



peace & justice news

A PUBLICATION OF THE PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER

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Our work has just begun if we want to see the manifestation of change.



■ Springsteen's Inspiration

We are reprinting his speech because of the eloquence with which he talks about the values that are at the heart of what the PJC does and the social justice issues we work on.



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■ Reflecting on the PJC's 30 years

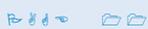


■ Anise Richey joins PJC staff

Anise is the new Development Director.



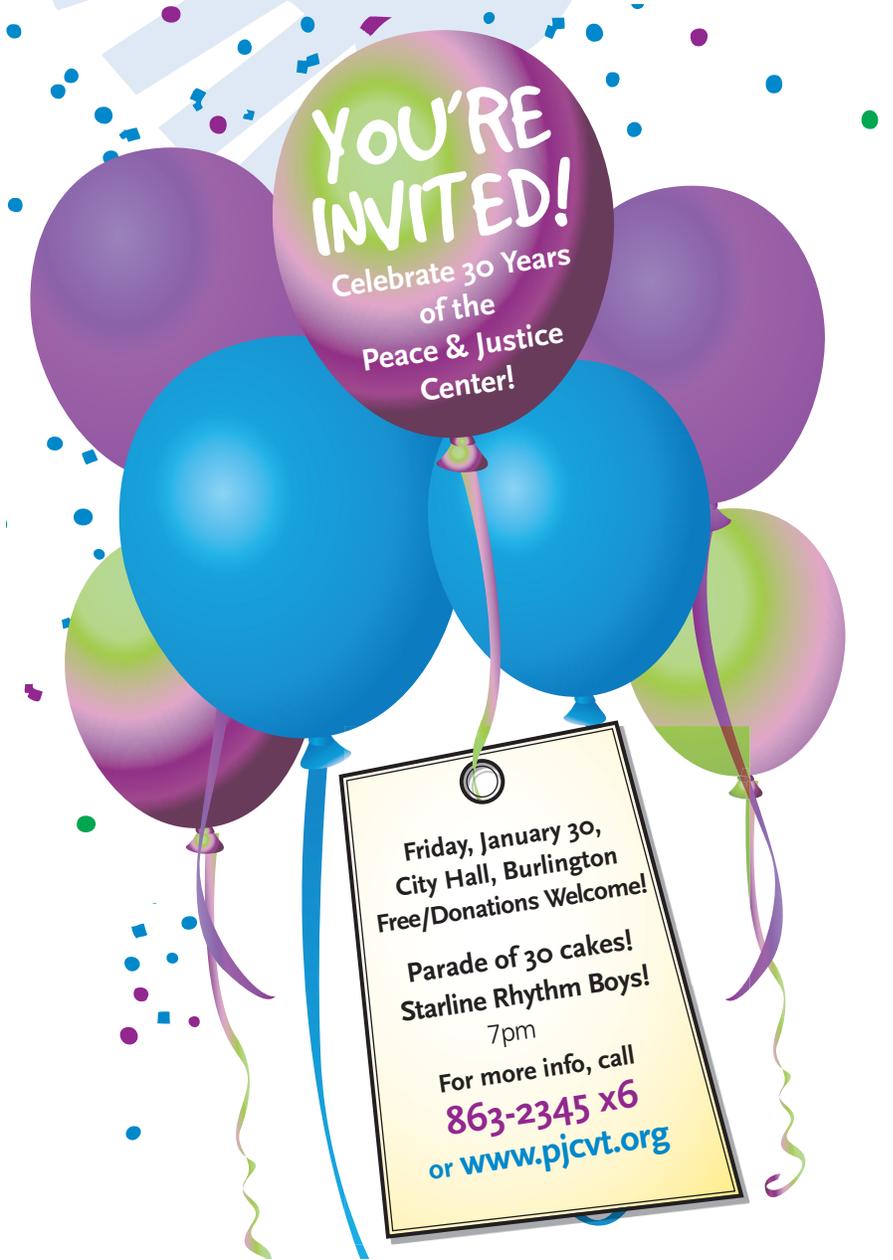
■ Calendar



■ Cry Congo

Woman spoke – in Swahili, French, or English – of their long trauma, search for safety, and coming to America.

peace & justice center Celebrates 30 years!



EDITORS

Wendy Coe
Gene Bergman
Robin Lloyd

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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.

We Must be Obama's Inspiration for Change

By Colin Robinson

We all remember the excitement felt in the lead up to President-Elect Obama's victory on November 4th. The campaign called it hope, and that is what many of us felt. After eight years of Bush's follies, fumbles and blunders that lead us into illegal war, the worst financial crisis since the great depression and the horrific response to Katrina, we were all demanding change. In Obama we saw and still see a manifestation of change. He is clearly a different type of leader who has the ability to be a catalyst in a time of hardship. He will present to the world and young children across our country a very different face of America – not only in the color of his skin but also in the way he chooses to handle crisis, be inclusive and possibly redefine what a president can be.

However, as we have seen the recent appointments to the Obama cabinet and the tenor and triangulation of messaging we know that our work is cut out for us. We all believe that Obama in his heart is a progressive. With a history as a community organizer, raised by a single mother, who went on to teach law, he understands the issues of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights like no president before him. But he is now in a position where it is easy to take the middle road – the softer course in public opinion – and not move the progressive agenda

that our country needs now more than ever.

Just as Obama has hit the ground running, as a progressive activist, so must we as citizens. Our work has just begun, if we want to see the manifestation of change. In the 1930's, at the height of the Great Depression, when labor leaders went to FDR asking for a minimum wage, he told them that they needed to organize people to make him do it. FDR agreed we needed a minimum wage, but he knew that to make it politically possible for him to step out on a limb, he needed millions of workers organized, holding up the limb as he stepped out. So workers organized and the limb did not break when FDR stepped out on it.

As our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents did then we must now organize, push, and act to make sure Obama ends the war in Iraq, raises wages and allows workers to organize freely and fairly into unions, and creates a universal health care system. These things can happen and we have a president now who has the potential to make it happen – but we as citizens must push him. It is our responsibility to channel the hope, optimism, excitement, time and energy that was put into his campaign and organize for our future.

As we all take on this hugely important task, remember the sense of hope and possibility we all felt – Obama was our inspiration then, now we must be his inspiration for change. ☺

Cake Bakers Wanted

As part of the PJC's 30th Anniversary Celebration we are going to have a parade of 30 cakes on Church Street at noon on Friday, January 30.

We need volunteers to bake cakes and volunteers to be in the parade carrying cakes, carrying umbrellas over the cakes if it is snowing, and for general merriment!

Decorate your cake with a dove, peace symbol, hammer of justice, equal sign, etc.

Please call Linda at 862-3671 if you want to bake a cake.
If you want to be in the parade, call Anise at 863-2345 x6 or arichey@pjcv.org





From the editors—What follows is a campaign speech by Bruce Springsteen given in Cleveland, Ohio 2 days before the November election. We are reprinting it because of the eloquence in which he talks about the values that are at the heart of what the PJC does and the social justice issues we work on. Regardless of your position on electoral politics generally or Obama's positions specifically, it summarizes the hopes and dreams of the millions who elected our first African American president and the standards we will need to hold him to. Springsteen has given us a call to look inward and a call to be active participants in our own destiny. He speaks to what we need our nation to be and what we need it to do, for each other and for ourselves. He speaks indirectly to the need for organizations like the PJC because little of the substantive work can be done by each of us separately. That has been a major lesson of our 30 year history. He asks people to join in making the change together like we ask you to join us in making change here. We hope it inspires you like it did us.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S COMMENTS FROM THE STAGE AT CLEVELAND'S VOTE FOR CHANGE RALLY

November 2, 2008

(reprinted from his website)

Hello Cleveland!

It's great to be here today among friends. I'd like to thank Senator Obama and his folks for inviting me. I've been here many times since 1973, but never on a day as glorious as this one. We are at the crossroads.

I've spent 35 years writing about America and its people. What does it mean to be an American? What are our duties, our responsibilities, our reasonable expectations when we live in a free society? I saw myself less as a partisan for any particular political party, than as an advocate for a set of ideas. Economic and social justice, America as a positive influence around the world. Truth, transparency and integrity in government. The right of every American to a job, a living wage, to be educated in a decent school, to a life filled with the dignity of work, promise, and the sanctity of home. These are the things that make a life, that build and define a society. These are the things we think of on the deepest level, when we refer to our freedoms. Today those freedoms have been damaged, and curtailed by eight years of a thoughtless, reckless, and morally adrift administration.

I spent most of my life as a musician measuring the distance between the American dream and American reality. For many Americans who are today losing their jobs, their homes, seeing their

retirement funds disappear, who have no health care, or who have been abandoned in our inner cities, the distance between that dream and their reality has never been greater or more painful. I believe Senator Obama has taken the measure of that distance in his own life and work. I believe he understands in his heart the cost of that distance in blood and suffering in the lives of everyday Americans. I believe as president he would work to bring that dream back to life, and into the lives of many of our fellow Americans, who have justifiably lost faith in its meaning.

In my job, I travel around the world, and occasionally play in big stadiums, just like Senator Obama. I continue to find everywhere I go that America remains a repository for people's hopes and desires. That despite the terrible erosion of our standing around the world, for many we remain a house of dreams. One thousand George Bushes and one thousand Dick Cheneys will never be able to tear that house down. That is something only we can do, and we're not going to let that happen.

This administration will be leaving office, dumping in our laps the national tragedies of Katrina, Iraq, and our financial crisis. Our house of dreams has been abused, looted, and left in a terrible state of disrepair. It needs defending against those who would sell it down the river for power, influence or a quick buck. It needs strong arms, hearts and minds. It needs someone with Senator Obama's

understanding, temperateness, deliberativeness, maturity, pragmatism, toughness and faith. But most of all it needs us. You and me. All a nation has that keeps it from coming apart is the social contract between its' citizens. Whatever grace God has deemed to impart to us resides in our connections with one another, in honoring the life, the hopes, the dreams, of the man or woman up the street, or across town. That's where we make our small claim upon heaven. In recent years that contract has been shredded and as we look around today, it is shredding before our eyes. But today we are at the crossroads.

I'm honored to be here on the same stage as Senator Obama. From the beginning, there has been something in Senator Obama that has called upon our better angels, I suspect, because he has had a life where he has so often had to call upon his. We're going to need all the angels we can get on the hard road ahead. Senator Obama helped us rebuild our house big enough for the dreams of all our citizens. For how well we accomplish this task will tell us what it means to be an American in the new century, what's at stake, and what it means to live in a free society. So I don't know about you, but I want my country back, I want my dream back, I want my America back. Now is the time to stand together with Barack Obama and Joe Biden and the millions of Americans that are hungry for a new day, roll up our sleeves and come on up for the rising. 



Peace & Human Rights

2008 Shows Another World is Possible

By Jen Berger

The New Year always rings in thoughts of past, present and future. We take a moment to pause and think about the last 365 days. 2008 has been full of peaks and valleys in the anti-war movement.

In the late 1990's, the anti-globalization movement was at its peak. Energy was strong, people were angry and inspired. The Battle of Seattle sat high at the top of this peak. Shortly afterwards we, the global community, experienced a drop deep into a valley with the 'election' of George W. Bush and his administration into the White House. We knew things were going to change, we just didn't know how.

9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq shifted the focus of the entire world, including the anti-globalization movement. It brought together activists in a different way. No longer was "Another World is Possible" the focus, but hanging onto the world as we knew it and not letting that slip away. While the last 8 years have brought havoc, heartache, death and destruction, with a new administration around the corner, change is here once again. I, for one, still believe Another World IS Possible.

Each action we take is a step from a valley towards the peak.

In February the Recruiting for Peace Campaign (RFPC) published *The Alternatives Book*, a statewide Vermont-based resource for alternatives to military service. We hope we covered all of the reasons why someone might join the military and offered an alternative. Copies are available for sale at the PJC store, or for educational purposes, contact RFPC.

The anti-war movement began 2008 with planning for the beginning of the 6th year of the occupation of Iraq. This year, there was no call for a national demonstration. The call was for support of a momentous and historical event: *Winter Soldier: Iraq & Afghanistan*. Three and a half days of testimonies from veterans and active duty soldiers and marines about what life in the military is really like.

Women, gender, rules of engagement, breakdown of the military and other topics left unspoken on the nightly news were bravely revealed. RFPC supported this event in many ways. We worked with local public access stations to set up live feeds throughout the state, and local viewing locations. The PJC also sent me to *Winter Soldier*.

At *Winter Soldier*, I filmed the testimonies and interviewed five veterans about their experiences with recruiters. Each story is so different, yet equally compelling. The edited version of these interviews will be used to educate youth about military recruitment and enlistment in Vermont.

From the testimonies, the relationships built with veterans, and the interviews, I returned to Vermont full of knowledge and passion to share. Working with 2 summer interns, we developed a plan for this fall's Opt-Out Awareness Campaign and were able to strategically plan where the campaign's energy would focus. As a result, we were able to table at 8 schools in 6 weeks, all of the schools were new relationships.

RFPC continues to share the truth about military recruitment/enlistment with Vermont youth. We visit Burlington High School classrooms, have Chat & Chews at Spectrum Youth & Family Services drop-in center, participate on a panel discussion at Mt. Abe High School after an all day simulation of war, and more.

The Truth in Military Recruitment movement is growing. Passionate people across the state are visiting high schools. To make this network tighter, Oskar Castro from the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, was invited to do a full day training this past fall. Out of this training a collaboration between RFPC and AFSC in Montpelier developed to strengthen our work.

Educating and empowering youth expresses itself in many ways. It was an honor to witness and participate in the Vermont Student Summit on Bringing Peace to Iraq this October. Over 100 of

Vermont's youth gathered to share videos, songs, and workshops on how the youth can help build peace in Iraq. I was moved to tears, as were many others there.

2008 has been full. When I think of the present (and the future), I reflect once more in May 1st, 2008. On May 1, all 29 ports on the U.S. West Coast were shut down by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in protest against the U.S. war on Afghanistan and Iraq. Activists all across the country did solidarity actions, as did oil workers in Iraq. In Burlington, VT a group of activists locked themselves in the office of General Dynamics to protest the money GD gives to political candidates, and receives from the State of Vermont, as well as building weapons of mass destruction in our community. Ten people were arrested that day. The publicity and awareness around this event kicked off what is now called, the Vermont Peace Economy Campaign (VPEC).

VPEC promises much for the future. By researching and analyzing where our state money is allocated versus where it is needed, by calling for a shift in our economy from one that supports capitalism and war profiteers to one that promotes community, health and peace, we are working towards a more peaceful Vermont. Now, more than ever, we need to be aware of economics.

In all of these ways we can see the tangible steps Vermonters are taking to create the other world we know is possible. As I reflect on the past 365 days, I am proud of what we have accomplished. While the administration and president will be changing, and this is something we are proud and hopeful of, our work is still not done. We may not agree with all of the decisions of the new administration, yet hope was seen when Obama supported the factory workers takeover in Chicago. So let's continue to act against what isn't working while we build what we do want to see. To quote one of my favorite bands "turn frustration into inspiration".

Happy New Year! 



Economic Justice

Stagnant Wages Set the Stage for Financial Crisis

By Colin Robinson

For the nearly 6,000 Vermonters who earn \$8 per hour or less and the nearly 7,000 Vermonters who receive tips, January 1st is more than the beginning of a new year -- it is the day they get a much deserved raise. On January 1st the Vermont minimum wage will raise to \$8.06 per hour and the minimum wage for tipped workers will rise to \$3.91 per hour. For Vermont's lowest paid workers this annual cost of living increase is a continued step in the right direction towards ensuring that all Vermonters can meet their basic needs and move towards a livable wage. It is also significant that the Vermont minimum wage is breaking \$8 for the first time and that the increase truly reflects the increase in food, fuel and other costs that we all have been experiencing.

While we are fortunate to have the fifth highest minimum wage in the country, the reality remains that tens of thousands of Vermonters and their families, working at and even above the minimum wage, remain in poverty. It is also important to recognize that the picture of Vermonters earning below \$8 per hour is not one of high school student at fast food restaurants. According to 1999-2001 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, 60% of all workers earning less than \$8.00/hour are over 30 years old. This is a very different picture than what we are usually told, but sadly not surprising. It also has a direct connection to the current financial crisis.

As we all know we are in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and it didn't take the government officially declaring a recession for Vermonters to know that we have been in one for awhile. So, what caused this financial crisis? What we hear on the news it that it was sub-prime mortgages, irresponsible borrowing and lending, a perfect storm.

Without a doubt these current catalyses brought down the economic

house of cards. However, as the vast majority of us know from our stagnant paychecks, sagging 401(k)s and skyrocketing health insurance premiums and deductibles, the stage for this financial crisis has been built over the past 30 years.

So what connection does the minimum wage have to the current financial crisis? The minimum wage has the important function of setting the wage floor upon which all wages are based. As the minimum wage goes so do all other wages -- it goes up, so do other wages, it remains stagnant so do other wages, it goes down so do other wages. For the past 40 years the minimum wage has been losing value in terms of real purchasing power. In 1968, the federal minimum wage was \$1.60 per hour, but when adjusted for inflation in 2008 dollars that would be \$9.96. So while here in Vermont we are lucky to have a minimum wage that has gone up consistently and is significantly higher than the current federal minimum wage of \$6.55 per hour, low-wage

Vermonters still have 20% less purchasing power than if the minimum wage had retained its 1968 value.

The effect has been two fold. First Vermont's inflation adjusted median household income since the last recession in 1990 has only risen by 5%. If we look at a period from 1981 to 2003, the bottom 20% of Vermont households have only seen a 7% increase in inflation adjusted household income, while the top 5% have seen an increase of 84%. The lowest income Vermonters, not surprisingly, are doing the worst. Secondly, as folks on the bottom have seen their wages remain stagnant or minimally increase there has been a greater reliance on credit cards and other debt to pay for basic needs like food, medical expenses, clothing, fuel, etc.

This decrease in purchasing power of the wage floor -- the minimum wage -- has been the base upon which the current financial crisis was set. As more and more emphasis was put on an economy that worked for the few rather than ensuring all folks are able to meet their basic needs, most of us lost ground. It is exciting that Vermont continues to be a leader and that at least 13,000 Vermonters will get a raise, but we still have a long way to go to recover from the 30 year financial slide. ☹

■ Updates

- The Vermont Livable Wage Campaign will be on Vermont Public Television throughout the month of January. Watch for us on VPT and see a short PSA focusing on livable wages and the minimum wage. Tune in on Thursday, January 29th at 8pm for *Public Square*, a live call in show on issues effecting Vermonters. The VLWC will lead the conversation on the hour long segment on livable wages in Vermont.
- On January 15th the Joint Fiscal Office will release the new and updated *Basic Needs Budget Report* to the legislature. The *Basic Needs Budget Report* is the source of the livable wage figures and will look slightly different than they have in past years. Look for the updated numbers and a link to the report on our website, www.vtlivablewage.org. We hope you can help us publicize these new numbers in your communities.
- Our Paid Sick Day for Vermont Campaign continues to move forward, but we need your help. In the month of January we are hoping folks can write letters to the editors of your local papers in support of Paid Sick Days. Please let us know if you can help! We have talking points and contact information for your local papers. Give Colin a call at 802.863.2345 x8 or email livablewage@pjcv.org.



Robin's Nest

Finding the Door Out of War

By Robin Lloyd

I first met Jon Turner when he moved in next door. A nice looking guy with piercing questioning eyes, his car, initially, seemed more revealing than he was. The license plate carried a PH (and next to it a small purple heart); on the dashboard, an American flag folded into an isosceles triangle, as presented to grieving families; and on the back window a decal: “In memory of Cpl. Richard Z. James, May 13, 2006.”

Jon is a former marine who has joined the Green Door Collective on Pine Street, started in 2002 by Drew Matott and Drew Cameron, that creates ‘combat paper’ by grinding up uniforms and transforming the resulting mush into paper – creating a personal slate for poetry, graphics and prose.

Indeed transformation is the spiritual and psychological glue that inspires and justifies the project.

The identifying graphic of the combat paper project is a reverse image of a man holding something or pulling something from his body. Is he taking his skin off, or pulling off a scab? Closer scrutiny reveals that he is pulling off strips of his uniform. This image effectively portrays the project; the painfulness – but ultimately the joyful release – of stripping oneself of a former all consuming identity.

I talked with Jon last week and asked him why he joined the military. “I come from a loving military family,” he began. “I signed up at 17. I didn’t join for any reason: it was my time.”

Two weeks after graduation from special training, in February 2004, his unit was unexpectedly sent to Haiti. President

Aristide had just been overthrown. After several weeks stationed at the airport, they were sent down to the port. “The place was a mess. People were looting the large shipping containers. My platoon was first in. It was an eye opener. We slept in the container boxes. There were flies in the daytime and mosquitoes at



night. And for a few hours at dusk there were both out there. Finally they brought us cots. We had to sleep with our gear on. That’s when my insomnia started.

“I remember once passing by this big puddle. It was neon green. A huge pig was sleeping in the middle of it. I saw a woman bend down and start drinking the water.”

His unit returned to the States in August, and shipped out to Iraq seven months later, right before the Iraqi elections. At that point, he said, “I believed we were supposed to be there.”

His two tours of duty took him to Faluja and Ramadi. “In Ramadi our main area of operations was the government buildings in the center of the city. The last few weeks we were there we blew up a lot of buildings. The demo guys set up the C4. Three blocks, including some

government ministries, became rubble. These were buildings that had housed the insurgents.”

A turning point for him came when a friend died. “We were doing overwatches in Ramadi which means spending a night in a building. It was supposed to be for an hour, but it turned into 24. I couldn’t go because of my ankle. I stayed by the radio, listening. First there were pot shots, then I could hear they were taking fire. They called in a ‘KIA’. I heard the staff sergeant say ‘no, he’s still breathing.’ We found out it was James. I was pissed off because I wasn’t there. I was the one who had to go to Camp Ramadi to identify him and accompany the body. They opened up the cooler and pulled out the body bag. When they unzipped it, I saw just his face – so white. He was dead. His forehead had caved in. Then we zipped him back up. We went through the ritual of guards accompanying us as we rolled the body out to the helicopter. I put him on the bird and strapped him in.

“That was one of the first events that really stuck with me. I had to speak at his memorial service. During that time I went through a lot of emotions – wanting revenge and wondering why we were there.”

Because of his bad ankle, Jon couldn’t patrol on foot. “I was a gunner in a truck. One of the scariest places was this massive intersection. It was always planted with IEDs. I experienced two IEDs. I was hit by a piece of a mortar in the jaw.”

As a result of his injury he received the purple heart. “They gave me a purple heart, but then I had to purchase one for \$36: a shiny piece of brass and ribbon made in China. I got seven medals in all. I had to pay \$94 for the stack to put them on my chest, and \$300 for the dress uniform.”

He did a lot of stuff that seemed pointless. Even his superiors asked, “Why are we doing this? It’s putting our boys at risk.” By the end, he continued, “everybody wanted to go home. No one talked about how much bullshit there was. People just kept their mouth shut. When I got back from Ramadi in October of ‘06 I was upset with people who I felt were not supporting the troops or the war. During my last year in the Marine

Corps I became a recluse. I had to get away from base. I spent time at the beach. I needed to leave the south.”

He came to Vermont with his ex-wife in 2006. “We visited the Peace & Justice Center. I looked at a lot of cards, but I was having a hard time being there. My ex-wife helped me think in the right direction. I’ve loved nature and being peaceful, but for a few years I was blind. It took a while to loosen up.”

Jon says, “I have gone on a 180 now. I am asking questions.” He had friends in Burlington, and some of them were involved with the Combat Paper Project. “The first night up here I started shredding uniforms.” Sixty-three vets are now part of the project, from a wide variety of wars. Three work with the project full time: Matott, Cameron, and Jon.

“My dad came to a reading and contributed a uniform. Also my grandfather. I’m proud of my dad – we’ve come a long way together. He has seen the stages I’ve gone through.

“On tour, people are pretty amazed at what we’re doing. Handmade paper is a lost art. We’re taking and transforming it – the uniform – to a new medium of art work. You can write on it what you were doing when you wore the paper. It’s cathartic.”

One art project John has posted on the website is a series of five prints. The first



portrays a dog tag and chain silhouette at top center on a piece of ‘combat paper’ made from his uniform: the

chain forming a kind of visual spiritual dance around the tag. The next three sheets show the descent of the tag down the page from its first more hopeful configuration; in #4, shockingly, the tag is covered in red, that spurts out into the darkness around it: and finally, in #5 the body of the tag has been subsumed by an American flag, which itself is disintegrating.

My take on this series is: how do you grieve for a comrade when his death is officially justified as patriotic but you know he died in a senseless war? Grief becomes striated with anger, and there is a feeling of impotence at the injustice.

Jon gets some disability payments, but he still has bouts of depression, anxiety, rage, and insomnia. He was once on six different medications, but now he refuses to take any. He is looking for a shaman. In the meantime, he is struggling for self transformation through art. 

■ Statement by Jon Michael Turner

From the website GreenDoorsStudio.net, 2/08

After being discharged from the Marine Corps in 2007, I moved to Burlington to escape from the realities of military life and society in general. Due to my deployments to Haiti, Fallujah, and Ramadi, I suffered from post-traumatic stress from the atrocities of war as an infantryman. Although I have turned down the wrong paths before, art, poetry, and performances have now become my way of letting go of my past; a time in my life that was filled with hate and destruction. Even though I was misplaced for 4 years, my writings (as harsh as they can be) and artwork have made impacts on the people who care to observe. They also have reminded me of who I was before I signed on that solid black line. I will never be able to go back in time to change things. All I can do is look back, learn, and progress forward.

Since I started working at the Green Door Studio (GDS) in August of 2007, I have been able to start a new chapter in my life; a chapter that is filled with smiles from letting go. From the first snip of scissors to my uniforms, I knew that paper and book making would turn into one of the many positive paths that I now follow. Taking a piece of clothing that was created for something negative and turning it into something positive, something beautiful, something that other people can understand, is my way of letting other people know my story. A story that needs to be heard. Not just by the art community, but by everyone. We, as veterans of all wars, have seen what really happens. And though not everyone can experience this, (nor should they), it is up to us to get the truth out. My way of doing so is accomplished through my art. My books and paper are made from the uniforms I wore on my deployments overseas. I only have so many uniforms that I can transform; but it is my job to teach others what we do at GDS, that life should be filled with beauty and not hate. In paper I find beauty. Minds are blown away when they become aware that us radical veteran artists are making paper from our clothing. Some may not see it as art, but in my eyes, as well as many others, it is. Different people have different talents, be it sculpting, woodworking, or film making, but paper and poetry happen to be the art forms I choose to embrace.” 

Green Door Studio will set up their paper making equipment in the Firehouse Gallery starting Friday, February 20. Workshops will be held on paper- and printmaking. More info: Chris Thompson, Curator, at 865-5392.



On Sunday, December 7, members of the Burlington High School Amnesty International chapter reminded Christmas shoppers of the need to close Guantanamo. The hooded figures, in the center, wearing orange jumpsuits, represented Guantanamo prisoners. Carolyn Smiles on the right is the new Vermont area coordinator.

Reflecting on 30 years with the PJC

Gene Bergman:

If you're lucky you get to work on issues and initiatives that make a difference in peoples' lives and the life of communities. For 28 of its 30 years, I've been lucky to do that by working with the members and staff of the Peace & Justice Center.

I was lucky to work on the ultimate issue, the Fate of the Earth as Jonathan Schell termed the nuclear weapons issue, in the early 1980s when Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld decided nuclear war was winnable and embarked on an insane arms race with the Soviet Union.

As Soviet leader Gorbachev acknowledged, only the mass movement of the world's peoples, through initiatives like the nuclear freeze, ended that insanity. I, like so many others, was lucky that the PJC (then the Burlington Peace Coalition) was organizing activities in 1981 that I could get involved in. The PJC helped unleash citizen activity at Town Meetings like never before, making the nuclear freeze in 1981 and 1982 a local issue with a national impact when 182 Vermont municipalities passed freeze resolutions.

When Wendy Coe organized northern Vermont to bring thousands to NYC for the million person march on June 12, 1982 and Dr. Helen Caldicott honored Robin Lloyd and Jim Geier at a packed Patrick Gym at UVM, you knew the impact was also global.

I was lucky to be on the newsletter committee and the PJC board when we began working on the essential local issue, the Livable Wage, in the 1990s. It is now part of our language but it was not always so. Poverty in Vermont was just expected, part of our lot for being in the hinterlands, until the PJC, under the leadership of Executive Director, Ellen Kahler, initiated the *Vermont Job Gap Study* to reveal the fundamental unfairness of working 40 hours a week and still not be able to pay the bills.

It took from the mid-1990s to just two years ago for Vermont's minimum wage to be raised from the depths and be indexed to inflation. It is a privilege to have supported that work and the economic justice staff like Jen Mathews, Emma

Mulvaney-Stanek, Colin Robinson and their community based Vermont Livable Wage Coalition.

The PJC is part of a vital civil society. It has answered the call when historic events beckoned us to take historic steps. Its strength, it seems to me, has been in having worked effectively inside and outside the political and economic power structure, engaging in strategic pragmatism, pushing, helping, and tapping into peoples' needs and moods. When times forced us to adapt, we adapted.

The move to Burlington's Church St. brought us into the mainstream. The earliest Fair Trade practices at the Peace & Justice Store helped start a movement that is just taking off 20 years after Alice Christian, a PJS coordinator, began the work that Kathy Bouton and Jennifer Ray continue today.

The counter-recruitment work of Jen Berger fills a vast void at a time when militarization of society is rampant. All while she continues the essential anti-war work done by past organizers, Kim Ead, Marc Estrin, Jean Pineo, Bob Fisher and Greg Guma. These are things we all can take pride in doing.

When Bill Clinton was elected, there was a fall off in support for the PJC. People thought he would take care of everything for us. We learned quickly that was a false promise. Our weakness hurt. We and other organizations like us needed to be stronger to defeat NAFTA and welfare cutbacks and to get national health care. Even the best politicians need civil society, organizations of the people, to push them towards their better selves.

What is our calling now, at the start of Barak Obama's historic presidency? This is the challenge we face at age 30. Will we be strong enough to not let him get stuck in an imperial and hubristic war in Afghanistan? Will we be strong enough to show him and Jim Douglas that economic progress requires economic justice, livable wages, universal health care, and an empowered working and middle class? The time is ours to seize. I'd be really lucky if we did. I think we can. ☺

Joseph Gainza:

(AFSC-VT Field Organizer)

When I look beyond the windows of the AFSC office and think about who in Vermont is doing what for justice and peace, I see the faces of many individuals and think of the names of several organizations. We are blessed in this small state with an abundance of activists working in the vineyards of justice and pressing out the good wine of peace.

There are people in Vermont engaged in just about every worthwhile struggle imaginable. And sometime in their activism over the last 30 years, I would bet, most of them have been inspired by, learned skills from, got their facts straight through, had their efforts supported by, or simply been infected with the energy emanating from 21 Church St. Where else can we get most any book, magazine, video, DVD, CD, article or just good advice on movements and movement building than from the Peace and Justice Center? Debts of this magnitude cannot be repaid, they can only be gratefully acknowledged. ☺

Serena Chaudhry:

(PJC Executive Director 2006-2008)

In the fall of 2006, staff and board started actively brainstorming around the PJC's 30th anniversary celebration. I distinctly remember wanting to integrate the PJC's 30th with the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States. In the fall of 2006, I was hopeful that these respective celebrations would organically mesh. Little did I know that they would be so profoundly integrated. The election and inauguration of Barack Hussein Obama illustrates movement towards the equity and justice for which the PJC has fought for the past 30 years. Obama's grassroots strategies ARE the strategies that the PJC has employed diligently over the past three decades. Obama's inauguration and its recognition of community organizing exemplify the PJC's power of everyday people to make change.

I am hopeful about the next four years. I am inspired about the next thirty! Thank you PJC members, staff and board for your commitment. Thank you for leading our country and our world forward. ☺

Ellen Kahler:

(PJC Executive Director 1990-2002)

What I was always amazed and humbled by during my tenure at the PJC was the level of dedication our members had to the organization.

Through all the changes and broadening of programmatic focus (e.g. economic and racial justice, VT Job Gap Study), our members stuck with us and supported us in economic down and boom times, during war and peace times. Because the PJC is always there to respond to injustices in our community, nation and world, it's heartening to know that our members are right there with us.

And of course, over the years I got to work with amazing co-workers and terrific board members! Congratulations on turning 30 PJC ... it hardly seems possible that so much time has passed!!

Judith Joseph:

I stumbled into the Peace & Justice Center my first week in Vermont 17 years ago. The staff back then made me feel welcomed into the progressive community of Burlington and the many wonderful staff since then have always been there for me personally and for my group, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Thanks and congratulations!

Vivian Mason:

("Conversations on Race")

How do I reflect upon what the Peace & Justice Center does and contributes and stands for in our community? I believe that this amazing grassroots organization is instrumental in our lives by raising awareness, supporting inclusiveness, challenging "old time" thoughts and replacing them with fresh and vital ideas with tireless folks' participation in Human Rights, truth and fairness, conferences, vigils, conversations, voicing peoples rights on equality and standards that we all, as humans, deserve just by virtue of the fact that we breath the same air. And the Peace and Justice Center advocates for us all. I, for one, am a more contented person, knowing that in our small, but mighty Queen City, we are connected by common values and visions in a place we can visit, participate in and call our own Center, for our Peace and Justice. Happy 30th Birthday, and many more, PJC.

Peace & Justice Center Welcomes New Development Director

Anise Richey has joined the staff of the Peace & Justice Center as our new Development Director. She comes to the Peace & Justice Center with a background in non-profit administration and fundraising coupled with project management experience within the private sector.

"It's great to be back in the non-profit world and especially to be involved with such a dedicated staff and membership."

Anise has been a Burlington resident for over nine years and has developed strong ties to the charitable community in Vermont. She currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for Vermont CARES and regularly volunteers for that agency. She has also previously served on the Board of Directors for the R.U.1.2? Community Center and she and her partner Meg are the volunteer caretakers of the Vermont Queer Archives. She is also a member worker at City Market.

"It's very important to me to stay involved with the local community. Making connections with people participating in programs or becoming members is what ultimately what motivates me to do this work - knowing that the Peace & Justice Center can have a positive affect on someone because of the work I chose

to do."

It was this desire to contribute more to the greater good that motivated Anise to leave her job in the private sector and return to non-profit work.

Having worked in administration at the Community Research Initiative on AIDS and the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in New York City in the '90's, Anise made the move to Vermont with Meg in 1999 to take some time to switch gears and recover from the stresses of living in the city. She soon got an entry level job at Burton

Snowboards and for the next nine years worked her way around that company from customer service to logistics to product management.

"I got a lot of great opportunities at Burton and was able to really hone my project management skills there. The additional insights of how a for-profit consumer products company works have also added to my abilities to organize. But there came a point when it wasn't enough to just be successful at the job. I needed to feel like that success could contribute to something bigger than the company's bottom line - it had to give back to the community."

We are glad to have Anise with us and encourage you all to get to know her.



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 <p>Old Fashioned Chicken Noodle Soup</p> <p><small>Ingredients: Water, Chicken, Egg, Flour, Onion, Garlic, Carrots, Cornstarch, Salt, White Peppercorns, Bay Leaf, Chicken Stock, Oil, Salt</small></p> <p><small>Contains egg and wheat</small></p> <p>Chicken Noodle</p>	 <p>Minestrone Soup</p> <p><small>Ingredients: Water, Olive Oil, Onion, Garlic, Carrots, Beans, Cornstarch, Salt, White Peppercorns, Bay Leaf, Chicken Stock, Oil, Salt</small></p> <p><small>Contains wheat</small></p> <p>Minestrone</p>	 <p>Seafood Gumbo</p> <p><small>Ingredients: Olive Oil, Water, Shrimp, Crab, Chicken, Onions, Carrots, Celery, White Peppercorns, Bay Leaf, Chicken Stock, Oil, Salt</small></p> <p><small>Contains shellfish and wheat</small></p> <p>Seafood Gumbo</p>	 <p>Tomato Basil Soup</p> <p><small>Ingredients: Tomatoes, Water, Cream, Basil, Salt, Oil</small></p> <p><small>Contains dairy</small></p> <p>Tomato Basil</p>
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CALENDAR

January 2009

[4] Sunday

- 2pm Vets for Peace meet at PJC.

[6] Tuesday

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

[7] Wednesday

- 7-8:30pm Conversations on Race: An Evening of Conversation with Hal Colston, founder of *Good News Garage* and *Neighborkeepers* program in Chittenden County. Hal's presentation will focus on exploring dimensions of white privilege, then sharing our thoughts and stories with each other. At the 1st Unitarian Universalist Society, top of Church St, Burlington. More info: S. Linskey 879-0576, hhskl47@verizon.net or V. Mason 324-5612, vhm84@hotmail.com.

[8] Thursday

- 5:30-7pm Fold Cranes for Peace. Lessons in origami crane folding and reflection/self-education about disarmament with WILPF members. This is part of an on-going project to collect 1,000 cranes to send to Hiroshima. All are Welcome. Also on Jan 15 at 4pm. Information: Kathie: voigtwal@aol.com or Margaret: 848-7552.

[12] Monday

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

[14] Wednesday

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

[15] Thursday

- Attorney Robert Rachlin: Challenges of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the Obama Era. Firehouse Gallery, Church St., Burlington: Reception at 5:30, Lecture/Discussion at 6 pm.

- 7- 8:30pm Central Vermont Peace & Justice Group meeting at the UU Church, Rutland. info@centralvermontpeace.org

[20] Tuesday

- Inauguration Day for Barack Obama. There are two buses from Vermont going to Washington DC. From Burlington: valerie@burlingtontelecom.net or from Montpelier: lewis@lewisfranco.com

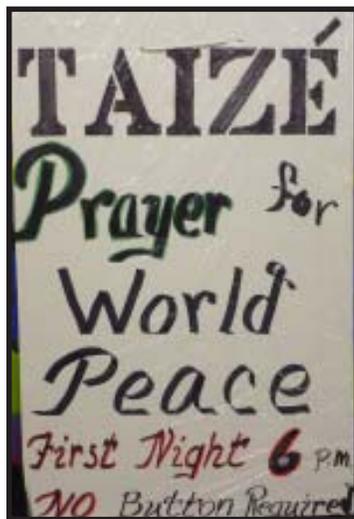
[30] Friday

- 7-11pm The Peace & Justice Center's 30th Anniversary Celebration at City Hall, Burlington. Free/donations welcome. 30 cake parade. Dance to the Starline Rhythym Boys.

February 2009

[4] Wednesday

- 7-8:30pm Conversations on Race: An Evening of Conversation with Denise Dunbar, Director of Reading to End Racism in Chittenden County, a childrens' educational school reading program to support conversations on racial awareness and understanding through literature. At the South Burlington Police Dept Building, Dorset St, across from the South Burlington Library, just north of Kennedy Drive. More info: S. Linskey 879-0576, hhskl47@verizon.net or V. Mason 324-5612, vhm84@hotmail.com.



Pax Christi Burlington has offered an ecumenical prayer service for world peace with the music from the Taizé Community at Burlington's First Night for the past 6 years. The Taizé chant is accompanied by harp music. Hundreds of people fill the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. Other sponsors are the Cathedral Church of St Paul and First United Methodist Church of Burlington, Sisters of Mercy, and other area churches.

For more calendar events, join our email action alerts. For Peace & Human Rights, email peace@pjcvt.org. For the Vermont Livable Wage Campaign, email livablewage@pjcvt.org

Join us to fold Peace Cranes in the Spirit of Sadako

We want to send 1,000 peace cranes to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial in 2009. The cranes we make will also decorate the Peace & Justice Center's 30th Anniversary Celebration!

Where: P&J Center, 21 Church Street, Burlington

When: January 8 from 5:30-7pm and January 15 from 4-6pm

We can show you how to fold. It's fun and we need YOU

Info: Margaret at 848-7552 or Kathie: voigtwal@aol.com

Cry Congo

By Robin Lloyd

Thirty-four Congolese and US women met in Winooski in early December to listen and learn about the war in the Congo. Our gathering was organized by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Anti-Violence Partnership and Women's Center at UVM, and the Association for Africans Living in Vermont whose Program Specialist, Naweza Muderhwa, was most helpful in making it happen.

One woman after another spoke – in Swahili, French, or English – of the terror faced by some of their loved ones back home; and the long trauma of their own search for safety – leaving their homes for a refugee camp, and finally coming to America. Most stories were personal, but one woman stood and spoke softly in generalities which were no less poignant: “When the war came, we were weak” she said, pausing after each sentence, “we had no way to defend ourselves.... We didn't know our rights... They ignore us, like we didn't exist.... It looks like nobody is seeing nothing.... everywhere is war and nobody cares.”

An older woman pointed out that the rebel leader Nkunda was trained by the Rwandan army. “Rwanda is a small country, but it is stronger than the Congo. Rwanda is now like Europe, with good roads and business, and American support. The international community knows who Nkunda is, but no one does anything about him. And the Congolese army doesn't have weapons and is under-

paid.” Naweza added, “It's all about natural resources.

Perhaps with a new US president, something can be done.”

But what? The women asked that we help them set up meetings with our Congressmen. Two bills relevant to the war in the Congo might be brought up in the next Congress. One addresses resource piracy and is called the ‘conflict coltan’ bill.

The eastern Congo reportedly holds over 70% of the world's coltan, a rare mineral used in Sony playstations, laptops, and mobile phones. Militias fight to control the coltan mines, and force villagers to extract the mineral in order to trade it for weapons. Senate Bill 3058 will enforce restrictions to make sure we don't end up with ‘conflict coltan’ in our mobile phones.

The other bill of interest is the International Violence Against Women Act (S.2279). This bill, if passed as written by Joe Biden and Richard Lugar, is an unprecedented effort by the US to address violence against women globally. It directs the US government to “create a comprehensive, 5 year strategy to reduce violence in 10-20 diverse countries that have severe levels of violence against women and girls. To achieve this goal, the Act authorizes more than \$1 billion over 5 years in US assistance to support international programs that prevent and respond to violence.”

Meanwhile, here at home, a powerful opportunity will present itself to help the Congo: specifically the raped women of the Congo. Eve Ensler, writer and impresario of *The Vagina Monologues*, has visited the Congo several

times, and was deeply impressed by the work of a gynecologist at a hospital in the town of Bukavu who is helping the damaged and suffering women get their vaginas back in shape. She is asking that all productions of the *Monologues* this February be dedicated to Congolese women. Proceeds will support Congolese women and men who are demanding an end to rape.

Carol Spelke of UVM attended the gathering and is working with others to stage three benefit productions of the *Vagina Monologues* (February 13 -15) at UVM's Davis Center. Tickets are \$10 in advance, and \$15 at the door. Ticket sales begin in January (see side bar). Local Congolese women will be invited to attend as honored guests. 



photo: Margaret Harrington

What are the Vagina Monologues?

The Vagina Monologues by Eve Ensler is a revolutionary play, which reveals one of the world's most hushed topics: vaginas. In this play women from all walks of life share their most amazing and heart wrenching stories, which are performed by women all over the world.

V-Day Schedule of Events at UVM:

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

Film screening of **Until the Violence Stops** with panel discussion. CC Theater in Billings, UVM from 6:00-9:00pm (This is subject to change due to the availability of the space). This film shows how Eve Ensler's solo show *The Vagina Monologues* became the movement called **V-Day**.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

A Passion Party will be held in the John Dewey Lounge from 7:00-9:00pm. This event is a fundraiser for this year's V-Day campaign. We will be auctioning off donated merchandise such as non-toxic sex toys, lingerie, Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, and many other fun items. Auction tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 tickets for \$5.00.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

V-Day Spotlight Teach-In is a collaborative event with Women at Noon. This event will be held at the Women's Center (34 S Williams St) at 12:00pm (noon). We invite any and all who are interested in understanding more about the crisis going on in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14, & SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15

The Benefit Production of The Vagina Monologues will be performed in the Davis Center: on Friday and Saturday night in the Livak Ballroom and the Sunday Performance will be held in the Silver Maple Ballroom. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance or \$15.00 at the door. Tickets will be on sale at the Women's Center, the Davis Center, and at the Peace & Justice Store. 



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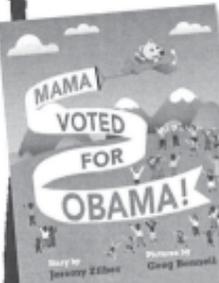
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