

The Peace Press – August/September2008

There can be no Peace without Sustainability, and no Sustainability without Justice

Getting Centered – Rights of the Earth

by Elizabeth Stinson, Director

In an effort to examine the conditions environmentally, we learn that our relationship with the earth is a reflection of our relationship with ourselves.

We should be working to nurture and protect our environment with regard for all life. Much has been done under the guise of seeking justice that has been at the expense of life. Much has resulted in great loss of human life and the sacrifice of nature, on which all of life is reliant. We must not be overwhelmed when looking at what is wrong. We have to select a piece of it, no matter how small, and grab it and shake it as hard as we can and each little piece – whether a vigil, mailing, phone call, donation, conversation, or meal shared and voice heard – can help reach an understanding.

Every bit of peace gained, no matter how small, is part of a larger “peace.” It is that larger peace that must be nurtured.

We cannot let the disastrous concepts blindly leading the country lead our environment and children. The struggle is worth having.

If ecosystem is defined as an interaction between organisms and environment, what is your personal ecosystem? Does it involve the sky, the earth, recycling, community activism, waste and the depletion of resources? How do we work to charter a different course? A non-depleting, nature-restoring path?

The Center is working to construct The activist Tool-kit, to be accessed online. It will not only have ways to generate and activate change locally, but ways to do so with environmental awareness and regard.

At this time we are required to challenge the concepts based on cultural relativism: the principle that a person’s beliefs should be based on and understood only in terms of their own culture. Instead, we ask all to hold on to the rights of and the need to protect the environment. “Nature” is derived from the latin word *natura* or “the course of things.” When we think of nature and its having been ravaged by man and its loss of species and loss of potable water for much of the world’s population, what do we see as “the course of things”? I do not see the planet as our resource to use, though I know many would disagree with me. I do know that to restore myself, I need the oceans, the birds, the mountains, the sky and other humans... all worth preserving.

As tenaciously as we advocate for our children, we must advocate for the rights of the earth. For without an ecologically balanced environment, we are endangering the future of all children. Earth/Life advocacy – this ideal can be reflected in our work, in how compassionately we regard our households, our actions, our community our conversations and our votes.

I would like to honor the passing of local activist and friend, Cindy Webb. Cindy’s work was heartfelt and tenacious and tender. Cindy’s presence was felt by many, and she will be greatly missed.

Slow Food Nation – Returning Agriculture to Farmers

by Shepherd Bliss

“Come to the table,” Slow Food Nation invited. And come to San Francisco over Labor Day weekend they did – 60,000 people, perhaps the largest food celebration in American history.

Tables and straw bales appeared at the Civic Center around a victory garden on what was formerly a lawn. It was surrounded by a huge marketplace – a farmers’ market that gets food directly from the farm to the fork.

At Ft. Mason – inside an old military hangar – people strolled down a long aisle to taste fresh seafood, chocolate, wine, olives, ice cream, Indian bread and other delightful options.

Meanwhile, downtown, people discussed the growing global food crisis and their responses. The final panel included key voices in the growing world-wide sustainable agriculture movement: Italian Carlo Petrini, the founder of Slow Food in 1986, physicist Vandana Shiva from India, Kentucky poet and author Wendell Berry, UC Berkeley professor Michael Pollan, Alice Waters of Chez Panisse Restaurant, and “Fast Food Nation” author Eric Schlosser. Petrini emerged as a storytelling organizer, Shiva as an activist, Berry as an elder statesman, Pollan as a teacher with a broad theoretical frame, Waters as an inspiring chef, and Schlosser as a reporter from the field.

Food and agriculture were related to climate change, social justice, re-localizing food, and the planning needed to replace our current food system with a sustainable one. “Good, clean, and fair” are Slow Food Nation’s (SFN) goals, described as a “Triple Bottom Line.”

“We’re not the leaders,” Berry avowed. “We’re the catalysts. More and more people are talking to each other and doing things for each other. This is the cooperation principle.” Berry focused on the importance of being thrifty, growing a local economy, and being a good neighbor.

“The themes here are the themes of the next century,” Petrini declared. “If they are not, there will not be a future. Sooner or later these issues will arrive on the tables of all politicians.”

“Food matters,” Pollan stated. “It is about politics and our health. The food issue has gotten on the national agenda because of the world food crisis. Food prices are high and the era of cheap food is over. It involves all the issues – energy, the price of oil, climate change, and health. We have been eating oil for 30 years now.”

“Markets are being stolen from farmers,” Shiva asserted, indicting industrial agriculture corporations. Shiva described the large number of farmers in India who are committing suicide because they are being displaced and losing meaning in life.

At a soap box set up outside in the victory garden, farmers and others spoke. Orchardist Peter Jacobson of Yountville said, “We need 50 million more farmers if we are going to be able to farm sustainably” in the US.

The long weekend became an educational process. “We all eat everyday,” master chef Waters noted. “There are consequences to the choices we make with respect to our health, environment, and culture. Edible education is to help children understand those consequences.”

Echoing what her mother, Frances Moore Lappe, wrote about in *Diet for a Small Planet*, Anna Lappe asserted that “the problem with respect to hunger is not a question of scarcity. We have enough food to feed us all. It is a crisis of democracy, as my mother wrote thirty years ago.”

“Food is a universal right, not a privilege,” declared Josh Verteil, the new president of Slow Food USA and coordinator of some 200 US chapters.

The draft of a Declaration for Healthy Food and Agriculture was released. The intention is to gather some 300,000 endorsers and take the document to Washington, DC, in the fall of 2009 to influence the next farm bill. The Declaration is now posted on www.fooddeclaration.org and seeks comments and endorsers before a final version appears.

“The role of Slow Food Nation,” according to Michael Dimock, president of Roots of Change and a Sonoma County resident, “was to convene people and be a convergence.” A test of its effectiveness will come as endorsers of the Declaration are solicited and when it is presented to Congress.

Shepherd Bliss, sb3@pon.net, began farming organically in Sonoma County, Northern California, in 1992, and currently also teaches at Sonoma State University. He is completing chapters on agropsychology and agrotherapy – farms as healing places – for various books.

Creative Inspiration

by Susan Lamont

*Literature is necessary to politics above all when it gives voice to whatever is without a voice, when it gives a name to what as yet has no name, especially to what the language of politics excludes or attempts to exclude. I mean aspects, situations, and languages both of the outer and of the inner world, the tendencies repressed both in individuals and in society. Literature is like an ear that can hear things beyond the understanding of the language of politics; it is like an eye that can see beyond the color spectrum perceived by politics. Simply because of the solitary individualism of his work, the writer may happen to explore areas that no one has explored before, within himself or outside, and to make discoveries that sooner or later turn out to be vital areas of collective awareness. Italo Calvino, *The Uses of Literature*, 1986*

Of course, Calvino’s statement also applies to every creative form – songwriting, painting, and photography, to name a few. We who put together the *Peace Press* – along with our contributing essayists, poets, artists, cartoonists – are a hopeful lot. No matter the odds we face, we continue to work to inspire for a better world.

For years, the *Peace Press* has given voice to many creative individuals. In this issue, Magick could have given us all the reasons for daylighting the creeks our governmental agencies have paved over. Instead, through poetry, she chose to tell us a story – a story which helps us become the creek – experience the imprisonment – experience the freedom.

But the medium need not be as “artistic” as poetry. The same passion can be invoked in an essay, a photograph, a cartoon.

I have a friend who is a Socialist. When he begins his reasoned and measured discourse on his beliefs, the words often fall dead and dull from his lips. When he can’t inspire me, a fellow socialist, something is wrong. But when I question him about the values close to

his heart, from which his ideology springs, then we're on to something. I hear the passion behind the words. Facts, figures, and reasoning are important – we need them – but something much deeper is required to motivate and convince. Behind every governmental policy or party platform is a set of values. If those values don't serve the earth and humanity, find ones that do and speak them more boldly.

So I ask our contributors – and also you, our readers, in the course of your daily encounters – let your words or images take your readers/viewers/listeners to some place deep inside themselves – to some place they may have forgotten or have repressed in our cultural rush for reason and acquisition. Remind people who they are and were and, even more, who they can be. Let the personal be the path to the universal.

We find ourselves living in a parasitic culture – sometimes against our will and sometimes because we've abdicated responsibility – a culture which sickens and kills its host and, eventually, itself. I cling to the hope that humans are not intrinsically parasites. I cling to the hope that our words and images can change our course.

We may never reach the utopia of symbiosis, in which we give back to the earth as much as it gives to us. Permaculturists believe we can. Others hope that we can at least cease to destroy.

Though there are exceptions, as children we were in awe of a caterpillar, a pond, a thunderstorm, a flower in a crack in the sidewalk. We need to rekindle that awe. Octavio Paz wrote that "nature speaks as though it were a lover." We, who love her back, need to use our skills and talents to translate her message for those who can no longer hear. We need to invite everyone to experience the joys of being a tree-hugger or a dirt-worshipper – to join us in the community of earth's lovers.

We should not shy away from relating our experiences of communion with the earth and her people. It is my hope that each time one of us speaks up – in whatever form we choose – in the forum of the *Peace Press* or elsewhere, we invite and inspire others to do the same and we find out what we all share. If we were all to do this, we could change the world.

The Insect Carnival **An Experiment Towards Sustainability and Peace**

by Bite the Hand Productions & The Boogie Room and Gardens

On Labor Day weekend, a group of young artists and activists worked together to create an event called "The Insect Carnival." For three days and three nights, this do-it-yourself festival celebrated the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. People from all around biked and carpoled to the small farm where The Carnival was held, and shared in a lively and inspired weekend with over 30 music acts, public workshops on poetry and farming, a huge mud pit, bonfires, storytelling and theater. It was an event that embraced local art and was created by a local consciousness.

The young people of Sonoma County have been working together for quite some time to create a strong underground community. We are seriously discussing and implementing principles of sustainability, peace and self-sufficiency. The times we are living in can be discouraging and fearful. We are responding to a population that is feeling hopeless and bored. Events like The Insect Carnival are hopeful expressions of our intention for sustainability through creative expression.

This strong new community has been forming out of the creativity and courage of these artists and activists. Two local groups have been working hard to steward this growth. They are called Bite the Hand Productions and The Boogie Room and Gardens.

Bite the Hand Productions is the group that organized the Insect Carnival. It is a collective of artists who put on local events and produce a monthly publication called "The Pharmakon." Bite the Hand works to publicize and comment on local activity and to help artists and activists connect with each other. According to their manifesto: 'Bite the Hand' means to refuse to be led into a life you had no part in creating and instead to find real sustenance in the world around you... *to feed yourself*.

The Boogie Room and Gardens is the group that hosted The Insect Carnival. They are a small group of people who believe that there is beauty in self-reliance and self-representation. They encourage people to provide for themselves and find the balance between work and play, teaching and learning, under the umbrella of artistic expression. By creating a space to share art and skills, The Boogie Room encourages others to recreate their own culture.

The Insect Carnival was the product of these two groups and a community that was willing to evolve a simple musical event into something greater. It was an effort to look beyond the huge and costly mega-festivals that seem to dominate the summer, and to create a rewarding experience that is more about inspiration than inebriation. At The Insect Carnival, the performers were part of the community: they were workers, neighbors and friends.

If you want to stay informed on what we are doing, you can pick up The Pharmakon at coffee shops for free. There will also be a film coming out titled "Pharmakon", which documents some of Bite the Hand and The Boogie Room activities. Now more than ever, we need to reach out, participate and make connections with each other. We hope to inspire others, as we have been inspired.

This is a crucial time to be active in Sonoma County. We are standing at a point of great decision and it will take a sustained effort and an open heart from *everyone* in order to change our course and protect our future. The Insect Carnival is a gesture in that direction. Now it is time to settle into the dirt, find our roots and rise up. It is time to learn how to work together.

To learn more about Bite the Hand Productions, go to www.bitethehand.org or e-mail thepharmakon@gmail.com. To learn more about The Boogie Room and Gardens, go to www.myspace.com/theboogieroom. For Gabe Meline's article on The Insect Carnival, go to www.bohemian.com/citysound.

Is the War in Iraq a Local Issue?

by Will Shonbrun

If you could choose how to spend the tax dollars that provide federal government funding for our nation's needs, would you have that money go toward a universal health care system, affordable housing units, elementary school teachers, public safety, transportation and infrastructure needs, or to the continuation of war and occupation in Iraq?

According to a study issued by moveOn.org, using estimates based on congressional budget allocations and supplemental funding bills, the cost of the war/occupation was \$456 billion in 2007. According to Internal Revenue Service records used to compute the costs at a local level, war spending included \$1.33 billion of taxes collected in the 6th and 1st Congressional Districts, which comprise most of Sonoma County.

In Sonoma County we've seen funding diminished for our schools, hospitals, libraries, environmental protections, transportation needs and affordable workforce housing. Three of our county hospitals are in dire financial straits and face closing their doors. Tuition for Sonoma County high school graduates applying to University of California colleges is skyrocketing, ranging from \$17,000-\$24,000 a year, and loans for higher education are financially crippling many families and students. Despite the downturn in Sonoma County housing prices, entry level housing for essential Sonoma workforce services – education, public safety, health care, etc. – is still prohibitive, forcing longer out-of-town commute hours, and increasing highway deterioration, air pollution and greenhouse gasses. Who in Sonoma County has not felt the financial and social impacts related to the cost of this war?

And then there are the unquantifiable and devastating impacts on Sonoma families and their communities when Sonoma's sons or daughters are killed or grievously wounded in Iraq. Such losses are inestimable and lived with for a lifetime.

The war machine has deployed California's National Guard – including approximately 200 from Sonoma County – to Iraq, as it has from the other states. By so doing, Sonoma County and other regions are left vulnerable to emergencies and natural disasters. Thus the prosecution and elongation of this war/occupation puts all Sonomans in greater jeopardy.

President Eisenhower famously said in his Cross of Iron speech:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.”

Schools, homes, roads and hospitals. How do you get more local than that?

The “war on terrorism”, with Iraq as ground zero, has given rise to illegal, warrant-less secret government surveillance on American's phone calls and mail. Government domestic spying has not just been relegated to international calls as we were led to believe, but to collecting phone call data from tens of thousands of citizens as reported in the *New York Times* and in other media. We in Sonoma are not immune to these abuses of Constitutional rights of privacy, just as we are subject to certain provisions of the USA Patriot Act's incursion into library and bookstore records.

The Iraq war has resulted in the use and contracting of torture and clandestine renditions for that nefarious purpose, and the elimination of judicial due process. Unprecedented and incredible! Besides putting our military in extraordinary danger (if captured), this reprehensible violation of the Geneva Conventions disgraces the model of American democracy in the eyes of the world, as we are all, Sonomans included, tarred with that despicable brush.

The theme of this edition of the *Peace Press* is *sustainability*. One of the meanings of the word *sustain* is: to bear up under; suffer or undergo. This begs the question: how much longer can this occupation of a foreign land be sustained – by our fellow countrymen or by us in Sonoma?

The late, great Molly Ivins said in her last published column, “We are the people who run this country. We are the deciders. And every single day, every single one of us needs to step outside and take some action to help stop this war.”

**Sources: The Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 8/17/07, and National Priorities Project, 2007.*

Daylighting

by Magick

Dear Friends, It is time to free the waters of the world. Daylighting is one piece of the process. From Seattle, Washington, to South Korea, daylighting of creeks is becoming a worldwide effort. The goal is to restore a stream of water to its natural state, which has previously been diverted into a culvert, pipe or drainage system.

Daylighting

Some say, what's done is done,
Some say she just babbled anyway,

But listen closer.

Silence your mind, put your ear to the ground,
You can hear her pounding against her cement ceiling,
Begging to be heard.

Some say, what's done is done,
Her pores stuffed with gravel
From the last time
The gavel of injustice fell,
And few who live remember
Her anguished cries
As they sentenced her to hell.

What's done is done, they say,
Build 5 stories, maybe ten,
Upon her liquid skin,
Her kind shall not be seen again.
But she rumbles and paces.
Her cries, now only mumbles,

But one day, she knows
Her mother will
Shake out the seemingly solid surface,
Forming a mouth for her living river,
So she may burst forth shouting, I am free!
Her ecstatic cries echoing to the mountaintops,
As she erupts, a geyser steaming, with furious force,
From her prison underground!
The sun hits her body like
Lightning from thunder clouds,
And she knows again her heavenly sister's touch
As raintears of reunion
Bless her shimmering skin!

The winds and willows guide
Her course languishing in her Laguna lover's arms,

She gains strength,
And rushes on down the river
To her very source!
Mother ocean greets her
at Jenner with the cries of gulls,
The yelps of seals, Kites and hawks hover
Overhead, Yemaya pounds the beach with
Wave after wave, of welcome,
Embracing the patient one,
The faithful one,
Who always knew she was innocent,
Who always knew she was beautiful,
That she did not deserve to be locked
Away in a cold cement channel
That crushed her curvaceous body,
That starved her of sunlight
That kept her from the joy of suckling the little ones with their first drink of liquid love,
And yet, like Kuan Yin, she pours her compassion out upon the world,
And forgives even the faithless city fathers,
Calling them all to slake their thirst and remember
That they are water, too, that their body is her body, is the eagle's body,
As he soars to the heavens to declare her liberation,
And the egrets take flight, fifty at time,
And the frogs croak, and the crows caw
To let her know she was never forgotten,
The souls of the Miwok and the Pomo
Rise in her mists, chanting and wheeling in circles,
The grandmothers take axes
And rip the granite from her banks,
To let the earth breathe and grow green again,
The children come to plant willows and reeds,
And seed a garden by her shore
Giving her all the love she needs to recover, discovering their reflection in her water
They greet the daylight daughter and dance!

April 5th 4am new moon in Aries 2008, www.magicktarot.com,
magick@magicktarot.com, 707 824 1394.

Pre-Election Coverage: Report-Back from the RNC

The following account is from a local activist who went to Minnesota to protest at the Republican National Convention. It is plain to see from his observations that free speech is no longer tolerated, that warrants authorizing the search and seizure of activists and their belongings are actually fictional suppositions, and that we truly live under martial law.

by Carl Patrick

Hey everybody,

I'm here in the Twin Cities, gettin' prepared for the Republican National Convention, which starts tomorrow. For those of you that haven't heard, here is what's going on here right now. This is very important, and I hope you spread the word and stay informed through the week about all of this.

Friday night the police raided our Convergence Center (where people have been gathering for workshops, meetings, meals, sign making, etc.) They broke in, with guns drawn, and detained about 50 people for a few hours. They stole computers, literature, banner-making material, cell phones, and various other harmless items. Although detained, no one was formally arrested.

Saturday morning, more raids occurred at four separate activist houses. A couple of people were also picked up off the street and arrested. As of right now, there are six confirmed arrests. People are being held in jail on "conspiracy to riot" charges, and may be there until Tuesday or Wednesday. Although police have found no illegal items or weapons, they have falsely claimed that we are intending to be violent at Monday's protest. They also have spread the rumor that we have "stockpiles of urine and feces" that we intend to throw at police. This is completely false (and slightly hilarious).

A mass meeting was held in the park yesterday, and a very large spokes council (I would estimate 400 people), took place last night to plan the final aspects of Monday's protest.

The police are everywhere, hassling everybody and generally attempting to stop us from mobilizing on Monday. Of course this is not working for them. People are even more resolved to keep fighting, and are now angrier than ever at the Republicans and the "police state", which they use to defend their agenda. There are tons of people in town, and despite trying to arrest "ringleaders," the police have done nothing to hinder the organizing efforts of the many thousands which are expected to descend on St. Paul on Monday.

Monday's plan, (for me at least), is to march from Macalester University with the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) feeder march to the larger "March on the RNC" demonstration which begins at 11am. (They're expecting 50,000 people). There is an anti-capitalist bloc in the large march, and we hope to draw a significant number of march participants downtown afterwards to help defend our blockades of the Xcel Energy Center (where the convention is held). If we can do this, there is a good chance the convention will be successfully blockaded.

That's it for now. There are more mass meetings today and events and workshops as well.

Please keep yourself informed about all of this. Things could get real ugly, or real pretty (if we win), but either way you should know (and give a damn) about it, because our lives, and a whole new world, are at stake.

Carl Patrick is member of the activist group IMPACT based in Petaluma.

Why I Bike – Experiences of a Newly Delighted Bicyclist

by Brad Morrison

I had not owned a bike my entire adult life until March 2008 when I went to Community Bikes and bought a used one. Initially I bought the bike for 2 reasons: 1) I am frugal and the amount of money (and who that money was going to) I spent to fuel my 2004 Honda Civic Hybrid bugged me; 2) I always cared about the environment for the simple reason that I like

breathing, eating, drinking, and generally staying alive on this often wonderful planet. It took me so long to purchase a bike because I used to hate bikes. I thought they were slow, unsafe, hard to ride, and uncomfortable. Over the past few months of riding I have been overjoyed to find that I was wrong.

I like to think that the motivation to start riding my new bike was a form of guilt over the reality that I was leaving the planet a little worse with each trip, but it was mostly my desire to spend less on transportation. So I tried it and the first day I rode the 2.6 miles to work that I had been driving for the past 8 months (yes, I know, only 2.6 miles), worked an 11 hour day, and rode home. I didn't ride my bike for another 3 weeks, but when I did something amazing happened: I found a new form of freedom. My whole life I have been dependant on cars to move me where I wanted and needed to go. Through biking I discovered another option that was healthier in many ways. Physical health is the obvious one, but since I get a lot of exercise through my work, it didn't apply as much to me. More unexpected is the mental boost I get from riding home; it is hard to describe how different and more real it feels to travel under your own power. More than just releasing endorphins, biking actually makes me feel more in control. And even more unexpected than that is the social aspect of riding; when you slow down and are able to acknowledge your fellow people, there is a connection present that is numbed when you are driving. I was trying to get back home after going to Redwood Credit Union on Mendocino and accidentally found myself in Steele Lane Park while avoiding Steele Lane (which has no bike lanes). I met a mother and her kids and some of the kids' friends and asked the mother how to get back home. She quickly gave me directions, but we kept on talking about the kids who were reenacting the latest Indiana Jones movie complete with the bigger kids carrying the smaller kids across a footbridge. It was hilarious and I couldn't stop laughing at how thrilled the kids were to be "saving" each other.

I tell this story to illustrate how much fun "distractions" can be. All of this is basically to prove that biking is not the sacrifice that the many people (including me less than 6 months ago) who don't regularly bike think it is. The real sacrifice we all too often make is living a life separated from each other and from what is truly fulfilling. Biking is one way we can begin to work to change that.

For more help on biking, visit Community Bikes on Thursdays from 5-9 PM and Sundays from 1-5 PM at 4009 Sebastopol Rd in Santa Rosa or call 707 579-5811.

Brad has been a long time PJC volunteer

Ride the Wave of Resilience: 19th Annual Peace and Justice Center Dinner November 8

Yes, it is time for our peace and justice community to come celebrate and grab the wave of resilience. Each year we spend one evening together with loving people, honored guests and good food and wine. This year we are honoring Linda Speel, our Peacemaker of the year, Ben Saari, our courageous and committed advocate for justice, and the Alternatives to Violence Project AVP, our dedicated community organization.

The evening begins at 4:30 with a silent auction with wine, music and appetizers, along with special objects to bid on. Dinner around 6:15 is followed by the award ceremony, all too wonderful to miss.

The cost with reservations is \$35 (\$20 with need); \$40 at the door if room is available. The place is Sebastopol Vets Building. An invitation with details will be coming to many of you in the mail.

This event is our main fundraiser for the year. Besides purchasing your ticket, buying auction items, making donations to the auction, we also invite you to become a sponsor. Lets celebrate a new year of a community making the world a better place, especially for our children.

Peacemaker of the Year – Linda Speel

by Alice Waco

We are so excited to honor Linda Speel as our Peacemaker of the Year. Linda has been “making peace” for many years. Many of us do not know her yet, but we know what she is doing. As a true activist, Linda is not only where the action is, she makes it happen.

Linda began her activism in 1971 at the Tennessee Farm Community, where she and her family (along with 250 other community members) decided she would work for peace by raising her children in a peaceful place. In the Farm Community, she raised her own food, home-birthed her children, helped build their school, a clinic, and several homes, researched a vegetarian diet and even a soy dairy. Added to all of that, she helped to form a book company and a relief organization, called Plenty, which has been active in New Orleans and in Central America. These are just some of the accomplishments of the Farm Community in Tennessee!

When Linda moved back to the Bay Area she immediately joined the peace movement in Petaluma, protesting the gulf war. She was determined that her son would never go to war. In 1993 she joined Medea Benjamin and Global Exchange with the Freedom to Travel Campaign, challenging the embargo by the US against Cuba. This was another step on her journey to peace and justice. After 9/11, Linda was inspired again to ‘hit the streets’ with many others. She helped to organize North Bay Code Pink, a women-for-peace group that participates in parades in Sebastopol and Petaluma.

Linda, along with her husband and their friends around the country, formed Peaceroots Alliance, a non-profit organization of which she was vice president. Peace Roots Alliance puts up billboards with Public Service Announcements, such as “Peace is Patriotic”, “Wake Up America-VOTE for a Change”, and “Support Our Troops – Bring Them Home Now”. Working with people from across the country, Peace Roots Alliance put up more than 200 billboards, all of them still relevant today. (There are eight “Wake Up America!” bus shelter signs in Sonoma and Marin County right now.)

Along with Peace Roots Alliance, Linda formed a West Coast branch of More Than Warmth, a project to teach school children to make peace quilts and send them to war torn areas in the world. With the help of Global Exchange, the quilts went to Afghanistan and Iraq before the bombs started dropping there in 2001. More Than Warmth has worked with over 11,000 students and sent quilts to over 40 countries around the world. This year her organization worked with children to make quilt squares for over 40 quilts that have been sent overseas. Their Activist Quilt is currently on display at the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center and will be awarded to a lucky raffle winner.

All of the projects Linda worked on served to empower others. This is especially true in her newest effort in helping to form Farms Not Arms, a voice for farmers against the war. It grew into the ‘roots of peace’ Farmer-Veteran Coalition Project. The Project organized farmers and veterans groups to experience the healing that happens with growing and nurturing organic food gardens. Currently, she has opened her home to a returning veteran so that he could begin a farming job. With the assistance of Peace and Justice Center Director, Elizabeth

Stinson, this veteran has received an Honorable Discharge from the military. Linda travels the country to represent veterans at events and is continuously inspired by the many wonderful people she's met who are also working toward peaceful solutions.

Linda works in the schools as a nurse with disabled children. She is a Healing Touch Practitioner and hopes to practice this healing, energy work with veterans. She is an artist and may bring some of her inspired artwork to the dinner. Please join us as we honor Linda and listen to the vision and beliefs that motivate her.

Courage of Commitment Award – Ben Saari

by Elizabeth Stinson

The Center's Courage of Commitment award winner is Ben Saari. I have known Ben for years. He is a trench worker. By that I mean he does the dirty stuff that is needed. He often does it alone, but not without the support of Desiree, his, wonderful partner. You can find Ben carting the movements crap around in his truck, standing up for those with no voice, looking at the "powers" as needing deflation and helping it happen.

Ben is a pain in the ass! Just the kind of pain in the ass we need more of. His willingness to be one is what makes him so effective. In a meeting, he is most likely to say what everyone else may be thinking, but afraid to say. If I need to know what is really going on in the county, who to talk to about something nobody else is willing to touch, I call Ben.

Ben is one of the early organizers of Sonoma County's Food Not Bombs. He is also a founder of Free Mind Media Guild, a radical info shop on Pacific Avenue, and of Santa Rosa Copwatch. For years Ben was active in Needle Exchange and has a lifelong commitment to address failures in police accountability.

Although Ben would never say this, he is the unchecked, young father figure to a generation of Sonoma County children who rely on him for safety, humor and truth. Ben's commitment to revolutionary change, his unending compassion expressed in his personal non-violent actions, make his living example worth celebrating by all of us.

Community Award – Alternatives to Violence

by Sylvia Melrose

Once again we have the privilege to honor a community organization. This one works to inform and transform diverse members of our society. The Alternatives to Violence Project is a multicultural volunteer organization which works at offering experiential workshops to the community at large. But AVP's focus on the prison population, oftentimes considered a throwaway population, is what makes this organization such an effective resource for our community and beyond. It can truly empower these neglected individuals to lead nonviolent and more productive lives.

Alternatives to Violence Project has a fundamental belief, that in everyone, there is a power for peace and social good, and that this power can transform violence, building a peaceful community.

The local AVP has been giving workshops since the early nineties. They meet once a month, plan workshops for places such as Susanville Prison, Vacaville Medical prison, Lassen Community College and prisons across the state. They also sometimes work with CCR in Sonoma County jails. AVP started in a New York prison in 1975, with prisoners and Quakers

working together to create a way to help young people change their lives from violence to nonviolence. The program is now in almost every state in the country and in 44 countries throughout the world, especially countries in turmoil such as Rwanda and Kenya.

As part of the local outreach, Ann Boone and Alice Waco have been going to Susanville every month for almost three years doing prison and community workshops. They also facilitate with volunteers Barbara Moulton, Sharon Beckman, Steve Birdleough, Barbara Flynn, Jim Avera, Pamela Sue Poter, Maggie Cushnear, Heidi Fantacone and Lizette Guy. These facilitators work wherever people choose to take this life-affirming workshop. You too can experience the power of an AVP workshop by joining an already existing workshop in the community or in prison. For more information contact AVP at 707-220-8269.

We are proud to honor these caring and dedicated people as they enrich our social fabric, always working towards a more compassionate world. We wish them well.

September 11th, 2001

by Brian Romanoff

A moment of silence, please, for the nearly 3,000 souls who fell silent on that horrific day...Thank you. It is hard for many of us to look back upon it. But soon it will be the 7th anniversary of the attacks that took so many innocent lives in the air and on the ground of America – land of the *free* and home of the *brave*.

The years since 9/11/01 have been filled with torment, winds of the sort that have not been felt in this country for thirty years or more. We can reflect on years of war since then; kids who were in 8th grade in 2001 are now in their third year of college. We have been in Afghanistan for seven years, Iraq for five. US soldiers and the US elite are responsible for over a million Iraq and Afghani deaths. We have lost nearly 4,500 American brothers and sisters in the “War on Terror.” Nearly 3,000 were killed on 9/11/01 and the tragedy continues for the numerous workers and volunteers who cleaned up Ground Zero, as many of them have contracted terminal cancer. Already there have been over 500 officially-recognized 9/11/01 related deaths.

Might you remember the story of the 11th? If so, which one? The Commission Report is one story. The FBI portrays a slightly different one and the FAA has one quite different from that. Even the stories from the CIA, the media and numerous other “official” accounts differ — sometimes slightly, sometimes drastically.

Inconsistencies abound. The Commission Report doesn't mention that the Head of the Intelligence Service in Pakistan, our ally in the war on terror, wired \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta on September 10, 2001. The Commission notoriously didn't mention the unprecedented total failure and collapse of the World Trade Center Building 7. The Commission briefly mentioned the highly unusual stock trades that suggest insider trading and foreknowledge of the events, such as bets that American and United Airline stocks would fall. United Airlines experienced a trading volume of “put options” more than 25 times its normal volume on September 6, 2001 and those earnings are still unclaimed.

The fact that the FBI's most wanted page for Osama bin Laden doesn't have him listed for the crimes of 9/11/01 is just plain weird. In 2006, author Ed Haas contacted the FBI and asked why. The Chief of Investigative Publicity for the FBI, Rex Tomb, stated “The reason why 9/11 is not mentioned on Osama bin Laden's Most Wanted page is because the FBI has no hard evidence connecting bin Laden to 9/11.”

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has been formally charged with explaining why and how *three* buildings, WTC 1, 2 and 7, collapsed on 9/11. In 2006 NIST released its 10,000 page final report. It failed to mention exactly how the buildings fell completely and utterly, into a small pile of debris and lots of dust, which would later kill countless others. The report was only for Towers 1 and 2. The Report for Tower 7 is, as of now, unreleased and unexplained.

These are just some of the lingering questions that remain. It was other questions that created the 9/11 Commission in the first place. The "Jersey Widows," Laurie van Aukin and others, pressured the Government to form the Commission and conduct an investigation. Initially Henry Kissinger was going to chair it, but after conflict of interest accusations, he stepped down. Phillip Zelikow, younger and less prominent, was the next appointed chairman, but just as many conflicts of interests existed according to the widows. The Commission convened for its first time over a year and three months, 441 days, after the events of 9/11.

The Commission utterly failed to answer 70% of the questions that the widows had asked of them, finally leaving the women with more questions than answers. This was the unofficial beginning of what is now recognized as the 9/11 Truth Movement, a fast growing body of people researching and working daily to learn more about what *really* happened on September 11. It matters more now than ever before that justice is seen for 9/11/01; if not for the widows and others who lost loved ones, then for the 8,000 Americans who have died since then. This November tell your candidate you want truth, and change shall follow naturally.

Brian Romanoff can be contacted at jungeonwarrior@yahoo.com.

It's Good to BEE Green! – Graton Flower Show

Graton Community Club Fall 2008 Flower Show & Plant Sale, Friday & Saturday, October 24 & 25, 2008. Open 8 am - 4 pm; Lunch 11 am – 4 pm; Dessert w/coffee or tea served all day. Live Piano: Friday – Ed Lepler will play sing-along piano tunes; Saturday Izzy/Jerry Green will soothe away the week's stress with reflective piano meditations. Location: in the clubhouse, on the corner of Graton Road and North Edison in downtown. Taped message: 829-5314; questions: 829-9440 – HolLynn.

This fall's flower show theme takes a playful but sincere approach to all things green, earth-friendly and home grown. Members have searched second-hand and local sources, creatively reused what they have and repaired rather than contribute to the landfill to bring visitors a glamorously green flower show, unique and diverse raffle and a nearly guilt-free holiday shopping experience. Knowledgeable gardeners have propagated many of their own seedlings and will be on hand to answer questions regarding native and water-wise plants. Other bargains include hand-sewn crafts and embroidery, and collectibles. Proceeds from sales contribute to local students' scholarships, clubhouse upgrades and repairs. Neighborhood green enterprises will provide information for living more economically and sustainably.

A harvest luncheon prepared fresh from local garden produce and homemade dessert will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the dining room for only \$8. Dessert with coffee or tea may be enjoyed all day for \$3. A vegetarian entree will be available on request. Paper and plastic have been eliminated from the lunch operations.

In honor of the founders of the 94 year-old service organization, visitors who wear a dress hat will receive \$1 off lunch. Ride your bike to the show and get a free chance on a raffle prize.

Recreating the Wheel – Al Gore vs. the Petaluma General Plan!

by Connie Madden

"Reducing Sprawl Called Crucial in Warming Fight," read a *SF Chronicle* headline recently. So, how's about changing our auto-centric ways?

Petaluma Planning Department's consultant, Pamela Tuft, said, "We're recreating the wheel here," as she presented the General Plan Draft section on greenhouse gas reduction (GHG). This is her statement that we can't keep our promise to Sonoma County Climate Protection Campaign to reduce greenhouse gases 20% by 2012- we can only promise 8% reduction.

I've been dipping into climate change data: point is, we don't have the leisure to just wait 'til after 2012 or 2025 to change our ways!

I heard that Jerry Brown, our Attorney General, is saying that we've got just 4 years to turn the bilge barge around; some give us 10 years or so. Whole lotta change must occur - if you want clean air, water, no huge rise in cancer and bacterial bugs on the ground and in the air. Scientists predict mass die-offs and migrations of people and animals as temperatures rise and more desert is created in Africa, Asia and in Middle and South America. Wish we could just imagine a humungous and perfect CO2 vacuum cleaner into existence – but that won't exist anytime soon.

Al Gore to the rescue? At least he makes pure sense when he says, "We're borrowing money from China to buy oil from the Persian Gulf, in order to burn it in ways that destroy the planet. Every bit of that has got to change!" He didn't say, "Gee, I guess we ought to drive a bit less," or "Just change your light bulbs," or, as some Petaluma council members seem to be saying, "We **need** more on-ramps and parking lots and big box stores to fuel our auto-centric lifestyle, and bring in more tax revenue." (While doubling our GHG?) The new stores are robbing from the existing ones, building up infrastructure costs and medical costs to the city – this helps how? We'll need a balance sheet to see if that in any way could **help** our bottom line and be a net positive for Petaluma. A Community Impact Report (CIR) policy is now being called FEIA - fiscal economic impact assessment – oat-mealish words, but if they get the data on the page, ok!

I know TV and the big corporate guys have fueled our ideas of what we think we want: more everything, and now. It wasn't always thus. Need I mention, we got all dependent on foreign oil largely because the Bush administration is laden with Oil Tycoons? Example: There's a Chevron oil tanker named after Condoleezza Rice, who served on their board, and VP Cheney is linked to Halliburton, to say **nothing** of where our President Bushie got his dough. Oil money/greed did actually fuel a war here, still a shooting war that made us miss the bigger stories coming out of the Middle East, in favor of saving oil rights while polluting the universe and adding to a global economic crisis!

Recently the State of California came out with a 9-page proclamation, reading something like our General Plan, i.e. **dense** copy you can't easily chew your way through. If you're looking for what you can do at home, there are green self-help lists in the newspaper, if you can find a paper (at least 3 newspaper boxes downtown are empty or broken downtown), and read it, and tomorrow maybe focus on how you can reuse instead of recycling. If you're really thinking about it, you'll build a rainwater catchment system or cistern, (to conserve water against drought). You could have a healthy veggie garden while the grasses around you are all burned up. Great way to more than keep up with the Joneses.

An energy solution for Petaluma that I'd dearly love to see is our Community Center at Luchessi becoming our first Community Choice Aggregation site - solar energy beaming from its broad roof to the neighbors nearby. This is a practice that could, with care and investment, become our alternative to foreign oil, to foreign wars as we know them, to saving ourselves from the worst of climate change - broken infrastructure systems, broken energy grid. California is looking to take money **out** of its road repair budget right now. That CalTrans money from the sky just may never be there. We have a postcard community here - let's learn a lot, change our ways and leave the place for our kids in at least as good shape as you see it now.

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Harvest Dance and Celebration

Dust off your dancing shoes and dig out your tie-dyed t-shirts!

The 10th Annual Harvest Dance and Celebration, presented by Peace in Medicine, will take place on November 15, 2008 at the Sebastopol Community Center and Youth Annex, 390 Morris Street, Sebastopol.

Not only will there be dancing and live music at this all day and all night event, but it will include 3 all-day classrooms, hosted by Oaksterdam University and Americans for Safe Access. For the first time, the Harvest Dance and Celebration is starting early in the day with a series of workshops. Classes and seminars will include California Legalities, cannabis cultivation, growing solar, caregivers workshops, patient's rights, make your own medicinal edibles, trimming 101, the history of cannabis and its spiritual aspects and many healing workshops. The event will offer activities and safe fun for the young ones, outdoor food vendors, a daytime marketplace and a Mediterranean Medicating Tent.

The day will culminate with the Harvest Dance from 6 pm to midnight with headlining local entertainment and a keynote address by Don Duncan, California Director of Americans for Safe Access. Ngaio Bealum, Master of Ceremonies for the evening, is a well-known comedian. Throughout the day will be a variety of live music. There is sure to be something for everyone (schedule to be announced).

The goal of the event is to "facilitate an opportunity for the local and regional medical cannabis community to unite in a joint effort of celebration, education and accomplishment" while raising needed funds for two 501(c)3 organizations: Americans for Safe Access & The West County Health Centers.

Activists Robert Schmitt & Keith Alden, who have both completed sentences in federal prisons for taking care of patients, will be honored. Sonoma County is grateful to have them in our community.

Americans for Safe Access (ASA), a beneficiary of the event, is the nation's largest organization of patients, medical professionals, scientists and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research. Go to safeaccessnow.org for more information.

The other beneficiary of the event is the West County Health Centers, Inc., which provides comprehensive, quality and accessible health care services to the communities of Western Sonoma County. They consist of a cohesive team of health care providers, support staff and volunteers dedicated to wellness, compassion, affordability and excellence of care. They support non-judgmental and equal care for all members of our diverse community.

Sponsors for the event include Sonoma Alliance for Medical Marijuana (SAMM), Oaksterdam University, North Bay Bohemian, Solar Works, Laguna Farms, Sebastopol Community Center, WaccoBB.net, Paesano Productions, Wholly Sacred Design, West Coast Cannabis and West Coast Leaf. Dispensaries participating in the event include Compassionate Caregiver's Group, Marvin's Gardens Herbal Co-op, North Bay Collective, Capitol Wellness Collective, Los Angeles Patients & Caregiver Group and Peace in Medicine.

Oh, to Break Loose

by Debra Birkinshaw

I sit at a favorite cafe table in a courtyard. I hear the plashing of water in the nearby fountain, and lean in as if to hear the inspired words of Robert Lowell, a like-minded poet who is no longer alive, except in my mind and heart. Our imagined dialogue reflects the dilemma we continue to face. "Shall we each make the choice to awaken, to really see and be grateful for the bounty that our earth offers, and try to preserve it? Will we hold sacred the lives of all beings, clearly seeing our interconnectedness with all life? Or, in our arrogant supposition that we can reign over nature, will we choose to dismantle the earth we know? Will we encroach on each other in our effort to plunder all our planet contains, right down to its very core? In our clumsy effort to reassemble all the elements in order to appease our shortsighted desires, will we destroy this gift we call life?"

I hear Mr. Lowell's words, as clearly as if he was seated next to me in this café. He is so good at pointing out the disparity between the constructive, creative traits, and the destructive darker nature of humankind...

Waking Early Sunday Morning

(An excerpt)

*O to break loose, like the chinook salmon jumping and falling back,
nosing up to the impossible stone and bone-crushing waterfall – raw-jawed, weak-fleshed
there, stopped by ten steps of the roaring ladder, and then
to clear the top on the last try,
alive enough to spawn and die.*

*Stop, back off. The salmon breaks water, and now my body wakes to feel the unpolluted joy
and criminal leisure of a boy – no rainbow smashing a dry fly in the white run is free as I, here
squatting like a dragon on time's hoard before the day's begun!...*

*...O to break loose. All life's grandeur is something with a girl in summer ...
elated as the President*

girdled by his establishment

*this Sunday morning, free to chaff his own thoughts with his bear-cuffed staff, swimming nude,
unbuttoned, sick of his ghost-written rhetoric!*

No weekends for the gods now.

*Wars flicker, earth licks its open sores, fresh breakage, fresh promotions, chance
assassinations, no advance.*

Only man thinning out his kind

sounds through the Sabbath noon,

the blindwipe of the pruner and his knife

busy about the tree of life

*Pity the planet, all joy gone from this sweet volcanic cone; peace to our children when they fall
in small war on the heels of small war – until the end of time
to police the earth, a ghost orbiting forever lost in our monotonous sublime.*

Robert Lowell 1964

I picture him. He shakes his head, resigned. It is as he has foretold. More than 40 years later, we are at a tipping point, with perhaps ten years remaining in which to turn our lives around—we must do or die.

I want to tell him that we face the abyss, yes, but we are building a bridge as we descend, and it may catch our fall. It may hold.

People meet at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa to educate, and to problem-solve. The Water coalition reaches into the political realm so as to have influence, regarding our water supply, on the regional and state level. Nearby, the SCCC hosts meetings for an entire federation of local groups concerned about our air, our fish, our birds—our land...

Across town, the SCCA monitors the politicians, assessing their receptivity to environmental causes for voters. South of there, in a rural part of town, is a farm where college students engage in various forms of constructive activities—music, gardening, dialogue, action.

Out West, nearly touching the ocean, the OAEC presides over an ecological preserve that educates thousands every year. ILED is poised to guide our county in purchasing electricity for all users, commercial and residential, directly from green energy providers, rather than from PG&E. Through our whole county, Daily Acts that sustain us, body and soul, are taking place.

Oh, yes, it is possible to break loose of the hold that our over-reaching habits have on us, for the good of the world. We all have to wake up to that choice—our lives depend on it.

The Seed

by Elaine B. Holtz

With the seeds of the sunflower running through my hands,
I saw and felt the oneness of it all.

For it is in the understanding of the seed that we see all,
for we are all, all of the great divine, the great process.

Each and every form of life on this planet forms first within a seed.
Perhaps even the big bang itself was a cellular explosion
of the continuum of seed.

The great mystery is a simple fact: We are all of seed.

Our fractionations and habitats may be different,
but our beginnings and needs are pretty much the same.

All life as we know it needs air, oxygen, water, food, space and sleep.

All life as we know it experiences various forms of transformation.

All have their beginning, their in-between time and their final time.

There is no need to know anything beyond the truth of the seed.

We are of one source.