



peace & justice news

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PJC MISSION

Our mission is to create a just and peaceful world. To this end, we work on the interconnected issues of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights through education, advocacy, training and non-violent activism, and community organizing, since 1979.



From the Center

Greetings!

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the bits of sunshine that Mother Nature has bestowed upon us so far this summer, albeit a little stingy! We certainly have been busy here at PJC, planning our annual awards event, tabling at SolarFest and DemocracyFest, working on the Paid Sick Days Campaign and doing some serious reflection about the future of PJC.

I'd like to thank those members who responded to my request for comments and suggestions regarding the current status of PJC and ideas for our future. The board, staff and I have engaged in exciting and productive discussions and made some decisions about our new direction, which includes honoring our past, building on our best work and continuing our dedication to a just and peaceful world.

In order to facilitate progress, we will be making large organizational changes. Our staff will be organized by departments, while working inter-departmentally and side-by-side to accomplish our goals, as opposed to being isolated and segregated by "projects." We are creating a new infrastructure that will allow specialized and responsive support to our allies.

One of the biggest changes we are considering is moving to a space that is more conducive to our new focus and one that will provide a healthier environment for us to do our work. Don't worry, though, our store will move with us and will continue to offer customer favorites, but with an even greater commitment to selling primarily local and fair-trade items. Stay tuned!

We will announce more details about PJC's changes and new direction at our 3rd Annual Activist Awards on August 29th. This promises to be our best event yet, with the addition of two new awards—one for Outstanding Social Justice Group and another for a Young Leader Award.

To close, I want to say how thrilled I am to be charged with leading the Peace & Justice Center to the next level. We are positioning ourselves to be the statewide source for social justice research, policy and action, examining issues important to Vermonters – now and into the future – through a human rights and racial/economic justice lens. I hope you will join us on this journey!

In celebration of Peace and Justice,
Nancy T. Lynch ☸



3rd Annual Activist Awards

Please join us on Saturday August 29 as the Peace & Justice Center hosts the Third Annual Activist Awards, a Celebration of the Social Justice Community in Vermont. This year's *Ed Everts Award for Peace & Social Justice* will be presented to Marmete Hayes. Marmete lives her life as an activist, working ceaselessly and selflessly to give voice to the voiceless. Marmete is a founder of Pax Christi Burlington and has been a part of the 8-year vigil at the top of Church Street from the beginning. A vocal opponent to the Iraq war, Marmete has participated in demonstrations, including one at Senator Leahy's office which landed her in handcuffs. She has also engaged in acts of civil disobedience at the School of the Americas. She has helped organize the Nagasaki vigil and volunteers regularly for the Peace & Justice Center.

Along with the *Ed Everts Award* we have added two new awards this year. Ita Meno will be presented with the *Young Leader Award* as we recognize the impact a new generation of activists is having on the social justice movement in Vermont. Ita is an established community leader and dedicated activist. Her service as the CEDO staff person for Burlington's community development work has inspired hundreds of community volunteers through her work to strengthen local civic engagement and support local leadership development of low income and people of color throughout Burlington. Ita collaborates with several community organizations on lateral oppression organizing work to connect issues of racism and homophobia in Vermont and has served as a co-leader for a grassroots anti-racism group that formed in 2005 out of a community-wide training by the People's Institute for Survival.

Our third award this year is for *Social Justice Group of the Year* and Vermont Freedom to Marry will be the first group to receive this award. Vermont Freedom to Marry has been committed to gaining civil-marriage equality for Vermonters since its founding in 1996. Not resting following the 2000 ruling allowing for Civil Unions, Freedom to Marry continued to push for full marriage equality and saw the fruits of this labor pay off this spring when the Marriage Equality Bill, the first in the country passed by a legislature, passed the Vermont House and Senate. One last push to override a Gubernatorial veto resulted in a win for social justice and human rights in Vermont.

In addition to the awards the evening will feature food by Skinny Pancake, cash bar, and music and dancing. Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$50 at the door and can be purchased at the Peace & Justice Store or by calling 802-863-2345 x6. ☸



Economic Justice

VEPC and the Money-Go-Round

You don't need a weatherman to know which way the money blows.

By Doug Hoffer

OK this is a bit wonky, but it's instructive and, as they say, the devil is in the details.

As you know, the VT Economic Progress Council (VEPC) gives away millions each year in business "incentives". The program has been criticized for years for a variety of reasons. But even if we accept it on its face, it still has a serious problem.

The methodology used to calculate the award is based on a number of factors, especially the expected number of new jobs. But the program is only supposed to reward new incremental jobs. That is, jobs that wouldn't have been created otherwise. To ensure this, VEPC uses what's called the "background growth rate" to discount jobs that would have been created in the normal course of business.

However, the background growth rate is an industry average rather than the applicant's actual history. This creates a problem.

Here's an example: If a widget maker applies for the incentives, VEPC uses the recent growth rate for all Vermont widget makers. Assume there are ten widget makers in Vermont. At any given time a few of them will be struggling (perhaps cutting jobs), a few will be stable (profitable but no new jobs), a few will be growing modestly, and one or two will be growing at a good clip. Therefore, the overall annual industry growth rate may be 2% but one or two widget makers may have been growing at 5% or more per year. And since the incentives are only paid if jobs are actually created, it stands to reason that the growing firms are the ones applying.

To extend the example, let's assume a widget maker with 100 workers promises to create 10 new jobs. Using a 2% background growth rate, VEPC deter-

mines that the company is eligible for incentives based on eight jobs. But if the firm's growth rate has been 5%, history suggests that it would have created five jobs anyway and should only receive an award for the additional five.

So by applying a 2% background growth rate to this hypothetical firm (which is actually growing at 5% per year), VEPC ends up paying for three jobs that would have been created anyway. Obviously, this is not a fiscally sound practice.

The problem was identified by the State Auditor in the very first review of the program in 2000 (I was the principal author of the report). More recently, the Auditor's 2008 review used a small sample of actual company data to illustrate the problem and recommended that the methodology be changed [see <http://auditor.vermont.gov/uploads/1213298995.pdf> pages 23 - 27].

VEPC's response was predictable and – in my opinion – showed clearly that it is more interested in pushing money out the door than protecting taxpayers. In its

comments, VEPC said that using company-specific background growth rates would be inconsistent and unfair, because some applicants are too new to have much history (see Appendix V of the Auditor's report, pages 72 – 74). But the change would not penalize newer firms (the industry average would still be used for them), and would only serve the intent of the statute, which is to not provide incentives for normal growth. Moreover, the Legislature's desire for consistency in implementation should not be read as a justification for wasting money.

The statute says that all such methodological issues are within the purview of the Joint Fiscal Committee (JFC) rather than the full Legislature. The JFC will meet at least twice before the next full session (once just before the newsletter is published) so there is an opportunity to correct the error made years ago.

And the timing is right. The Administration and the Legislature have both indicated a desire to cut costs. One would think they would want to fix a problem that has cost taxpayers millions over the years. This is not a frontal assault on VEPC. Even if you like the program (I don't), you should want it to be run responsibly.

But notwithstanding his supposed commitment to cutting waste, Jim Douglas has not responded to the Auditor's recommendation (although he doesn't seem to have a problem cutting programs for the poor). Let's hope the Joint Fiscal Committee has more courage. ☹



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Peace & Human Rights

Youth Seeking Answers with PJC

By Jen Berger

“The young, free to act on their initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown... The children, the young, must ask the questions that we would never think to ask, but enough trust must be re-established so that the elders will be permitted to work with them on the answers.”

– Margaret Mead

Do young folks have all the answers? No. Do they know the questions? Yes, many of them do. And they have more answers than even they realize. From June 26-28th, 14 high school students from around Vermont spent the weekend together at the Peace & Justice Center’s Youth Activist Institute (YAI), asking very important questions, and working across generations towards answers. (www.pjcv.org/youthactivistinstitute.htm)

In 48 hours we covered topics of community organizing, organizing movements in high schools, economic justice, media tactics, anti-racism and white privilege, and Theatre of the Oppressed. All of the participants held varying degrees of experience and knowledge on many topics, and with an equal amount of passion for social justice. By chance, all of the participants were young women, and, they had a lot to say.

They arrived with a range of issues that impassion them: combating discrimination in high schools more effectively, global warming, marriage equality, Darfur, the US occupation of Iraq, military recruitment, Vermont Yankee, school violence, and leadership in movements.

These young women shared with each other their work, passions, struggles, challenges and successes, and sought out inspiration and ideas from each other. They had more answers than they knew, and the four weekend staff learned a ton from them as well.

A very special thank you to weekend

staff, Kecia Gaboriault and Jean Marie Pearce for dedicating their time and energy to YAI that weekend, and for bringing so much experience and knowledge to it. Another special thank you to Emily Coon, Brian Hsiang, and Kesha Ram. Emily graduated from Mount Mansfield Union in 2008, and spent last summer interning at the PJC working on issues of military recruitment, which is right up her alley as she was one of the key organizers of the recruitment office demonstration in Williston a few years ago. She is also the founder of the peace

club at MMU, and shared her experience in starting movements in high schools with YAI. Brian is a former PJC board member and an anti-racism educator. Brian conducted an interactive series of exercises on white privilege and the history of racism in the US. Kesha joined us to share her stories of being the president of the student body council at UVM; her campaign that landed her as the youngest VT state representative, and to offer insight on how to engage with legislators toward creating social change. Thanks to all of our guests – we couldn’t have done it without you!

One more HUGE thank you to Tara Simms. Tara has been interning with the PJC since the spring. Tara designed all of the paperwork for the YAI, did peer outreach across the state, and put together a youth advisory council. Tara’s dedication, networking skills, determination and excitement ensured the success of YAI.

The participants of YAI were able to attend free of charge because of the generosity of New Visions Foundation and Seventh Generation.

And thank you to all of the participants. Their willingness to engage made the conversations richer, and hopefully more useful to the work they are doing. 

Conference Feedback

“What was the most important thing you gained?”

- I realized how much power I have as a youth, and that I can really change things. Because sometimes I feel like I’m not taken seriously.
- An understanding and realization that many young people like me share my passion and determination. This will push me forward in my activism.
- I was able to feel. I also have a better idea of how to approach activism and am more motivated and hopeful for activism.
- Concrete things that I can do. Bouncing ideas off of other people.
- I learned how to move forward with a group that I want to start at my school.
- The most important things I gained was the knowledge of how to start and organize a group or event.
- Knowledge, exposure to new ideas, new tactics.
- A realistic impression of my organizing abilities.
- The steps and resources to start a campaign.
- Confidence, PATIENCE & PERSISTENCE.
- The most important thing I gained was inspiration. It gave me a lot of hope to know there are other teens with similar goals to mine, and now that I have these skills and know these tactics, I feel like I’ll get a lot more done.
- An action plan.



Robin's Nest

Glen Elder: A True Friend of Africa

By Robin Lloyd

I wish Glen Elder was here to help us deconstruct President Obama's recent speech in Ghana, Africa. As many of you know, Glen Elder died of a heart attack at the age of 42, a few weeks after speaking at the Human Rights in Africa conference sponsored by Burlington College and TowardFreedom.com on April 11.

Glen appreciated the enormous opportunity Obama holds to change policy from the Bush years. So I think he would be disappointed to hear that Obama's FY2010 budget doubles funding for the US military presence in Africa (AFRICOM), including increasing funds for weapons and military training.

In April we asked Glen to help us understand what Obama's election means for US policy in Africa. Below are highlights of his speech.

I arrived here from South Africa in the mid 1990s: since then Burlington has become a very different place. A conference like this speaks to that change.

With events like this, VT has undergone a paradigm shift. We're no longer a place where issues pertaining to Africa are issues we should be charitably interested in. Africans are now part of a VT constituency and Africans are Vermonters. It's gratifying to see so many Africans here this evening.

The three issues of concern to Africa in the next four years are investment, trade and resources, security, and health.

■ China

US policy over the last four years has been trying to play catchup with what China has been enacting in terms of policy over the last eight years.

During the first four years of the Bush administration there was an attitude of neglect, with a few exceptions; places that had oil were of interest, such as Angola and Nigeria. China, by contrast, with its enormous thirst for natural resources, moved into that vacuum. One

of the real differences between China and the west is that China has a non-interventionist policy; China is simply interested in long term guarantees for access to resources, in return for which they will build hospitals, schools, and infrastructure.

The US's mode of engagement, on the other hand, has been through highly unequal trading arrangements. Some have argued that if we want to begin to address issues of injustice in, say,



Glen Elder
May 4, 1967- May 21, 2009

Mozambique, we should rethink our farm bill and cotton subsidies. Doing so would allow Mozambique farmers to compete in a global market with a more equitable cost attached to the cotton.

Instead, from the African perspective, our unequal trading relationships benefited the US and made African countries the dumping grounds for surplus generated in the US.

So this is the knotty issue that Obama faces: the ascendancy of China as a superpower, and trying to renegotiate what is seen from an African perspective as unfair and unequal neo-liberalism.

■ Oil and trade

As we question whether we have reached 'peak oil', Africa emerges as especially important, as it has many untapped reserves, and some of the largest non-OPEC nations (Organization of the

Petroleum Exporting Countries). The US and China are both interested in setting up trade with these countries because it could help to break the price monopoly that OPEC holds. Negotiating relationships with these oil rich countries will be a challenge for Obama.

■ Security

The Pentagon has recently published a map which divides the world into a number of 'hot spots' and projects where US force will be required over the next decade. The map portrays a stable North and South, surrounding a central zone made up of hotspots of incredible instability.

In Africa these regions where the US expects to have a considerable military presence are the Great Lakes region, East Africa and Nigeria. This is reflected not only in theoretical terms, but in the very real deployment of US tax dollars. For the first time in US history the US is deploying a central military command that will focus specifically on the African continent. Africom was established in October of 2008; it is one of six Defense Department military headquarters, and is to include military relations with 53 African countries.

■ Health

Former President Bush used to say that one of the things he was most proud of was his administration's health policy on the African continent. And certainly, on the basis of money spent, the programs on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis should be celebrated. But this success is something the Bush Administration learned the hard way. During its first term, the administration had followed a kind of unilateral policy, and it was only at the end that it realized that working with local NGOs and governments would create more effective policy.

In retrospect the US has made a considerable impact, and with the Clinton and Gates Foundations and the UN, has managed to turn the corner on the global HIV/AIDS crisis. I'm hopeful that this will come to shape other kinds of policies, and that multilateral engagements with a variety of actors, rather than unilateral deployment of US force, will prove themselves the most effective way of bringing about change. 

Corridor of Amity, Part 3

By Kevin Dann

In my last report about my “Corridor of Amity” pilgrimage for the *Peace & Justice NEWS* (June/July), I spoke about the wisdom and good will that I encountered day after day on my journey. I find this entry in my notes:

Discovery on Day 13: I am still struggling with how to speak about “the hard stuff” with strangers, and this morning this thought came to me: Champlain came with *amitié* – good will – in his heart, but ended up as the weapon of mass destruction in the Northern Alliance’s pre-emptive strike against the dread Magua/Mohawk. As I experience all this intense good will out here on the road, and reflect that back to the people I meet, I must find a way to say how it breaks my heart that as a people, we have so much good will, while our “will apparatus” – our American military – runs amok creating ill will in the world. How will we as a nation, in this 400th anniversary year of these two historic voyages, make a path with our head and heart that will redirect our collective will in the direction of the good?”

That entry came the morning after I had given a program at Rokeby in North Ferrisburgh, and the day before that I had spoken at the Old North End Studio in Burlington. Given these venues, and with many friends in both audiences, I tried in both places to broach the subject of torture, and found that people were very reluctant to speak directly about America’s ongoing history of crimes of torture.

In 1959, during the 350th anniversary celebration of Champlain’s voyage, at Fort Ticonderoga, an outdoor pageant culminated with the scene – described in Champlain’s journal – of Champlain’s “mercy killing” of an Iroquois captive being tortured by Champlain’s native allies. In the 20th century celebrations of Champlain’s legacy, he had been recalled as a noble step away from ancient practices of ritual torture. Historical reflection and commemoration *can* offer us ways to speak thoughtfully about ourselves in the present. Given the

unfolding revelations about the Bush administration’s use of torture to manufacture falsehoods to support its illegal war against Iraq, it seemed like it would be possible to have this conversation freely, but the small private conversation among neighbors was as difficult to have as it is for us as an entire nation.

From time to time on the road, I became quite aware of the landscape of fear that



Kevin Dann and Pete Seeger in Beacon NY.

continues to grip us as a people. After walking through a horrendous thunderstorm to Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY, I spent the night on the porch of an empty house owned by a woman whom I had met in Newburgh the day before. Seeing the weather report, she had told me to sleep there if I needed to. This was my first real night in suburbia, and sure enough, the neighbors took a keen interest. About 6am, a car pulled out of the driveway across the street, came to the end of the driveway, then pulled back in. About ten minutes later, a police car arrived. The police officer said to me when he drove up: “You’re a drifter, right?” “I prefer ‘pilgrim,’” I replied.

Weeks later, on my way to Beacon, NY, crossing from the RR tracks toward what I thought was Route 9, I was stopped by a pair of NY Department of Environmental

Protection police, as it turned out I had stumbled upon the site where the Croton aqueduct comes ashore after passing under the Hudson; in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the site is now like a small fortress.

That night that I arrived in Cornwall-on-Hudson brought just the sort of serendipitous encounter that was the hallmark of my journey. As I walked into the village drenched to the bone, a fellow stopped me on the street. “Haven’t you lost the trail, pilgrim?” he asked. The man, Chris Miller – a former Special Forces soldier, who now is head of counter-terrorism operations and support at West Point – offered to buy me a beer, then signed my map after an amazing conversation, and suggested that I speak to the West Point military historian, Steve Grove. Sure enough, later that evening, I got a call from him, and he was keen to tell me a story of “amity”: the episode of the transition at West Point when women became cadets.

Encountering people as a stranger walking a long distance, I found that a whole suite of defenses and defensiveness dropped away, and quite powerful natural bonds of helpfulness and friendship were quickened. The next morning, as I walked toward West Point on the Storm King Highway, Chris passed me and slowed to say he’d meet me at a lookout at the top of the hill. He had been on his way back from the barber’s, and was headed home to Cornwall, but decided instead to devote his day to touring me round West Point. He ar-



With Chris Miller (L), my West Point tour guide, on Storm King, above the Hudson River.

ranged for me to stay at the inn on the campus, and even gifted me with my next meal – MREs he carries in the back of his van to share with cadets on training missions.

I traveled through many towns where support for the military is a time-honored local tradition, and where today many young men and women take up military service because of both tradition and diminished economic opportunity. In Poultney, Vermont, after being invited to spend the night with Fred Michel – who met me when his dogs chased me as I was going to scout out a sleeping spot in the local Catholic cemetery – I was introduced by Fred to his friend and fellow Rotarian Dawn Sarli.

I had told Fred how I was looking to speak to local students, and so at breakfast Dawn – enrichment co-ordinator at Poultney High School – came to interview me. It was truly an interview, since it turned out that the school had hosted a peace activist recently, whose visit had left a wake of hard feelings. Dawn was understandably cautious about inviting me into the school, but just 15 minutes after she left, she called to say that there were two teachers who wished to have me visit their classes.

It would take pages to describe how rich these visits – in a school full of kids from military families – were. Perhaps I can just tell this one story: as I was finishing my presentation for a 7th grade class, the bell rang, and the teacher, Linda Paquette, who had been incredibly helpful all during the session, called out to one of her students to lock the door so that the next class wouldn't come in and disrupt us. Then she spoke to her class quite intensely: "Now, I hope that you all realize that we can never act again the way many Americans acted when the troops returned from the Vietnam War – disrespecting them and their service."

I understood Linda's desire to put a kind of counterweight upon my presence, especially in the wake of what I took to have been a quite divisive incident. I held my tongue at first, aware that the pervasive post-Vietnam story of widespread

disrespect for soldiers is more myth than reality, but then finally spoke up, asking the students to remember that obedience to authority was a supreme value in military service, and that because frequently only the most heroic and principled soldiers would disobey illegal or immoral orders, that it was up to each and every one of us as citizens to make sure that American soldiers were called into service where their missions were legal and moral.

One day, in Glens Falls, NY, I was speaking with a couple outside the public library and I grew quite sharp with my condemnation of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They told me of their nephew being redeployed under the stop-loss policy, and how difficult it was to



Dawn Sarli, Linda Paquette, and her 7th grade social studies class in Poultney.

accept this. Turning to their teenage daughter Anna, I asked how she felt about the wars. "Actually, I planned to join ROTC next year. I have always wanted to serve in the military, and look forward to it as a career." I congratulated her, and promised her I would do whatever I could to ensure that by the time that she finished her training, she would only enter into missions that served humanity, not ones that were morally and legally questionable. Before we parted, I asked Anna to sign my notebook; later, I found that she had written: "Thank you for your insight and concern for my ROTC career. Good luck in all you do."

Each time – and the times were countless – that someone sent me off with "Good luck!", I wanted to cry, for I felt in almost every single case, that the encounters with so many strangers were a kind of blessing. I feel that I have friends now in so many towns and among

so many communities where I would not have had I not entered them on foot as a stranger. In this time and place of such deep political polarization, I found that there is a path toward conversation, and that conversation might lead to understanding, and understanding to action.

The greatest challenge for any pilgrim is how to keep the pilgrimage alive once returning home. I have been thinking that I would like to create a "Pilgrimage Project," journeys within the same corridor that I traveled, to take teens on foot to experience the wisdom and generosity that was extended toward me. I am keen to help our region's youth to experience the extraordinary outpouring of good will that I have received.

The heartbreaking truth of course is that this reservoir of good will seems cut off from our national destiny at the moment, as our leaders continue to practice a duplicitous and disastrous imperialist foreign policy, and a domestic economic and social shell game detrimental to working people across the land. I continue to find that speaking up and out about America's "dark side" is largely unwelcome, and must be framed with the most polite and genteel overtures. True open discourse in this nation is endangered. The Pilgrimage Project would have as one of its primary goals the practice of open dialogue with each of our host communities.

I have been so extraordinarily blessed on this journey, to meet so many different people, all of them with their own styles and sources of deep wisdom and most also ready to give of themselves to the stranger in the most beautiful ways. Thank you to all for your support. ☺

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The Legacy of Champlain: A Conversation with the Grandmothers

By Donna Roberts Moody

When asked to present a paper for the recent Vermont Quadricentennial Indigenous Conference at St. Michael's College, my first reaction was to roll my eyes. "After all," I thought, "how many Indian people think the coming to our homelands by Champlain was a good idea?" But then I thought about it more and what follows is the text of the paper I eventually wrote and delivered at the May 2nd - 3rd, 2009 Vermont Quadricentennial Indigenous Conference, Session V, The Legacy of 1609: Ripples of Colonialism, Survival, Identity, and Change in the Bitawbakw Wolhanek (Champlain Valley).

Playing the "Devil's Advocate" is difficult and exhausting. It's a position I am frequently in. Often, I take an opposing point of view from the majority of co-confererees. I don't rely on my own views, opinions, frame of reference, or personal realities. My foci are conversations I have had with Elders, most often Grandmothers, who have asked me to address a certain topic. They are pretty clear on how they want their opinions expressed. And they don't want to express those opinions themselves in a public setting.

It goes like this: "I was talking with so-and-so and we think you should do something about....." "Well, why don't you just speak up about this?" "Oh, no. I could never say that!"

And so, with promises of absolute anonymity, here is *The Legacy of Champlain: Viewing Samuel de Champlain through Indian Perspectives in Interviews with Six Grandmothers*.

The question I posed to these Grandmothers was, "What changes and lasting effects have resulted from the "discovery" of N'dakinna by Europeans?" These were the carefully thought out answers I received.

"I don't agree with this celebration. I don't think we should be celebrating."

"We let him in."

"Lake Champlain was here, it wasn't 'discovered'." "So we didn't lose it?"

"No. There was nothing to discover. We knew it was here. And that's not what we called it either."

"Odanak would not have existed. It was good we had it as a refuge place though. But it's not good that there was a need for it."

"French influence almost destroyed our language." "Do you think holding on to the language is important?" "Yes. It says who we are as a people." "Do you mean it helps us maintain our identity and separateness as a people?" "Yes."

"Catholicism destroyed our Spiritual ways of life." "Was our religion, our way of worshipping OK?" "Of course it was OK."

Some of the input I received was poignant. Some came with a deep sadness



or ache. And some was extremely negative. It may be difficult to hear.

"In my opinion through researching and listening to the stories of Champlain that have been passed down to me through the many years of my life, I have come to understand that Samuel de Champlain may perhaps have appeared to be both a friend and ally to the Native peoples of this land. As a Native person looking back over all of his accomplishments and successes he appears to have left a grand legacy indeed for France, not in fact for the Native peoples of this land and its surrounding areas. The Lake In Between for which Champlain is so celebrated was already here. Champlain did not bring the waters or the surrounding land, he did not bring the wondrous creatures that once thrived in the lake and

most of all he failed to recognize the importance of the rich culture of the people who lived on these lands. These people whose hearts beat with the wind, whose blood ran in the lakes and rivers, these people whose spirit was embedded as one with all the living earth; these people to Champlain were considered subjects only of New France."

She continued, "The word 'sauvage' appears to be one of the few tangible legacies that in fact was left to these people, followed only by the few things that seemed to consistently dance with the many invaders who came from foreign lands to a sovereign nation; small pox, measles, typhoid, chicken pox, scarlet fever and many other diseases that the Native people of this land had no defense for. Champlain left the land strewn with his country's missionaries whose only mission was to civilize and Christianize these wild beasts of the World. This was and remains to be the legacy of all of these great explorers of the World.....This land was living long before it was 'discovered' and will continue to live as long as its people share the same breath, heart, blood, and spirit."

A couple of the Grandmothers spent more time thinking before answering.

"I had to think long on what I would have to say regarding the visit of Samuel de Champlain. I have an abiding sorrow for the loss of identity that Native peoples suffered when this continent was "discovered" by the Europeans.

"The encroachment upon a wild land inhabited by people who had a philosophy and belief far different from Europeans, where wars over land and beliefs had been fought for centuries (and to the conqueror went the spoils) inevitably led to great losses for our people.

"That said, when one speaks of Champlain, we realize his early trip down the lake and his encounters with Natives on both the Western and Eastern banks led to the formation of long lasting alliances and helped to shape the years that followed. As I understand it, French explorers were most interested in trade goods, particularly the fur trade. Since

they wanted and needed the help of local people – who had furs and hides tanned with such expertise as to make them as soft as velvet – they were less inclined to be aggressive towards them. Instead, they tried to form and foster alliances.

“The English when they arrived were on a “holy” mission. While they had left their own land due to religious persecution, they didn’t equate their intention to convert these people to what had happened to them. Not that the French missionaries didn’t try to convert the Natives as well, just not with the same zeal.

“Lastly, that Champlain recorded the presence of Native people in Vermont – whether or not he used the correct name for them – supports the fact that we were always here, and [we] are here still !!! VERMONT WAS NOT AN “EMPTY LAND,” not void of people. A quiet gentle people called this place their home long before any European set eyes upon these shores!!”

There’s a saying that Abenaki women never forget. If you’re very fortunate they may forgive, but they will never, ever forget. There is a 400 year long memory of not forgetting.

Another Elder says, “...the legacy he left was gun running, setting one tribe against another, lying, using his friendships to steal land, setting up trading posts to monopolize the fur trade for France, and discrediting the Native people as intelligent human beings.”

Another Grandmother countered, “Champlain’s legacy is that of loyalty in attempting to bring about colonization. Proof of his loyalty lies with becoming an ally with the Abenaki against the Iroquois. That all worked together for the success in opening up waterways for fur trading, etc. This was a sincere attempt at bringing Native and French people together in a way that’s beneficial to all. It [he] also established a place of being, which is more clearly defined.”

This sounds pretty good, doesn’t it? Ah, but wait. This same Grandmother goes on to say, “That is the legacy as it was intended. In 2009, this Grandmother sees a fairly successful explorer in times past, but in present day (the past 100+ years) sees a people that continues to struggle over issues that are far removed from how Creator intended. The much needed solidarity is not there, most modern day Native peoples have their

own agendas such as gaming, substance abuse, federal recognition, and land claims, instead of living a more honorable, traditional life of KNOWING WHO they are, WHAT they are, and WHERE they have come from. That’s my VOICE!!”

So what’s the common thread here? My synopsis is that these Grandmothers mourn, as have their Grandmothers, a legacy that has resulted in the near destruction of a people, their language, their culture, and their spiritual lives. This legacy removed our people from their thousands of years of ways of living. It has left our young people in turmoil, crawling into depression, suicide, alcoholism, and drug abuse to escape the pain of genetic memory and the effects of colonization. It left our people with epidemic proportions of diabetes, distanced from our traditional diets. And it negatively impacted the ways in which we make meaning of our lives.

These are the voices of the Grandmothers. As Native people, we would do well to listen to them more attentively, to seek them out for their wisdom, and to honor them as the tradition keepers and life-givers they are. ☪

Quadricentennial Indigenous Celebration, Burlington Waterfront July 2009

VERA LONGTOE

Coordinator of the Vermont Indigenous Celebration. “This was an historic four days. This indigenous celebration united so many Abenaki people together. When I got on the bus {to bring the community up to the parade} to make sure that everybody was there last night, I looked and the bus was full. It wasn’t just the Koasek, Nulhegan, Elnu and Missisquoi (the four Vermont bands), there were Abenaki from everywhere. There were Abenaki people on the bus I didn’t even know. Tears just came to my eyes. Even here, in the Abenaki Village, people come up to us and let us know ‘I’m Abenaki’, and they’re proud that we’re doing this. We’re here at the Lake In



Vera Longtoe.

Between, which is so important to our people. This is where our ancestors lived and died for thousands of years. For almost 11,000 years we’ve been here. So to spend these four days here on the lake, we’re not just

together with ourselves, we’re here also with our ancestors. I’m proud to be an Abenaki. It’s a good day to be indigenous.”

DR. FRED WISEMAN

Ethno-historian. “Champlain was a great ally of the Abenaki, and you won’t hear any Abenaki talking him down. If you go down on the other side, the Iroquois have a different perspective. The major lesson from Champlain is that all these native people here have French ancestry, and 80% of the French ancestry of people in VT have native in them. Just before he died, Champlain said “Our people will be one.”

CHARLEY DELANEY-MEGESO

Member of VT Commission on Native American Affairs and Mazipskwik Abenaki. “When Champlain confronted the Iroquois with his arquebus, we had never seen technology like this before in warfare. When he fired his gun in battle, it was equal to the US dropping an atomic bomb on Japan. It changed the whole playing field. He started an arms race.”



Roger Longtoe Sheehan, Chief of the Elnu Abenaki.



Darren Bonaparte, telling Iroquois history through the symbols on the Wampum belts.

CALENDAR

August 2009

[2] Sunday

- 2pm **Vets for Peace** meet at PJC.

[4] Tuesday

- 6:15pm **Burlington-Bethlehem-Arad Sister City** meeting at Burlington College, 95 North Ave., Burlington.

[6] Thursday

- **Hiroshima Day** events. See page 11.

[9] Sunday

- **Nagasaki Day**. See events page 11.

[10] Monday

- 7-9pm **Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel** meeting at PJC.

[12] Wednesday

- 6-8pm **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. Info: 372-6117.

[21-23] Friday-Sunday

- **Nonviolent Communication Workshops**. See article below.

[29] Saturday

- 6-10pm **3rd Annual Activist Awards: A Celebration of the Social Justice Community in Vermont**. At Union Station, One Main St, Burlington. A benefit for the Peace & Justice Center. With support by Main Street Landing. See pages 1 & 2.

September 2009

[16] Wednesday

- 7pm **Fr Roy Bourgeois** has been working to close the School of Americas. The school trains Latin American soldiers at Fort Benning Ga. He will give a talk at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Society, 152 Pearl St, Burlington VT. Free admission. web site: soaw.org. Contact Richard Kemp 802 862 4418.

To Social Activists who have Passion and Urgency to make the World a Better Place:

By *Crow Cohen and Bonnie Fraser*

No blood for oil! Out of Vietnam – now! Black Power! Take Back the Night! Gay Rights! Decommission Yankee Power Plant!

We have demonstrated in the streets, pamphletted and contacted officials to raise consciousness, change laws and liberate all oppressed peoples.

I (Crow) have been in shouting matches with “the enemy.” I have been proud of my voice. Recently I decided to shift gears. I am finding ways to communicate and connect with “the enemy” instead of getting up in their faces and screaming, “Change or else we’re doomed!” Does this mean I’ve switched from a radical to a moderate? Have I sold out? These are questions I ponder, but I’ll tell you what. This new practice is a lot harder and has engendered more hope in me. If I can’t communicate effectively with those who hold opposing views, how can I expect Middle-easterners, for example, to work it out?

I (Bonnie) wanted to be a peacemaker. I often swallowed my voice, was frustrated, and found myself repeatedly mired in the problem. I gave up until I started learning Nonviolent Communication (NVC), which showed me where I was getting off the path before I even realized it. I can see my progress in connecting rather than disconnecting with people who see matters differently.

And you? Are you tired of preaching to the choir? Would you like to become more effective in sparking the good will that creates the capacity to be heard by others? Are you hungry to learn how to stand up in the face of aggression without dehumanizing others?

The Peace & Justice Center and Burlington Friends Meeting are co-sponsoring a workshop for social activists. It will be facilitated by Pan Vera of Norwich, Vermont, a PSNCC Certified NVC trainer. He has worked with Nonviolent Communication for years, at the individual and group level. Pan has led trainings for social activists for the last three years in building coalitions for change. (See his website, www.compassionatecommunications.us for more information.)

In this workshop we will explore how the practical tools of NVC support the transformation of violence, particularly the subtler, unacknowledged verbal forms such as blaming, judging and punishing into clear and authentic expression of your needs and visions for change.

Workshop for Social Activists will be offered Sunday afternoon, August 23, 2009, 1-5pm. Donations accepted. Related workshops that would enrich your Sunday experience: a free introduction to NVC on Friday evening, August 21, 6:30-9:30pm and Saturday, a day of learning the basics of NVC, 9:30-5, sliding fee scale. All workshops will be at Burlington Friends Meeting, 173 N. Prospect St. Contact Bonnie Fraser, 802-865-1761, or fraser@champlain.edu for more information. 

Nuclear Disarmament Day & Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemorations

On the 64th Anniversary of the US Atomic Bombing of the civilian population of Hiroshima, Japan, peace groups in Burlington join with Mayor Bob Kiss to observe this day to remember, reflect, and reform, so that human beings will never again suffer such inhuman violence and destruction.

August 6, Thurs.: Nuclear Disarmament Day

• 8am: Hiroshima Silent Vigil, corner of S. Prospect & Main Streets, Burlington, sponsored by AFSC-VT.

■ Church Street City Hall Rally

- 11:30am: Parade with Bread & Puppet Theater starting at UU Society.
- 12 noon: Reading of Mayor's Proclamation. Speakers: Jody Williams, Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the International Campaign to End Landmines, James Moore (VPIRG), and Joseph Gainza (AFSC-VT)
- 12:30 Parade to head of Church St: floating of Candle Boats in the fountain

August 9, Sun.: Nagasaki Day

11 am, Nagasaki Prayer Vigil, corner of Cherry and St. Paul Sts., at the Catholic Cathedral bell tower, sponsored by Pax Christi Burlington

■ Activist Conference

At the 1st Unitarian Universalist Society, 152 Pearl St. 12 noon to 3pm:

- 12 Noon: Lunch: donation appreciated
- 12:45 Welcome and Introduction
- 1-3 pm Workshop on lobbying and organizing on the issues of depleted uranium and Vermont Yankee

Sponsored by: Nuclear Free Future Vermont, The Peace & Justice Center, The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), AFSC, VYDA, VTJP and Greenpeace. For more information call: 863-2345, x1 or 862-4929.

Vermont Town Meeting Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

By *Joseph Gainza, AFSC-VT Program Coordinator*

We are in an historic moment where it is conceivable that the US might lead the world toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. But, with powerful forces opposing abolition, it will not happen without an engaged and organized citizenry. In Vermont it is time to once again bring the issue to Town Meeting and help provide the impetus for abolition two months before the international community meets at the United Nations to review the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Vermont-based and national efforts have already begun. Burlington Mayor Bob Kiss co-sponsored a resolution adopted unanimously by the US Conference of Mayors (USCM) on June 15 at its 77th annual meeting in Providence, RI. The resolution entitled "Affirming the Role of Cities in Achievement of a Peaceful World Free of Nuclear Weapons by 2020," puts the USCM on record calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, along with President Barak Obama, former Secretaries of State George Schultz and Henry Kissinger and former Secretary of Defense William Perry.

The mayors recognize that cities would be prime targets in the event of a nuclear exchange and their first responsibility is to the health and welfare of their citizens. President Obama, speaking in Prague, Czech Republic in April declared: "One nuclear weapon exploded in one city ... could kill hundreds of thousands of people. And no matter where it happens, there is no end to what the consequences might be – for our global safety, our security, our society, our economy, to our ultimate survival... I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

The USCM resolution "welcomes enthusiastically the new leadership and multilateralism that the United States is demonstrating toward achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, and calls on President Obama to announce at the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference the initiation of good faith multilateral negotiations on an international agreement to abolish nuclear weapons by the year 2020."

But with powerful interests in maintaining nuclear stockpiles both in the US and abroad, the mayors recognized "the importance of city and citizen level

movements for the abolition of nuclear weapons."

In 1999 85% of the Vermont towns voting on an abolition article at Town Meeting passed it. In Burlington the article passed with 76% of the vote, in Middlebury with 75% and in Montpelier with 74%. The Vermont Senate approved a similar resolution unanimously and the House overwhelmingly.

The NPT Review Conference at the UN is in May 2010; our Town Meeting in March could send a clear message of support for the president's stated intention of abolition.

A draft of the Town Meeting article follows:

Whereas:

1. Nuclear weapons pose a continuing threat to civilization, the human species, and life itself;
2. Developing and maintaining nuclear arsenals costs billions of dollars per year, and these resources could be better used to rebuild our infrastructure, support the health and welfare of our citizens, and protect the quality of our environment;
3. The end of the Cold War has provided an unparalleled opportunity to end the nuclear weapons era;
4. There is a growing consensus among our nation's leaders that the existence of nuclear weapons jeopardizes the security of the United States of America; and
5. The legal cornerstone of international nuclear weapon disarmament, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), will be the subject of a Review Conference at the United Nations starting in April 2010.

Therefore, the people of the Town of _____ urge President Barack Obama to use the 2010 NPT Review Conference as an opportunity to begin negotiations for a mutually verifiable universal treaty for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

To join the Vermont Town Meeting Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, contact the American Friends Service Committee at jgainza@afsc.org or 802-229-2340. 





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