The Impact of a Gift

By Amy Crosswhite, Peace & Justice Store and Fair Trade Programs Manager

It is wonderful to see the look on a child’s face as they squeeze and shake a wrapped gift, guessing at what long-awaited prize is inside. Finding the perfect gift, for anyone, is rewarding, but who benefits? The recipient, who is the focus and reason why the gift is purchased, gains from the immediate material addition. However, there is someone else who profits during the rush to procure perfect presents: the manufacturer/producer.

So, who are these manufacturers/producers that are benefitting from your spending? Let’s take a look at one example. The Institute for Global Labor and Human Rights released an article last March about the slave-like conditions at Jeans Plus Ltd in Bangladesh. Over 1,000 workers, mostly young women, are being forced to toil 94-101 hour weeks for the corporation Inditex. While Inditex is one of the world’s largest fashion retailers, whose sales revenues were $22.9892 billion in 2013, a senior sewing operator earns just 41 cents (U.S.) per hour. These workers are not just lacking compensation, they are beaten when they do not meet production goals and they are robbed of their “earned leave” (vacation) money.

As a counterpoint, let’s look at a fair trade organization in India called Maher. Maher gives safe housing to 850 children, 300 women, and 21 men currently, and to a total number of 4,819 people over the years. All the women receive job training, as housemothers, social workers or artisans. Maher’s microloan cooperative has about 8,000 members who have purchased tools and supplies to start their own businesses. When we buy goods from Maher (and businesses like it), we are not only avoiding making people’s lives worse through the harm of sweatshops but actually make the world better by broadening the reach of Sister Lucy’s mission.

A third option is local businesses. These are run by our neighbors and friends. Shopping at farmers markets, cooperatives or artisan collectives ensures that the money is going directly to the producer. So, besides making life-long connections, you are also creating jobs. According to Sustainable Connections, small local businesses are the largest employer nationally and in our community and provide the most jobs to residents.

Before you buy gifts this year, I encourage you to think beyond the recipient. Do some digging and find out where your money is going, who benefits and who is harmed. Do the establishments you shop at force workers to live out their lives in poverty or do they provide a way out?
From the Director, Rachel Siegel

I am thrilled to show off our Educational Program Catalog as an insert in this newsletter. Please pull it out, consider hosting an event, and pass it along to someone else. We want to partner with people around the state to share this work. These programs have been made by volunteers, interns, staff and board members whose experience, commitment and knowledge are exemplified in the programs. Thank you to everyone who helped develop these events and workshops – there are too many of you to name – but especially thank you to Kyle Silliman-Smith, our Program Manager who developed many and oversees the implementation of almost all of them.

I also want to note that October is Fair Trade Month, the beginning of the so-called “holiday season,” and often the beginning of a long run of increased chocolate consumption and retail purchases. Please keep the Peace & Justice Store in mind if you are buying Halloween candy, holiday gifts, or need some coffee to keep you going through it all!

Lastly, I want to mention the PJC’s Ed Everts Social Justice Activist Award Ceremony on November 14th. This year the awards will be given by Allen Gilbert, Vermont ACLU director, to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform, and to Eugene Jarecki, Waitsfield resident and documentarian known for his film about prisons, “The House I Live In.” It’ll be a great party with a silent auction, cash bar and a dance party after the program.

We are fortunate to have three new board members who bring much wisdom, experience and commitment to the PJC. It is with much gratitude that we welcome Maleka, Jas, and Coralí. Come to our annual meeting on October 24th to officially vote them onto the board. Stay tuned for details!

Maleka Clarke is a single parent to an amazing 10 year old. She works on multiple Burlington School District initiatives aimed at parent, student, and staff involvement and empowerment. Maleka served as the PTO President of the Sustainability Academy in Burlington. She is a Registered Nurse working to improve children’s health and well-being. As a Governor’s appointee to the Building Bright Futures State Advisory board, Maleka helps shape statewide policy. She is a member of the Champlain Valley Down’s Syndrome Group. Her most important role is as “a mother and advocate for my amazing child. My journey with him has shaped me into a fearless civil servant.” Maleka is a person who truly see the interconnectedness of life and our mission at the PJC.

Jas Wheeler has worked with youth and adults experiencing homelessness at Spectrum and COTS in Burlington and also in Cleveland, Ohio. They currently work at Howard Center with individuals recovering from substance abuse. Jas identifies as a trans Afro-latin@ and is committed to uplifting the voices of QTPOC. They helped start the BTV Street Chronicle, a self-published zine that features stories, poems, statements, and art by homeless youth to share their stories with other Burlington residents whose lives are drastically different. Jas is an avid gardener, farmer, and a grassroots organizer of the finest order.

Olga Corali (Cotrina Ling) Bisbee grew up in Lima, Perú and moved to the USA in 1999. Her love for languages and cultures encouraged her to study Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, English, French and Quechua (Peruvian Native Language). She is driven by collective action that gives emphasis to social service, diversity, inclusion, education, peace-building and sustainability. Corali received her MS in Sustainable Development from SIT. She has worked as a Diversity Outreach Specialist, advocate, interpreter, and liaison, as well as an organizer in the Peruvian rainforest with cocoa and coffee farmers in agro-cooperatives. She lives with her husband, daughter, and puppy in Hinesburg. She loves to spend time with friends & family. She enjoys traveling, dancing, listening to music, swimming, running, skiing, and practicing yoga and meditation.

Turn to page 9 to read about our new PJC staff member, Dylan Kelley.
Revisiting Columbus Day in Vermont

By Beverly Little Thunder, PJC Board Chair

As the leaves begin to turn and we head into fall, I find myself thinking of the ensuing “Holidays” ahead. As a Native American woman I especially think about Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. I sort of understand the intent behind the Thanksgiving Day event, after all, our people celebrated the fall harvest long before European arrival. But I find myself perplexed over the Columbus Day celebration. Have you ever wondered why Columbus was chosen to represent our incredible Italian population and their contributions to this country?

It has me wondering how much people even know about the man Columbus. What do you know? There is the fact that he managed to talk Queen Isabella into funding the trip to locate gold and spices. Then he got lost on the way. When he was informed of the sighting of land by a crew member he said he had already seen it; this after promising the first person to sight land 50 pieces of gold as a reward.

The land he wrecked his ship upon was not the continent of America, but a Caribbean island. Once there, he was assisted by the Native Taino people to salvage his ship’s cargo, his men were cared for and fed. In return he enslaved and murdered them.

He kidnapped over one hundred people and took them back to Spain in slavery to prove to the Queen that he had indeed “discovered new lands for her to claim. He began slave trade to European countries, but because so many Native people died during transport, slaves were sought from Africa.

During his reign of terror, he encouraged and participated in the rape and murder of women and girls as young as nine. Arawak babies were used as food for the hunting dogs, which were then set on anyone who attempted to run away, including children. One Catholic priest who witnessed the carnage, wrote of the dogs tearing bodies apart. Columbus himself ordered body parts such as ears, noses, and hands cut off if orders he had given were not adhered to by the Native people.

So this is the man we have created a holiday for? I believe we should look at this holiday in a realistic sense. We need to have conversations among ourselves and within the local Abenaki communities. How does celebrating this holiday affect our children? Should we be looking at changing Columbus Day to another day of celebration such as Abenaki History Day? Isn’t it about time to tell the truth about figures we have been brainwashed into honoring? The truth in history needs to be told. This is one small way we can work to help heal the wounds that so many people have suffered in the development of the land we all call home now.

It is time to start invigorating the conversation. I invite you to respond with your own ideas and suggestions about Columbus Day.

“To be unacquainted with events which took place long before our birth is to always remain a child. Intelligent existence loses its meaning without the aid of history to bring recent events into direct continuity with the past.” – Cicero 46 BC

Beverly Little Thunder is a member of the Standing Rock Lakota band in North Dakota, a great-grandmother, grandmother, Lesbian and activist for 40 years. She lives in Huntington, Vermont where she guides ceremonies and teaches traditions passed on to her.

By Liz Mariani

I am an Italian-American. I want to thank the Peace & Justice Center for its amazing work promoting an active peace. I have a concern. Perhaps, we can connect on this issue. With the help of public school history books and a federal holiday, I was taught Columbus was a hero. To celebrate Columbus, a man who fed native children to dogs, is unfathomable. This celebration gives false information to children. It harms and confuses children, especially Abenaki children. For some people, this celebration causes anxiety every October. For others, their activist feathers get ruffled, but resettles after the holiday passes. This time, I propose we take this conversation beyond the month of October.

How would you feel if a formal redirection of the holiday celebrating Columbus was proposed towards a day more celebratory, reflective and respectful of indigenous peoples and specifically the Abenaki? I invite you to read “8 Myths and Atrocities About Christopher Columbus” from Indian Country Today online as you clarify your thoughts. Thank you for taking time to consider this relevant and sensitive issue.

Elizabeth Mariani is a poet, teaching artist and mindfulness educator currently living in Burlington, Vermont.

To join these conversations about changing Columbus Day in years ahead, please email info@pjcvt.org
What is the True Cost?
By Krista Cantrell, PJC Intern

As global awareness of worker exploitation has increased, Fair Trade product sales have grown as well. Much of this growth can be attributed to the successful efforts of activists to expose “free trade” agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the recently passed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). These misleading trade deals are anything but free, as they enslave developing countries economically. Under the guise of the free market system, corporations are permitted to exploit worker’s labor in order to gain profits.

The dichotomy between free and fair trade can be broken down by how we define freedom. Free trade refers to freedom from the “threat” of external policy restraints, but allows the mistreatment of people and the environment. Fair trade, however, generates personal freedom by enforcing certain practices which allow everyone their full human dignity.

This season, consider the true cost of what you are purchasing. There are important layers to peel back to uncover the full price. For example, a free trade t-shirt may cost $10 for me, but its profits are distributed unevenly, and might prevent the family that produced the t-shirt from accessing clean drinking water. On the opposite end, a fair trade certified t-shirt may cost $12 for me, but its profits are used to help the producer’s children go to school. The former is exploitative while the latter is empowering.

Thus, true cost is far greater than the price on a label. True cost reflects the economic, social, and environmental implications of your purchase as well. One way to be sure the expense of an item is fair and equitable is by purchasing fair trade goods. The intersection of the local and global is illuminated by our choices as consumers; and truthfully, every purchase counts.

1. In 2007, World Fair Trade Organization reported that total fair trade sales topped $2.6 billion https://www.fairtradefederation.org/history-of-fair-trade-in-the-united-states/

A Short History of Fair Trade
By Krista Cantrell

October marks the 12th annual Fair Trade Month. Fair Trade is a progressive economic movement that promotes just and livable trade wages for producers in developing countries. Fair Trade Organizations create authentic partnerships that result in a wide range of positive social impacts including women’s empowerment, education, health care, improved quality and productivity, and more democratic living conditions.

North America’s first fair trade organizations have a unique history, initially directing their energy toward struggling European countries following the devastation of World War II. Two decades later, fair trade reached U.N. attention and was implemented as a sustainable economic policy to achieve greater international development. As U.S. and Canadian nongovernmental organizations continued to network and expand, fair trade became more widely known among activists promoting conscious consumption. In 1988, Dutch Oxfam organizer, Max Havelaar created the first ever fair trade certification system and label. After the implementation of this system, and in conjunction with the evolution of the Fair Trade Federation that was officially founded in 1994, fair trade debuted on the global scale.

In October, 2003, Fair Trade Month was celebrated for the first time. Join us as we build on this movement that connects the dots between workers’ rights, environmental justice, economic justice, education, women’s rights, and more!

Upcycling Campaign
By Samuel Fessman, PJC Intern

In celebration of Fair Trade Month (October), the Peace & Justice Center is excited to launch the next event in our Upcycling Campaign: crafting recycled aluminum earrings with Leah Mitula!

Leah is the founder of Denur Crafts, a women’s collective based in Kenya. Denur produces jewelry using repurposed materials, such as aluminum from recycling plants or bone from butcher shops. This work has provided a sustainable livelihood for numerous women, providing them with jewelry-making skills and allowing them to send their children to school. All of their products are fair trade, and profits go back to the women who produce them.

This month, we encourage you to be part of a sustainable future. Fair Trade states that exploitation of children in one country should never provide goods for children in another. Stand up for mindful practices both in the environment and in business. In the face of sprawling free trade deals that are quickly reshaping the world’s economy, we can all make a difference by putting humanity first and rejecting the uncompassionate, corporate-driven model we’ve been presented.

Leah will be sharing this passion, and her jewelry crafts, at two workshops hosted at the Davis Studio, 4 Howard St, Burlington. We invite you to learn about upcycling and gain skills that will help you to exercise environmentally conscious practices in your daily life.

Adult class on October 5, Youth class on October 8.
See calendar for details.

For more information, Amy Crosswhite, Fair Trade Program Manager, store@pjcvt.org or (802) 863-2345 x3.
The Peace & Justice Center is a Vermont-based non-profit, membership organization. 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, non-violent activism and community organizing.
Nonviolence & Peace

These programs seek to foster mindful, active, and nonviolent community members by emphasizing the importance of self-care, empathy, conflict engagement, and bold action. Each program has educational outcomes that can both synergistically build upon each other or be an independent learning experience.

**Mindfulness for Activists**
*Two 2-hour sessions or four 2-hour sessions.*
Mindfulness emphasizes making connections within ourselves and offers possible ways to act on a sense of common humanity which lies deeper than conflict. Mindfulness is an essential tool for those who participate in social justice work. This program focuses on developing self-awareness and self-facilitation skills, understanding the relationship between activist work and self-care, learning to infuse mindfulness into everyday life, and introducing non-judgement as a tool of mindfulness. We address mindfulness and self compassion as well as mindfulness in difficult relationships.

**Nonviolent Activism 101**
*Two 2-hour sessions or four 2-hour sessions.*
Nonviolence has been proven to be incredibly effective in addressing oppression even though our culture may not embrace or encourage this truth. Nonviolent activists employ a wide variety of strategies, such as rallies, marches, hunger strikes, boycotts, and much more. While many people participate in these actions they may not have explored all the work that leads up to them. This program focuses on the strategy of building a nonviolent movement. Participants will explore how they are affected by various systems of oppression to help unlock meaningful ways to work towards social justice and peace without perpetuating the cycles of violence that permeate our culture.

**Nonviolent Action for Youth**
*One 3-hour session or two 2-hour sessions.*
*Best suited for youth ages 12+.*
Nonviolence education, whether for youth or adults, is an essential building block for effective activism and conflict intervention. Students may know a bit about Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Cesar Chavez but what about the strategy of the movements they were a part of? What is nonviolence in action? This program introduces participants to systems of oppression that perpetuate violence and affect them on a personal level and offers tools to address conflict through active nonviolence as a strategy to disrupt these cycles of violence.

**Kids Learning about Nonviolence**
*Two 2-hour sessions or three 1.5-hour sessions.*
*Best suited for kids, ages 7-12.*
This program includes games and activities that help kids explore feelings and needs, empathy, compassion and nonviolence. It also allows participants to share ways they want to change the world and how they plan to do it. This is complimented by exploring ways in which young people and kids have been leaders in past nonviolent peace and social justice movements.

**Recruiting for Peace Training**
*A single 2-hour event though participants are encouraged to attend the event multiple times because conversations vary.*
This training explores strategies for encouraging young people to engage in peace work in general and/or within their chosen field of study or occupation. The conversation will also include how to help high school students think critically about enlisting in the military. Most of this is about listening and asking questions about why this is important and how they are preparing for the risks involved with this decision.

**Conflict Engagement and De-escalation**
*One 3-hour session or two 2-hour sessions.*
Conflict is something that we are often told to avoid. It may seem that this avoidance is peace but if conflict is not addressed it will persist. This program explores the idea that addressing conflict nonviolently can be an exciting and effective way to make change and grow as individuals and as a culture, society, and community. Participants will explore violence, types of power and practice diffusing heated interpersonal conflicts nonviolently. The program seeks to encourage participants to actively engage in conflicts as a way to build connection and lasting peace.

**Racial Justice**
Programs in this series seek to spread awareness about the inequality people of color face in Vermont in order to build understanding and collaborations to undo racism in our community. We seek to address white privilege and challenge the practices and behaviors of people and institutions that support white people while simultaneously hurting people of color. These programs are facilitated by two people of different races.

**Racial Justice in Elementary Schools**
If you are interested in working with us on a series of activities in a school you are connected to, please contact us to discuss the programs we offer and how we would best structure a program for you.
Building Empathy and Addressing Oppression
Three 1.5-hour sessions.
The purpose of this workshop is to give people the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skills to engage in conversations about racism. Each day begins with a brief lecture followed by activities and discussions. Sessions explore white fragility, stereotyping, implicit bias, and how to directly engage with people in your community who may be perpetuating racism, stereotypes, and/or discrimination.

“The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness” Book Discussion
Two 2-hour sessions or four 2-hour sessions.
This book, written by Michelle Alexander, examines institutional racism in the United States and how it relates to and has evolved from previous oppressive laws, such as slavery and Jim Crow policies. Participants are asked to read the book and attend all sessions.

Privilege & Accountability: Becoming an Ally
Four 2-hour sessions.
This workshop is designed for participants to increase their skills as allies who can effectively build support among colleagues who may be experiencing oppression, especially racism, routinely. This workshop was developed for business owners, HR staff, managers and all workers who seek to create equity in their workplace.

How to Talk to Kids about Racism
Two 3-hour sessions or four 1.5-hour sessions.
This series addresses the impact of racism and white privilege on our children. Utilizing written resources, facilitated discussion and role playing, this program is designed to prepare people to discuss these issues with children in a meaningful and age-appropriate way.

“Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an African Slave” Book Discussion
One 2-hour session or two 2-hour sessions.
It is important to look critically at our country’s history as a way to build understanding of current racism. Frederick Douglass was an African-American abolitionist and social reformist in the 19th century. His memoir recounts his life in and escape from slavery. This is a great activity to host after the annual community readings of Douglass’ speech, “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro” put on by the VT Humanities Council in multiple locations. Participants are asked to read his narrative prior to attending the discussion.

White Fragility Presentation
A single event that can be as short as 15 minutes and as long as 1.5 hours with a Q&A.
Lecture and group activity focused on white fragility, the struggle for dominant communities to tolerate discussions on race without feeling shame, guilt, or victimization.

Fair Trade & Economic Justice
These programs promote positive change through the economic justice lens. Fostering discussion on free trade vs. fair trade, the implications of globalization and trade policies and what livable wage really is.

Fair Trade vs. Free Trade
A single event, 45 minutes, 1 hour, or 1.5 hours.
This presentation includes basic information about globalization and how policies and practices have paved the way for huge companies to profit at the expense of people and the planet. It also shows how Fair Trade principles work to, at a minimum, counterbalance these atrocities.

Understanding NAFTA and the TPP
A single event, 1 hour, 1.5 hours, or 2 hours.
This presentation includes basic information about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) including how it was described and how it has actually impacted us. The presentation also covers what is known about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and how experts foresee the effects of this deal should it be adopted and put into place as planned.

Livable Wage
A single event, 1 hour, 1.5 hours, or 2 hours.
This interactive workshop is designed to give participants a working knowledge of livable wage figures, definitions, and research about VT’s economy and jobs. It highlights research and analysis found in Phase 8 of the Vermont Job Gap Study, including statistics on how race and gender affect income.

Cocoa Campaign
A single event, 1 - 2 hours. Adaptable for ages 7 - adult.
The presentation focuses on the issue of child slavery and human trafficking in the cocoa industry. It is designed to educate, brainstorm solutions and create tangible action steps that fit within the comfort zone of each participant.

Cocoa Campaign for Kids
A single event 15min - 1.5 hours. Best suited for kids, ages 7-12.
This presentation seeks to share information with elementary age kids about the cocoa industry through activities and games without over stating the trauma of the situation. It is designed to inspire and support kids in taking action.
Cost of War: Focus on Drones

These programs are designed to educate community members on the dangers of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), commonly referred to as drones. We hope cities and towns will utilize these presentations, films, and activities to provide valuable information that can lead to local action such as town resolutions on drone use across Vermont. Each of these presentations can be paired with other presentations and/or films to make a more substantial event. We recommend films are followed by 30 minutes discussion on next steps, possible actions, and more.

**“Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars” Screening**
1 hour film directed by Casey Cooper Johnson.
This documentary examines the U.S. drone program through interviews with drone strike survivors, activists, journalists, academics, and a former drone pilot. It captures the destruction of communities experiencing drone strikes and ways that this program fuels mistrust of the U.S. globally. It concludes with effective solutions and emphasizes the need to demilitarize U.S. foreign policy.

**Drones 101**
45 minutes.
This presentation offers a basic overview of the history of drones including their use in warfare and as a domestic surveillance tool as well as the legality of these uses. Drone technology is growing faster than the infrastructure that seeks to secure human rights. It is designed to support a basic understanding of them to help prevent their misuse.

**“Wounds of Waziristan” Screening**
30 minute film directed by Madiha Tahir.
This documentary examines the lives of the survivors of U.S. drone strikes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan. It illustrates the psychological and physical devastation that haunts the people of this region on a daily basis.

**Experience of Drone Pilots**
45 minutes.
This presentation analyzes the U.S. military’s drone operator program. It debunks the myth that these pilots are safe. Even though the soldiers who operate drones are physically very far from a combat zone, research shows that drone pilots develop higher rates of PTSD than their counterparts.

**Drone Quilt Block-Making Party**
A single event or a series depending on the interest of the community. Timing is very flexible for this and quilting supplies can be provided if needed.
Victims of U.S. drone strikes are labeled as “collateral damage,” or often times labeled as “militants” without any significant evidence. Both of these labels dehumanize people. To honor the victims of drone attacks, communities are encouraged to host quilt block-making parties to build community and commemorate to lives taken by these weapons. Quilt squares will be collected and put together for the VT Drone Quilt and tour nationally with the Drone Quilt Project, showing that Vermonters are standing in solidarity with victims of U.S. drone strikes.

**Community Reading or Performance: “Testimony from Survivors of Drone Strikes”**
Three 2-hour sessions, culminating in a performance or a single 1.5 hour reading and discussion. We recommend a minimum enrollment of 10 people.
This activity uses a script that we have adapted from various testimony of drone strike survivors and news stories about actual drone strikes in various countries. The script can be used for a performance or a participatory community reading. The intent is to better understand and build connection to survivors of these strikes.

**Surveillance Drones**
45 minutes.
This presentation offers a basic overview of the history of surveillance in the U.S., how it is currently used, privacy laws, surveillance drone technology, and what to expect from the growing access to and use of this technology. This event will highlight how this technology is growing faster than the infrastructure that seeks to secure rights of people here in the United States.

**General Information**
We offer these programs intermittently as public events around Vermont. We would be happy to work with you to bring a workshop to your part of Vermont, place of work, or other community group. Most workshops are adaptable and can be combined.

Contact us for more information:
program@pjcv.org
802-863-2345 x6
www.pjcv.org
The Palestinian Violin Sings Out

By Mousa Ishaq and Kristin Peterson-Ishaq

On September 3, we, along with other members of Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel, were privileged to be in the audience to hear celebrated musician and composer Michael Dabroski play the first pure notes on the Palestinian Violin, an exquisite instrument crafted by Shehada Shalalda, a young luthier living in Ramallah. Joining Michael in performance at the College Street Congregational Church concert, and at three other concerts in Vermont and New Hampshire, was acclaimed pianist Michael Arnowitt. The pair of musicians engaged in a moving and ambitious program of music—Satie’s Gnossienne No. 1 (arranged for violin and piano), Bach’s Partita No. 2 in C minor, Beethoven’s Sonata in G for violin and piano, and Dabroski’s own Suite for Palestine—to test the violin’s mettle. The audience was enthralled.

The story of the Palestinian Violin began in December 2013 when violinist Michael Dabroski traveled to the Occupied Palestinian Territories to join musicians from around the world in performing concerts for Palestinians living in the West Bank. Under the auspices of the French government, Michael and several other musicians were also able to perform in Gaza before an enraptured audience long used to isolation because of the brutal Israeli blockade. Organized by Al Kamandjati (“The Violinist”), a Ramallah-based organization that focuses on music education for impoverished Palestinian children, the concerts brought musicians from all parts of the world together with their Palestinian counterparts. This is how Michael met Shehada Shalalda. Shehada, who came to know Al Kamandjati a decade ago when it opened a music school near his home, became passionately interested in musical instruments, especially the craftsmanship of making violins. At age 24, Shehada is the youngest of the very few luthiers in Palestine; he repairs instruments for Al Kamandjati and dreams of becoming a full-time maker of beautiful violins. In the spring of 2015, Michael and Shehada met again in Ramallah and agreed that he would make the Palestinian Violin for Michael to play in concert and to tell his story and that of Al Kamandjati. Hand-carried from Palestine, the violin arrived in New York, where Michael drove to pick it up, late this summer, just in time for its inaugural September 3 concert in Burlington.

With the help of fellow musician, gifted pianist Michael Arnowitt, Michael Dabroski embarked on a series of benefit concerts in Vermont and New Hampshire, featuring Shehada’s beautifully made violin, with proceeds going to Al Kamandjati. A new book, Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land, by award-winning author Sandy Tolan (author of The Lemon Tree), features the story of Al Kamandjati and its founder Ramzi Abuiredwan. Yo-Yo Ma says: “In a world where so much popular fiction depicts life in a dystopian world, it is refreshing to have this non-fiction account that reflects one individual’s belief in the power of music and culture to transform lives.” [Both books are available at the Peace & Justice Store.]

Michael Dabroski is eager to share the Palestinian Violin with all who invite him to play it in performance. For information about how to host a concert, please contact him by email: michael.dabroski@gmail.com.

From the Director continued from page 1

We are so excited to welcome Dylan Kelley to the Peace & Justice Center as our Organizational Assistant and Marketing Manager. Dylan has made a significant difference already as he creatively and energetically spreads the word on our myriad projects. A featured speaker at the National Conference for Media Reform, Dylan graduated from college with a triple major in photography, documentary studies, and media activism. He is a photographer, radio producer, and journalist focusing on emerging struggles, crises, and communities in contemporary America. His other adventures include hitch-hiking across the US and playing harmonica.
CALENDAR

October 3 & 10, Saturdays
3-6pm How to Talk to Kids About Racism. Winooski Community Center. Facilitated by Traci Griffith and Rachel Siegel. See catalog for description.

October 5 & 8, Monday & Thursday
Dentur Crafts Workshops at Davis Studios. The adult class will be October 5, 6:30-8:30pm, and the youth class will be October 8, 6-7:30pm. $35 fee to cover the space, materials, and instruction. Register online at davisstudiotvt.com

October 5 & 19, Mondays
6:30pm Save Open Space-Burlington. Working to protect the land around Burlington College. Meet at PJC. Also 11/2, 11/16, 12/7, and 12/21.

October 8 & 24, Thursday & Saturday
PJC Volunteer Orientations are on the 2nd Thursday at 11am, and every 4th Saturday (not 11/28 or 12/26) at 3pm. Learn about the Center’s history, our current projects, and how volunteers can use their skills and interests to help the PJC’s mission. More info at volunteer@pjcvt.org. Also 11/12 and 12/10.

October 8, Thursday
5pm Women’s International League of Peace & Freedom meeting at the PJC. Also 11/12 and 12/10.

October 12, Monday
6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC. Also 11/9 and 12/14.

October 13, Tuesday
6:30pm Champlain Area NAACP. Meetings are at 427A Waterman Building, UVM. Also 11/10 and 12/8. champlainareaNAACP@gmail.com.

October 14, Wednesday
5 pm “Improving Mediation in Vermont.” Combination workshop, discussion, and performance demonstrating how Improv Comedy may be used to defuse conflict and react to unexpected situations, both in mediations and in everyday life. Aiken Hall, Champlain College. Free.

October 15, Thursday
7pm The Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series presents Dongping Han speaking on Economic and Political Crisis in China: From the Great Leap forward and the Cultural Revolution to the Present. Han will give a very different picture than the usual “line” we hear about the Mao era and also about what is happening today. In the Livak Ballroom, Davis Center, UVM.

October 17, Saturday
9am NAACP Justice & Peace 5K Walk. Meet at the PJC. Bring water.

10am Vets for Peace meeting in Montpellier’s Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Usually the third Saturday, but check with Adrienne Knapp at adriennej@hotmail.com.

11:30-12:30 Medical Marijuana Info Session by VT Compassion Centers. 1st and 3rd Saturdays at the PJC. Classes are not sponsored by the VT Marijuana Registry, the state of Vermont or any governmental agency. The presenters are solely responsible for the information presented. vermontcompassioncenters.net

October 20, Tuesday
7pm Screening of The Mask You Live In at Roxy Cinema, Burlington. The film follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating America’s narrow definition of masculinity. Tickets are $12. Available at pjcvt.org under Upcoming Events. This is a Tugg.com event. Tickets must be purchased ahead; if a minimum is not sold the event will be cancelled.

October 24, Saturday
1-2:30pm PJC Annual Meeting at PJC. Join our members as we reflect on our work and elect board members.

October 26, Monday and November 1, Sunday
10/26 at 8:15pm and 11/11 at 2:45pm, screening of The Black Panthers: Vanguard Of The Revolution at Black Box Theater, 60 Lake St, Burlington. Rare archival footage with the voices of the people who were there: police, FBI informants, journalists, white supporters and detractors, and Black Panthers who remained loyal to the party and those who left it. Co-sponsors: PJC & Vermont International Film Festival. Tickets: vtiff.org.

November 1, Sunday
9:30am-4pm Big Picture Gathering at Vermont Technical College, Randolph. For people actively involved in social justice issues to meet and learn about the campaigns that are going on throughout VT. Panels on different social justice topics discuss how they organize and how they see their particular issue area fitting into a big picture of movement building for social change. Organizers are from the Peace & Justice Center, Veterans for Peace, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and Vermont Action for Peace. Registration form on pjcvt.org under Upcoming Events or call 863-2345 x6.

November 5, Thursday
Frederick Douglass Reading Group led by Dr. Emily Bernard. The discussion will allow for participants and facilitators to share parallels between slave experiences and the experiences of African Americans today and in the many years in between. At PJC. Register at pjcvt.org under Upcoming Events or 863-2345 x6.

November 21, Saturday
7-12pm PJC’s Ed Everts Social Justice Activist Awards. ACLU Executive Director, Allen Gilbert will present the award to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and Eugene Jarecki (who directed "The House I Live In" documentary on the need for prison reform). At Main St Landing, 1 Main St, Burlington.

December 1, Tuesday
#Giving Tuesday.

December 2, 9 & 16, Wednesdays
6-7:30pm Building Empathy and Addressing Racial Oppression. Led by Francine Serwili-Ngunga and Kyle Silliman-Smith. Participants are expected to attend all three sessions. See catalog for description. Space is limited. There is a fee, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Register online at pjcvt.org under Upcoming Events or call 863-2345 x6. At the PJC.

December date TBA
Mindfulness for Activists Workshop. See description in Catalog. Contact program@pjcvt.org at 863-2345 x6.
Robin’s Nest

Happy Birthday, Elka!

By Robin Lloyd

Several weekends ago, I followed Elka Schumann, co-founder of Bread and Puppet, as she gave her umpteenth tour of the magnificent barn museum in Glover VT. A few dozen visitors listened as Elka retold the creation story of B&P that gave birth to this extraordinary living archive filled with drawings and paintings of the light-hearted household verities: cup, chair, table, together with the flamboyant puppet congregations of fear and hope and greed clustered above them.

When she was done, and the last person with questions drifted away, she found a chair from behind a sculpture and sat down, resting her cranky knees.

A lot had happened that weekend, and more was coming up. Elka’s 80th birthday was to be celebrated that evening. I asked her the question on many people’s minds: “How will this institution – not only the barn, but the B&P troupe itself continue to flourish when you and Peter depart from the scene?”

She signed, “Well, we’ve set up the Sustainability Fund.” She paused. But the reality is “every day I see the little piles of powder created by the wood boring beetles eating up our barn. And the paper mache puppets are being eaten by mice…” She added, referring to herself in the third person, “There is indecision on the part of the directors as to what we want…”

It was a beautiful weekend. The honky tonk band opened the circus with puppeteers running with streaming banners as they have for decades. But I was despondent. I know, to every thing there is a season; nevertheless, I am filled with nostalgia.

As a filmmaker and a B&P groupie, I have produced several videos of the majestic pageants that took place every August at dusk in the outdoor amphitheater at the farm: Christopher Columbus’s New World Order (1992), Convention of the Gods (1993), Men with Teeth (1994), and Gates of Hell (1998) (all available through greenvalleymedia.org). Returning to Burlington, I spent the last few evenings looking at these documentaries. At least they are not being eaten by mice, although they are suffering, in their own way, their own slow demise.

What is it that moves me so deeply about B&P? For one, I love its archetypical feminism. Women are honored: from the great earth mother mask/puppet, to the female lion tamers, to the suffering women of the Vietnam and Iraq wars, Peter Schumann’s creativity is clearly stimulated by his love affair with his anima (Jungian female archetype of the unconscious). He often performs the female roles himself, such as the angel on stilts of the White Horse Butcher play. The male archetypes are more fun, perhaps, but are almost always involved in destroying the world. Corporate guys with hats, Mr. Fatso, officious bureaucrats all help to undermine patriarchy and capitalism and made a laughing stock of them.

I also love the peasant, pre-Christian imagery of the plays. In the midst of the 1994 pageant Men with Teeth, as the men (of the International Monetary Fund) are preparing their assault on indigenous agriculture, there is a quiet subplot of a pride of lions moving across the opposite slope and meeting a flock of sheep. They sniff each other and then lie down together, like an image from the Quaker painting the Peaceable Kingdom, before they slowly walk off together.

Indigenous agriculture in that pageant is portrayed as an undulating hillside of golden sheaves of wheat (large painted cardboard sheets). Interspersed amongst them was a sun emblem, a solar deity, recalling the peasant religions described by James Frazer in The Golden Bough (“a study in magic and religion”). The execution of the sheaf of grain is brutal: the IMF man staples an extermination notice onto the sheaf: we hear the staples bite in like bullets. Then the sheaf is surrounded and led to the firing squad, whipped, marked with an X, draped with a large sheet of black plastic and shot. With these highly symbolic gestures the actual tragedy of the destruction of third world agriculture is evoked.

That these actions are taking place outside makes it something more than a theater piece, it’s a ritual enactment of the suffering and cry for justice of humanity oppressed by capitalism. Perhaps one could say that in the pageants, Peter uses the expansiveness of the landscape to create a kind of opera, with slow moving plots and subplots all leading to the consummation by fire of the corrupt immoral entity, and ending with the white birds, swooping down from the upper hillside in the dusk, circling the fire, signifying who knows what, but making a perfect ending.

The pageants ended in 1998. Since then, instead of two blockbuster performances on one weekend in August, a smaller circus, with sideshows and pageant occurs every weekend in July and August. We have something rare and precious that takes place in our state every year. My despondency came from realizing that it won’t happen forever. Take advantage of it while you can. Put it on your schedule for next summer.

For an in depth appreciation of B&P read Marc Estrin’s Rehearsing with Gods: Photographs and Essays on the Bread & Puppet Theater (with Ron Simon); the Bread and Puppet Theater, vols 1 and 2, by Stefan Brecht, and our own Green Valley book (out of print) B&P: Stories of Struggle and Faith from Central America, based on the 1984 pageant honoring Oscar Romero.


Find B&P calendars and publications at the P&J Store.
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