Stinson says. Jeff Hergenrather arranged to authorize and purchase in bulk the needed medications.

On Jan. 7 Kima Douglas flew to Sri Lanka carrying the supply of injectable antibiotics. As more money than was immediately needed had already been raised, arrangements were made for her to make further purchases as needed while overseas.

Elizabeth Stinson emphasized that the Center is supporting charities that are sending aid directly to people in the disaster areas without excessive red tape or bureaucratic expenses. Dreamcatchers is disbursing 100% of the money received for antibiotics or other medical aid.

Dreamcatchers is a non-profit organization dedicated to cross-cultural communication emphasizing social and environmental respect. Contact Gary Rhine, Dreamcatchers Inc., 23852 Pacific Coast Hwy. #766, Malibu, CA 90265 USA, 310-457-1617, fax 457-2688. Tax-deductible donations may be made by phone or fax using a credit card or by check to "Dreamcatchers, Inc/ Tsunami Relief."

The Peace and Justice Center also endorses contributions to the following organizations: American Friends Service Committee (AFSC Crisis Fund) 888-588-2372. Doctors Without Border/Medecins Sans Frontieres 888-392- 0392. [Note: on Jan. 5 Medecins Sans Frontieres announced that they had sufficient funds to fulfill their mission of providing emergency medical aid. They suggested donations to support their mission in war-torn Sudan and the Congo or to organizations focused on long-term relief and reconstruction.]

Seva South Asia Emergency Fund 800-223-7382, www.seva.org. Seva began as an international health organization focusing on eyes. The Seva emergency fund was established to receive donations for disaster relief, disease prevention, homeless support services, and child health services.

Donations may also be made to the International Red Cross/Red Crescent. For a further list of charitable organizations involved in tsunami disaster relief, consult Altnet, www.altnet.org/story/20870.

Shirley Chisholm: Profile in Courage

by Patrick Burke

Shirley Chisholm died January 1. She was born in 1924 in Brooklyn, New York. Her mother was a seamstress and housecleaner. Her father worked in a factory that made burlap bags. She called her family “strongly disciplined,” but she drew on her own strength, too: “Mother always said that even when I was 3, I used to get the 6 and 7 year old kids on the block and punch them and say, ‘Listen to me.’”

She studied sociology in college, earned a master’s in education, and started work as a nursery school teacher. In time, she rose to be supervisor of the largest nursery school network in New York. It was through administering to hundreds of children, most of them African-American and Puerto Rican, that she learned the executive skills she used later in politics.

She helped create political clubs to elect people of color, and was elected herself to the state Assembly in 1964. In 1968 she became the first African-American Congresswoman in US history. Her first speech in the House stated her commitment to the needs of the disadvantaged, especially children: she intended to “vote No on every money bill that comes to the floor that provides any funds for the Department of Defense.” She advanced legislation on black civil rights, bills that benefited other people of color such as Native Americans and Spanish-speaking immigrants, and, always, always programs for early childhood education and child welfare. “She defended broad kinds of legislation; she advocated human beings’ rights, and whatever fell under that broad umbrella was really important to her” says Shola Lynch, director of “Chisholm ‘72: Unbought and Unbossed.”

“In the end,” Chisholm said, “Anti-black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing—anti-humanism.” She added: “As a black person, I am no stranger to race prejudice. But the truth is that in the political world I have been far oftener discriminated against because I am a woman than because I am black.” She campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment (which passed the Congress, but failed to be ratified by the states). She was a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus.

In 1972 she ran for President. “I am the people’s candidate,” she said. “I ran,” she later wrote, “despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo.”

Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones who led the small group of Democrats this January 6th who forced House and Senate debate on voting irregularities in Ohio says: “If there were no Shirley Chisholm, there would be no Stephanie Tubbs Jones.” Barbara Lee, the only member of the House to oppose President Bush’s demand for a blank check to mount military responses to the September 11, 2001, attacks, was inspired to enter politics by working on Chisholm’s Presidential campaign as a college student.

“In an era of self-serving and expedient politicians,” the Detroit Free Press wrote when she died, “Chisholm’s courage, conviction and plain speaking made her a giant among men.” The Washington Post marveled at her “unshrinking independence and fearlessness in the face of power.” When asked, she herself had said, “I’d like them to say that Shirley Chisholm had guts. That’s how I’d like to be remembered.”

Chisholm wrote two books, “Unbought and Unbossed,” about her run for Congress in 1968, and “The Good Fight”, about her run for President in 1972. Both are available at the Sonoma County Public Library.

“Chisholm ‘72: Unbought and Unbossed,” a documentary on Chisholm’s presidential campaign, will be televised in February as part of PBS’s POV series.

Patrick Burke is a long time volunteer at the Peace & Justice Center

Vote Rigging Prototype Designed in Florida

by John Byrnes

A Florida computer programmer claims, in an affidavit delivered to the House Judiciary Committee, that he designed and built a “vote rigging” software program at the behest of then Florida Congressman, now US Congressman Republican Tom Feeney of Florida’s 24th district. Clint Curtis, 46, claims that he built the software for Feeney in 2000 while working as at a software design and engineering company, Yang Enterprises, in Oviedo Florida, Feeney’s home district.

Feeney, who ran in 1994 as Jeb Bush’s running mate in his initial unsuccessful bid for Florida governor, was serving as both corporate counsel and registered lobbyist for Yang Enterprises during the period that Curtis worked at the company. He was also serving as a Florida State congressman at the time. He is now a member of the US House Judiciary Committee.

At an October 2000 meeting, according to the affidavit, Feeney inquired whether the company could build a “voter fraud software prototype.” Curtis claims that Feeney was very specific in the design and specifications required for the program.

“He detailed, in his own words, that (a) the program needed to be touch-screen capable (b) the user should be able to trigger the program without any additional equipment (c) the programming to accomplish this needed to stay hidden even if the source code was inspected.”

The first two requirements could be easily met. But, Curtis explained to the Congressman, it would be “virtually impossible to hide such code written to change the voting results if anyone is able to review the uncompiled source code.”

He was asked to build the prototype anyway. Upon delivery of the software design and documentation, Curtis explained again that it would be impossible to hide routines created to manipulate the vote if anybody inspected the precompiled source code.

His boss then told him. “You don’t understand, in order to get the contract we have to hide the manipulation of the source code. This program is needed to control the vote in South Florida.”

In other meetings prior to the 2000 election Curtis claims that Feeney bragged that he had already implemented “exclusion lists” to reduce the black vote. Feeney also boasted that “proper placement of police patrols could further reduce the black vote by as much as 25%.

Curtis reports that he documented charges to the CIA, FBI, and other agencies and no one has expressed any interest in his charges.

Since then, he has found an outlet among those in blogsphere, where his affidavit was first released on the Brad Blog. Two newspapers have begun the process of vetting

his claims. The Floridian's appearance in Washington, and the delivery of his affidavit to Congress, may signal a deeper investigation in progress.

adapted by Deb Nash and Shirley Johnson from www.bradblog.com

Labor News from Latin America

by Victor Chechanover

To further the goal of peace and justice, we can play an important role as consumers. The US/Labor Education in the Americas Project (www.usleap.org) publishes a newsletter reporting on the progress, or lack thereof, in achieving worker rights in Latin America, especially within those companies whose products are sold in the United States.

In the October issue, which is available on the rack in the Peace and Justice Center, you can read about the effects of NAFTA and the effects to be expected if CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) is passed. The article suggests telling members of Congress to oppose CAFTA.

Another article deals with developments in the banana industry. In Sonoma County markets, bananas carry labels such as Bonita, Chiquita and Del Monte. Past articles and information of the website of the organization of banana workers unions point to the Chiquita label as belonging to the only company that has recognized the rights of the workers on the plantations to join a union and in fact have negotiated a contract with the union representatives.

On the other hand, Bonita, an Ecuadoran company, has the worst record when it comes to the rights of their workers. In the past I have read that Del Monte is another company resisting the right to organize in labor unions and, so far as I know, they have not changed. I am showing solidarity with the workers by buying only the Chiquita brand.

On the back page of the October issue is an encouraging report about a worker-organized maquila in El Salvador, manufacturing clothing with the label Just Garments. More information is available at www.justgarments.net.

Victor Chechanover is a volunteer at the Peace and Justice Center.

PJC articles

Scary Times: Part 2 of a History of the Beginnings of the Peace and Justice Center

by Adrienne Swenson and George Romandy

In April 1983 the Contras were terrorizing Nicaragua. We threw ourselves intensely into the tragic events unfolding in Central America.

In '83 we were involved in peace actions for the Livermore Blockade, the Nuclear Freeze, the Port Chicago Blockade and rally, the Nestle Boycott, nerve gas, Euro missiles, and the invasion of Granada in October '83.

In January 1984 we moved to 540 Pacific with an open house. The Peace Center was officially born. We did draft counseling. Our Friday evening drop-in discussion group (now Thursday Nights at the Peace and Justice Center) began, chaired by Irma Stewart. Our non-profit status was approved in April.

In the Santa Rosa Rose Parade of April 1985, white doves flew from the top of the Center's large Earth globe just as the float approached the judges; it was a crowd pleaser and got first prize.

We helped organize the '85 Spring Mobilization. Dale McCarty organized our first peace library. Shirley McGovern and Betty Black basically organized and maintained the Center. In September '85 the board created the permanent paid role of Coordinator.

Our first Hiroshima Day memorial was held in Courthouse Square in August '85. In January 1986 W.A.N.D. (Women for Nuclear Disarmament) participated in a Peace Ribbon project to encircle the Pentagon. The Center still houses part of the ribbon, a gift from W.A.N.D. In February '86 the Peace Center became the Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County, continuing its work for peace and justice at its Pacific Avenue home for fifteen years.

During those years we became more and more visible in the community. Jim Curtis' mural on our building's west wall gave us identity as a real center for peace. Our efforts at the center from January '86 on through the end of 1990 would best be described as the nation's "Central American period." Major issues included Nicaragua and US support of the Contras, Ronald Reagan's Star Wars buildup, the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa.

In March '86 the Sonoma County Nuclear Free Zone campaign officially started. In April '86 the Center participated in a peace march with veterans for peace to coincide with a display at SRJC of a half-size Vietnam War Memorial Wall that toured the US. Wavy Gravy and Malvina Reynolds did a fundraiser for us in April. A local Sanctuary Movement to help refugees from Central America was started in Sonoma County. Our local anti-nuclear group, So No More Atomics zeroed in on keeping Rancho Seco off-line. Efforts to make Sonoma County a Nuke free zone unfortunately failed, but the work continued throughout the year.

In January 1987 12 local peace and justice groups met with Congressman Doug Bosco to get his support on important issues like Central America. He talked a good show.

We organized buses to carry local activists to the Spring Mobilization in San Francisco April 25. On May 2 '87 a benefit for the center was held at the home of ex-Wobbly, Joe Murphy. The May Day Solidarity Bash featured Harry Bridges, former president of the International Longshore Workers Union.

June 12th and 13th marked a huge demonstration at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, to stop US arms shipments to the suppressive governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. This was when peace activist Brian Willson lost both of his legs to a "weapons train."

A Vigil for Impeachment was established, and every Saturday at noon local activists, many from the Center, gathered at Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa.

In October the Center sponsored Daniel Sheehan, Christic Institute's spokesman, in a talk about Christic's lawsuit in federal court against Richard Secord, Oliver North, et al, the "Secret Team" in the White House basement, involved in drug dealing, illegal arms sales and illegal support of the Contras.

In December '87 the Center sent \$2,200 to help defray mounting medical costs for Brian Willson. A Peace Garden was constructed in Ragle Park.

In February 1988 the Center and W.A.N.D. co-sponsored a fundraiser that featured military space programs expert Dr. Robert Bowman; his subject: "Stars Wars", a project near and dear to our current leaders. In early '88 the poet Ralph Smith and his wife Marcia expanded the reference library at the Center; they kept it up to date until Ralph died in 1989. By May '88 a total of 16 active groups were working out of our Center.

Our hours were 10am to 4pm, Monday through Friday, and sometimes on Saturday, thanks again to all those volunteers.

In November '88 things were tightening up. Michael Dukakis lost to George Bush Sr. "because he offered no real alternative to the Republicans" according to lots of people in the peace movement. Does that sound familiar?

In March 1989 John Stockwell, ex-C.I.A. agent spoke: his subject was Bush and national security. March 17, '89: another non-productive meeting with Doug Bosco; folks were disappointed because they had worked so hard to help him defeat Rep. Don Clausen.

On March 20th we participated in a huge rally in San Francisco to stop the war in El Salvador. In June Daniel Sheehan was back in town for a Center fundraiser. In July '89 the Center purchased our very own "Mac" to do our Peace Press on. November '89 marked the successful return of Thursday Nights at the Peace and Justice Center. The US invaded Panama.

In 1990 the center joined with the Conservation Council to stage a large two-day event for Earth Day in April at the Burbank Center. 7,000 attended—in the rain!

In June '90 Earth First members Judi Bari's and Darryl Cherney's car was bombed. In September '90 the Middle East crisis heated up with Saddam Hussein in Kuwait and the U.S. in Saudi Arabia. The Center co-sponsored a community forum on the Middle East crisis. In January 1991, just as we were feeling we were on the cutting edge of peace, the US launched the first Gulf War against Iraq. The cries went up, "No Blood for Oil."

Next Issue: "No Blood for Oil. "And Again.

No Mas! No More!

by Susan Lamont

The Not In Our Name Project, from which the group Not In Our Name Sonoma County took its inspiration, was formed to prevent the United States' war on Iraq. Members organized around three principles: No US war on the world; No detentions and

roundups; No police state restrictions. Unfortunately, these groups, as well as many other groups and millions of individuals around the world, were ultimately unsuccessful.

Though some in the United States traded in their “No War On Iraq” bumper stickers for ones that read “Support Our Troops”, Not In Our Name Sonoma County members went to San Francisco on March 20, 2003 to express their outrage and to say “No!” to business as usual. While many in the peace movement were silenced by a collective depression, this small group continued to fight. Since the start of the war, several members have been arrested in a series of smaller demonstrations, such as the one protesting war profiteering by Bechtel Corporation.

Over the past two years, Not In Our Name Sonoma County has been very active, organizing demonstrations and vigils. NIONSC has created educational literature brought anti-war speakers and musicians to the county, organized the annual protest at the Bohemian Grove, hung banners over Highway 101, and fostered creative street theater to Santa Rosa and Sebastopol. Its members have rallied to protect the free speech of anti-war students, fought for the rights of students to be free of the coercion of military recruitment, and spoken on related subjects in the public schools. A committee was formed to call attention to the erosion of civil liberties through the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act. Its members dressed as Revolutionary War patriots and distributed informational flyers each week at Santa Rosa’s Wednesday Night Market.

The 2004 election created a split in the group between those in the “Anybody But Bush” camp and those who could not bring themselves to vote for a pro-war Democratic Party candidate. Anti-war activities dwindled as members temporarily aligned themselves with election-related groups. During this pre-election period, Not In Our Name Sonoma County began to hold retreats to contemplate its direction and purpose. More time was spent discussing current books and videos. The group also realized the importance of socializing as a bonding force.

In the wake of the Republican party’s theft of the country and all its political branches, many group members (including those who did not support John Kerry) have been gripped with the same anger and depression which has engulfed much of the political Left. It was determined that the group needs to work smarter and be less reactive. Members attended the Not In Our Name Project annual meeting in Oakland in December and were inspired by the energy of bright and imaginative colleagues. Sonoma County became active in the planning of the San Francisco protest held during the illegal inauguration of George Bush in January.

Though action is not being abandoned, more time is being spent in reflection and analysis. The group is studying the political framing work of George Lakoff. It is discussing past resistance and revolution in an effort to seek inspiration from the successes of the past. The purpose of this activity is to determine what it is that makes social change happen. The group sees the Democratic Party as a failed institution, which has moved so far to the right that it can’t reflect the interests of the people. Social change must occur from the bottom up, outside the political party system, and Sonoma County wants to be ready to effectively participate in that change.

Not In Our Name Sonoma County continues to be inspired by the words from The Pledge of Resistance: “Another world is possible and we pledge to make it real.”

Not In Our Name Sonoma County meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 at the Peace and Justice Center. Other discussion groups are held throughout the month at homes and cafes with no fixed schedule. The website is www.nionsc.org.

California Peace Centers Conference

The Peace and Justice Center will be hosting the California Peace Centers Conference, April 8,9, & 10. Traditionally the conference has involved Northern California Peace Centers and Groups. This year, we have been asked to open the conference to groups throughout California. The conference will include many workshops, including Fundraising and Grantmaking, led by Karen Topakian of the Agape Foundation, and Military Law and Counseling Active Duty personnel, led by Marti and Luke Hiken, of the Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild. We are working with diverse populations, and there will be many opportunities to strengthen and expand the peace and social justice network.

The Conference will be focused on activist tools necessary to structure the future that we need. For more information, please call the Peace & Justice Center, 575-8902.

Our Contribution to the War: War Tax Workshops

April 15th is approaching, with the deadline for most of us to ante up our taxes for the war effort. **Sonoma County Taxes for Peace** is a group of war tax resisters & protesters who believe that too many of our tax dollars go to the military. If you are troubled by paying about 1/2 of your income tax for war, join us for one of our workshops exploring the various forms of war tax noncompliance. The methods range from support of the Peace Tax Fund Bill which would create conscientious objector status for tax payers, to creative and humorous ways of resisting and redirecting your war taxes.

The **War Tax Workshops** will be on Sunday Feb. 20: 11:30am-12:30 at Garfield/Duffield Building in Libby Park, Sebastopol, and 2:00-4pm at So. Creek Commons Community Room, 887 Sonoma Ave., Santa Rosa; and Thursday March 31, Thursday Night at the P & J Ctr., 7:00-9pm, 823-9203.

Bike Project Update

by Marsha Banks

Thank you all so much for your generous donations to the Bike Project. I returned from Guatemala and Chiapas in October and am pleased to announce that we purchased and distributed 35 bikes. That makes the grand total of 60 bikes in less than two years. I met a group of people who belong to a Bicycle Club in Arizona and they are interested in

joining us in collecting for additional bikes. If anyone knows of any other group that would be interested in participating, I would love to hear from them. The other exciting news is that we gave away two bikes to single, working mothers and there seems to be a growing interest in bicycles for this population. With the increase in bus fares and the need for more women to work to support their families, I am going to focus on this group for my next trip. If you are interested in learning more about the project, please call me at (707) 523-4843 or e-mail me at mbanks@sonic.net. I have a Power Point disk and photos available for anyone who would like to use them. I am also available to give presentations to groups. If you would like to send a tax-free donation, of any amount, please make it out to the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center and mark "Bike Project" in the memo. The address is: Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County, 467 Sebastopol Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401. Again, thank you all for your warmth and generosity.

Community articles

GE Free Campaign Gathers Record Number of Signatures

Advocates for a moratorium on genetically engineered crops turned in 45,387 petition signatures Jan. 5. Despite torrential rain in the past few weeks, nearly one in five County voters stopped to sign the petition and show their support.

"I talked with people from all ages and backgrounds, all walks of life, and I found broad and enthusiastic support every time I went out", said Christina Hoex, a Radiology Technologist at Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa, who gathered over 1,500 signatures from people throughout Sonoma County.

The signatures were gathered by over 500 volunteers, also a county record. Campaign Coordinator Daniel Solnit called the results "a real victory. This represents an incredible amount of dedication and hard work by hundreds of people who took time out of their busy lives, time from work and family, to make this happen. Most of our volunteers are not activists, they have not been involved in campaigns before, but care deeply about protecting our food and farms from this threat."

Observers consider the anti-GMO measure to be more moderate and better written than similar measures passed in Mendocino and Marin Counties last year. The initiative prevents contamination of Sonoma County's agriculture and environment by placing a ten-year moratorium on the propagation, cultivation, raising, growing, sale or distribution of transgenic organisms within the county. The measure makes exceptions for agricultural or medical research, and exempts human food and animal feed products. The County Board of Supervisors would be able to amend the law by unanimous vote. If passed, the ban would be enforced by the Sonoma County Agriculture Commissioner, who would ensure that prohibited GE organisms are destroyed or removed from the county. Violators who

knowingly grow or raise GE crops or animals could be charged for all abatement costs, and fined a civil penalty of up to \$1,000.

For more information about GE Free Sonoma contact Dave Henson 707-874-1557 x214, Email: dhenson@oaec.org or Daniel Solnit, 707-823-4410 Email: dsolnit@ecoisp.com.

The North Bay Spokes Network Rocks!

by Lucy Kenyon

For those of you who don't yet know about the North Bay Spokes Network, I'd like to state our mission: we coordinate events, share resources and exchange information, nurturing the affinity of diverse groups working for positive social and environmental change. So far, 50 groups have come together to form the Network.

We meet on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 PM at North Light Books and Cafe in Cotati, in the Oliver's shopping center. The next meetings of the Network will be February 21, 2005; March 21, 2005; and April 18, 2005.

At our December 20 meeting, we talked about what we had done in 2004 that was successful: the Code Red for Democracy march in Santa Rosa the day after the election, the Election Forum on 12/17, and creating our website and listserv. Then we had reports from individual group representatives on what their groups are doing. The UFW would appreciate continued support at rallies and marches; Food Not Bombs announced a walkout on Jan. 14 to stop the occupation of Iraq and protest the inauguration; Adopt-an-Activist plans to adopt six more activists and is working on getting non-profit status. Goals for the Spokes Network in 2005 include growth, outreach (with an emphasis on diversity), and seeking out youth groups by announcing our availability to groups on the SSU, SRJC, and high school campuses. Debra wants to create a speakers' bureau that would be available to talk to student groups on the variety of issues that our network represents. Gabby will put an announcement in La Voz seeking new members.

Magick talked about the need to save the Laguna de Santa Rosa from a variety of curses: heavy pesticide spraying that is being done to rid it of the mosquitoes that live in weeds that thrive there because of mismanagement; and development that will take its water and encroach on its space. She said that developers are promoting a state of denial about water shortages that threaten the Laguna and other parts of the county.

Magick is a member of an as-yet-unnamed committee to protect the Laguna, since the official group tasked with the job is shirking its duties. The committee plans to hold an action forum for disseminating information on the issue and letting people know how they can help... stay tuned!

We decided that our future meetings will include one or two speakers from our member groups. This will encourage members to get to know each other and each other's work and to increase interest in and attendance at our meetings.

Check out our website at www.northbayspokes.org. You can put yourself on the meeting announcements and minutes listserve by going to the "Contact" page and clicking on the URL for the listserv.

The North Bay's Widening Wealth and Income Gap

by Marty Bennett

One in four households in the North Bay do not receive wages and income sufficient to pay for basic needs. Latinos, the fastest growing ethnic group in the North Bay, are the most likely to be living in poverty and employed. In Mendocino County, the district most hard-hit, more than 30% of all households cannot make ends meet. 60% of Latino households in Mendocino County are considered working poor.

New Economy, Working Solutions (NEWS) will release, "*After the Boom: Growth, Inequality, and Poverty in the North Bay*," which documents the growing polarization of wealth and income distribution in Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino and Napa counties, at a forum on Saturday, March 5th 2005 at Santa Rosa Junior College. Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey will chair a panel of elected officials and religious and community leaders who will hear a summary of the findings and the testimony of low-wage workers who are struggling to make ends meet.

"After the Boom" provides an analysis, based upon the 2000 US Census data, of employment patterns, wages, family income, and poverty in the North Bay. Funded by the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, UC researchers Dan Acland and Nari Rhee document how the economic growth and prosperity of the 90s has been dogged by increasing poverty, a rising number of the working poor, and the persistence of racial and gender inequality.

The report concludes with specific policy recommendations: raise the minimum wage, expand protections for the right of workers to organize unions, and increase access to affordable housing and quality healthcare.

The forum will be held in the Faculty Lounge/Doyle Student Center at Mendocino Ave. and Elliott from 9:30-11:30 am. Coffee will be provided at 9 am. The facility is wheel chair accessible and admission is free. NEWS is a nonprofit research and educational organization supported by labor, religious, and community organizations in the North Bay.

Co-sponsors of the forum include Family Action of Sonoma County, League of Women Voters, Leadership Institute for the Ecology and Economy, Sonoma State University Hutchins Institute for Public Policy Studies and Community Action, Living Wage Coalition of Sonoma County, North Bay Labor Council and the Service Employees International Union Local 707.

The executive summary or the full report can be downloaded after March 1st at <http://www.seiulocal707.org>. For more information call NEWS board chair Martin Bennett at 707-939-8933.

Food Not Bombs needs volunteers and donations of plastic food containers. Please call Ben at 544-3266.

The *Peace Press* is a grassroots newsletter and we desire to reflect the groups and activities of the large and influential Sonoma County peace movement. We encourage and urge the members of our community to write articles about what your group is doing to change the world! Submissions should be limited to 500 words. Longer articles may be run at the discretion of the collective. This is your newsletter. Any suggestions about what you would like to see in the *Peace Press* are welcome.