



RPEC NEWS

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

January-February 2008

Inside

Reflections	2
Happenings	5
Will Virginia Follow New Jersey?	6
Consumers Corner	7
What if the War in Iraq Had Happened in Virginia?	9
We Make Change	10
Calendar	11
Take Action! 83 Ways to Change the World	12

Profiles in Peacemaking

YOGA FOR PEACE

Nora Vimala Pozzi

Yoga has become a mainstream activity. It is said that more than 20 million people are practicing yoga in the United States. That seems like a lot of people practicing a discipline that is supposed to help bring peace of mind to the individual, and contribute, hopefully, to world peace as well. So why does the latter point seem especially not to be the case?

Many people that practice yoga do not find peace of mind, although they do feel more relaxed. And what about world peace? By reading the paper every morning I would not say that our world is at peace, or even getting closer to it, nor that we are in touch with our environment and at peace with the earth which is sustaining us. So what seems to be the problem?

I believe that yoga has been commercialized to a point that it has been devoid of its intrinsic and most important purpose, that of understanding the nature of our mind and the source of our thoughts and actions. In short, Yoga is the art of "Knowing Yourself". When we do that with total acceptance and compassion, we become more responsible for the effect of our thoughts, words and actions on ourselves and others, becoming more in tune with the Universal Law of Karma (we reap what we sow).

Although the Hatha Yoga path, which is what most people in United States practice today, is a valid path indeed - we do need to take care of our body, since it is the "temple of our mind" - it is not the only yogic path. And Hatha, like any *discipline*, is not an end in itself. This is where the other paths come in. And of course, if practiced obsessively, Hatha could become an obstacle to inner peace.

So if Hatha is just one of many different paths of Yoga, what are the others and what purpose do they serve?

While **Hatha Yoga** gives emphasis to the physical body's needs, using postures, breathing exercises (pranayama), and cleansing practices (kriyas), as well as diet - other paths of yoga emphasize the non-physical, or more subtle, needs of our inner spirit. For example, **Karma Yoga** is the path of selfless service through which one can experience joy by the act of giving without expecting anything in return, as when we feed the homeless. **Bhakti yoga** is the path of love, ritual and devotion. **Jnana Yoga** is the path of self-inquiry and study of sacred texts. Think of all the sacred works - be they religious or philosophical, or even scientific. **Japa Yoga**, the path of chanting or repeating a mantra or sacred sound vibration. And finally, **Raja Yoga** -the regal path of yoga- is the path of concentration and meditation based on the ethical principles contained in the "Sutras of Patanjali", the ancient yoga scriptures that define the "Yamas", the 5 Restraints, and "Niyamas" the 5 Observances.

So the practice of all these branches lead to control the fluctuations of the mind to experience our divine nature, our True Self. Depending on our tendencies or personality, we may be

(Continued on page 3)

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400 W. 32nd Street
Richmond, VA 23225

Phone: (804)232-1002

E-mail:
rpec@rpec.org

RPEC Web Page:
<http://www.rpec.org>

RPEC STAFF

Executive Director:
Adria Scharf

Asst. to the Director
Paul Fleisher

Office Manager
Johnnie J. Taylor

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor:
Bill Gerow

Newsletter Committee:

- John Gallini
- Jane Rosecrans
- Shirley Silberman
- Cathy Woodson
- Judy Bennett
- Ruth Anne Young
- Angela Lehman-Rios
- Adria Scharf
- Francis Woodruff
- John Williamson

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Contact Bill Gerow at
mbgerow@comcast.net.

Reflections

Adria Scharf, Executive Director

In the course of our recent discussion series on racial justice in Richmond, we took a look at some basic facts about our metropolitan region. A number of us, including some in the discussion group who had lived in the region for years, were surprised by what we learned. Among the facts that gave participants pause included these:

- Over 30% of children in the city of Richmond live below the poverty line.
- One-fifth of households in the city have no car.
- The city has just 3% of the landmass in metropolitan region.

(These statistics stood out in comparison to facts about the counties surrounding Richmond. Child poverty rates in Chesterfield and Henrico counties are about 9% and 10% respectively, for example.)

What explains these city-county disparities? A key part of the answer lies in the legal-jurisdictional relationship of the city of Richmond to its surrounding counties, and the annexation moratorium passed by the General Assembly which barred Richmond from annexing territory. Richmond is as a result something of an island, isolated from surrounding land, resources, and opportunities. This isolation is an important cause of persistent disparities between the city and its neighboring counties. The city's isolation also, I am certain, comes at a cost to the surrounding counties—even if many in county leadership positions don't yet see it this way—for our region is in fact interdependent and interconnected, and the fate of any one of our communities is bound up with that of all the others.

The data discussed in the discussion series, and summarized above, was provided by John Moeser, PhD, of the University of Richmond's Center for Civic Engagement.

RPEC Web Page:
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**Next
Newsletter
March 10**

Corrections

The name of the author of the Profiles in Peacemaking article in the Nov.-Dec. 2007 issue of RPEC news was inadvertently omitted. The author was John Williamson, a member of our newsletter committee. The editor regrets this omission.

The caption under the picture on p. 5 in the same issue should have read: Kristin Hott, Heidi Abbott, and Carter Carpin.

Profiles in Peacemaking

(Continued from page 1)

inclined to practice one or the other. If we are more of an intellectual nature we may be inclined to study and practice Jnana Yoga, and if we are more devotional may be the Bhakti Yoga is our path. Most of the time we may practice more than one branch or practice them at different times or stages of our life. It is important to understand that the purpose of controlling the mind and its thoughts is to be able to experience our inherent peace, which resides within ourselves. That is why, Patanjali, considered the father of Yoga, in his Sutras, also known as the psychology and philosophy of yoga, established what he called "Ashtanga Yoga" or the Eight-Limbed Path of Yoga (do not confuse this with the Ashtanga school of Yoga or Power Yoga).

The Dalai Lama:

"Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way... Peace must first be developed within an individual.. And I believe that love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world" [from forward to **Peace is Every Step** by Thich Nhat Hahn]

So what is this Eight-Folded Path that leads to Samadhi or the experience of our True nature? It is a scientific method in which in order to experience the ultimate goal -Inner Peace- we need to travel through different stages that take us from the most external and tangible aspect of ourselves to the most internal and subtle level, the core of our Being where we actually experience that peace or Yoga State.

Martin Luther King, Jr:

*"The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much deeper that emotional bosh...." "...In the Greek New Testament there are three words for love: "Eros".... "Philia"... The third word "agape" is the love of God operating in the human heart. At this level, we love men not because we like them, nor because their ways appeal to us, nor even because thy posses some type of divine spark; we love every man because God loves him. At this level, we love the person who does an evil deed, although we hate the deed that he does...." [from **Strength to Love**, by Martin Luther King, Jr.]*

The first two stages are the "Yamas" and "Niyamas", which are our behavioral patterns, the way we relate to others and ourselves. These ten rules are very similar to the 10 commandments of

the Judeo-Christian tradition, Buddhist noble truths, and other faiths as well. By practicing them we foster harmony in daily living, the basis and foundation to living in a peaceful community.

The first two "yamas", Ahimsa (non-violence) and "Satya" (non-lying or truthfulness) were the very foundation of Gandhi's "Satyagraha" movement of India's independence. The rest of the them, it is said, are contained in these two. Furthermore, Ahimsa rules over "Satya", since non-violence and non-harming is the utmost desire.

Violence is not just the act of killing someone. Ahimsa is non-harming in word, thought and deed. So beyond practicing overt non-violence, one must practice inward loving kindness, and act accordingly in everyday life in the little things we do. In this respect, banging a door with anger, saying or thinking something hurtful, or even just *not taking care of ourselves* is violence, and avoidance of such behaviors is Ahimsa, or non-violence.

Truth, or "Satya", has parallels in practice. Beyond just avoidance of lying, when we do not honor our intentions that we set for ourselves, the absence of practicing our *truths* is an obstacle to finding our *true self*. So disruptions to inner harmony, even if we are practicing lots of "asanas" or hatha yoga, can result from inadequate observance of Satya.

So within the 8-rungs of the ladder, from Patanjali's teachings,

(Continued on page 4)

Profiles in Peacemaking

the "asanas", or postures are only the third rung - and must be followed by the mastery of our harmony with ourselves and others, and this comes only after we have clarified the purpose and goals of our intentions. At this level, still yet to come is the work on the energetic level with the "pranayama: or breathing practices, and then "pratyahara", which is the withdrawal of senses that lead us still deeper into our inner world of our spirit-mind. So as we progress upward, the rungs are more internal, with concentration, meditation and Samadhi or contemplation as the top rungs of the ladder that lead to the experience of peace absolute.

Sri Swami Satchidananda:

*"There is not power higher than love. Hatred breeds hatred, violence breeds violence...."..."First gain peace yourself, and then share it with others through your movements. Prepare yourself for that. A peace movement is a kind or orchestra, a peace orchestra where peaceful music is played. If peaceless people join, then the orchestra will be out of tune and will go to pieces...." "...Permanent peace can never be achieved by violent methods..." [from **Peace Is Within Our Reach** by Sri Swami Satchidananda, world renown Indian monk and peace leader and founder of Integral Yoga]*

And still, the most important teaching in yoga is guidance on what to do once we experience this "yoga state" or state of inner peace. We can become "attached" to the pleasurable experience of a peaceful

Mahatma Gandhi:

Gandhi: "Satyagraha is love in action."

"...for him (Gandhi) satya meant the deepest truth of existence, that all life is one. The proof was offered by the Compassionate Buddha: When one person hates another, it is the hater who falls ill - physically, spiritually. When he loves, it is he who becomes whole. Hatred kills. Love heals. Satyagraha meant "holding to this truth" in every situation, no matter how fierce the storm... even in the face of the fiercest provocation, he never lets himself forget that he and his attacker are one. This is ahimsa, which is more than just the absence of violence; it is intense love.

*The Sanskrit word ahimsa does not obtain a negative or passive connotation... The implication of ahimsa is that when all violence subsides in the human heart the state which remains is love. It is not something we have to acquire; it is always present, and needs only to be uncovered. This is our Real Nature." [from **Gandhi The Man** by Eknath Easwaran]*

existence, only to have that become its own selfish endeavor. So beyond even yogic mastery, depending on the deepest "intentions" as expressed within the soul that lives among souls - as exemplified by Gandhi - there is still yet the knowing of how we practice Samadhi for the betterment of "all sentient beings", to serve others and share it with the rest of the world. So our commitment is both in action and inaction, not just a practice to

Thich Nhat Hahn:

*"When I was in Vietnam, so many of our villages were being bombed. Along with my monastic brothers and sisters, I had to decide what to do. Should we continue to practice in our monasteries or should we leave the meditation halls in order to help the people who were suffering under the bombs? After careful reflection, we decided to do both -to go out and help people to do so in mindfulness. We called in "engaged Buddhism". Mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting. Otherwise, what is the use of seeing?... If we maintain awareness of our breathing and continue to practice smiling, even in difficult situations, many people, animals, and plants will benefit from our way of doing things.... Are you massaging our Mother Earth every time your foot touches her? Are you planting seeds of joy and peace? I try to do exactly that with every step, and I know that our Mother Earth is most appreciative. Peace is every step [from **Peace is Every Step** by Thich Nhat Hahn, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, and renown world peace leader]*

develop our inner peace, but one with the purpose of *offering* it for those we live and work with, and to a larger degree, to our community and the world.

To contact Nora Vimala Pozzi, Director of the Integral Yoga® Center of Richmond, e-mail nora@YogaHelps.com or call (804) 355-1008. For a list of yoga classes, individual yoga therapy opportunities, workshops and trainings, see www.Yogahelps.com.

Happenings at the Center

RECENT EVENTS

Experiencing the Peace Center's Racial Justice Series

By Lauren Zingraff
(MSW student, VCU)

(RPEC sponsored Racial Justice series in October and November, here is one participant's reflection. The Center plans to offer this series again in 2008)

The racial justice workshop was powerful. Every session was well-organized, thought-provoking, and informative. I felt the environment was safe which encouraged participants to honestly express their feelings and to share life experiences in regards to racial justice or lack thereof. I felt welcomed and respected by every person in the room. There was a strong sense of unity across individuals of different races, religions, and gender, as everyone was genuinely committed to working together towards racial justice.

Also, the workshop was not just words, thoughts, and ideas -- which are, of course, necessary. The workshop moved beyond words as there was an action step decided on by the group, which puts into motion the workshop's number one goal, which was to take action towards improving racial justice in Richmond.

One of my favorite quotes by Dr. King is "If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl. But by all means keep moving". (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. May 1963). The racial justice workshop embodied this positive movement in the right direction.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Generation Dream 2008

On January 24, the Richmond Youth Peace Project presented an Educoncert as part of Richmond's annual Living the Dream commemoration of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth performers from William Byrd House, the New Generation Theatre Company, and the International School of Music also participated. RYPP youth were supported by a number of adult performers, including LaWanda Raines, Iman Shabazz and members of Drums No Guns.

The VCU Division of Community Engagement, Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, NAACP at VCU, the VCU Department of Theatre, and VCU Libraries co-sponsored this event, which was held at the VCU Performing Arts Center.

Conflict Resolution

In January and February, RPEC facilitators are conducting conflict resolution workshops with a number of different community groups, including:

- Interfaith youth from Unity, First Unitarian Universalist, Islamic Center, and Richmond Friends Meeting (Quaker) faith communities
- Mothers and Others
- Friends Association
- Boys & Girls Clubs

In addition, there will be an "advanced" Alternatives to Violence Project workshop for community members who have already taken the "basic" training the first weekend of February.

Community members interested in becoming a conflict resolution facilitator in 2008 should contact the RPEC office to be placed on the wait list for the next training for trainers, 232-1002.

Living Simply: Making Green, Just, Choices for an Abundant Life

On February 19, RPEC and the VCU Chapter of the Sierra Club will co-sponsor *Living Simply: Making Green & Just Choices*. The program will be held at the VCU Student Commons, beginning at 7 p.m. This forum, which is free and open to the public, will examine a variety of ways that people in the Richmond region can live in ways that promote simple living and environmental justice.

The program will feature a panel presentation, followed by smaller breakout sessions at which participants can learn about green building, community supported agriculture, mass transit, organic gardening, and other methods of living an environmentally conscious life in an urban or suburban environment.

For more information, contact the Peace Center at rpec@rpec.org or 232-1002.

Annual Membership Meeting

Please mark your calendars now for RPEC's Annual Membership Meeting! The membership meeting provides an opportunity for you to be up-to-date on RPEC's important work and share your thoughts and

(Continued on page 6)

Happenings at the Center

(Continued from page 5)

ideas about how RPEC pursues its mission for peace and social justice – locally and globally. Join us Wednesday, April 9th, at 7 p.m. at the Friends (Quaker) Meetinghouse on Kensington Avenue. Be an active part of this dynamic and growing organization. So mark those calendars now and stay tuned for more information.

Fourth Annual Youth Peace Summit Scheduled for April 26

The Richmond Youth Peace Project will hold its 4th annual Youth Peace Summit on Saturday, April 26. The Summit will again take place at 5th Baptist Church, 1415 W. Cary St., from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The event is free to all young people aged 12-19.

This year's Summit will again feature workshops on nonviolent conflict resolution and positive self-expression through the arts, including drumming, spoken word, electronic media, and design. Most workshops will be co-led by youth presenters. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Interested young people should email their contact information to the Peace Center at rypp@rpec.org, or call the Peace Center offices.

Teens and adults interested in volunteering to help plan the Summit, or to offer workshops, should also contact the Center at rypp@rpec.org.

The Power of Forgiveness

The Power of Forgiveness, a new documentary film, will be shown at the Virginia Holocaust

Will Virginia Follow New Jersey? YES, but most likely not this year!

Jack Payden-Travers

Director of Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

In December the New Jersey legislature ended capital punishment in the Garden State when both the senate and the assembly passed bills replacing execution with life-in-prison-without-parole. Gov. Corzine signed the bill on Dec 17, 2008. New Jersey is the first state in modern U.S. history to legislatively abolish the death penalty; Iowa and West Virginia last did so in 1965. The death penalty in New York was ended when the Assembly refused to consider bills calling for re-instatement of the death penalty after the NY Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 2004. The tide appears to be turning as additional states will be considering bills calling for an end to executions. In Maryland Gov. O'Malley has called for an end to capital punishment.

Change doesn't come quickly in Virginia but it is coming. 2008 marks the eighth time that Del. Frank Hargrove of Hanover County has introduced a bill to end the death penalty. **HB299 Death Penalty; abolishes for all Class 1 felonies** deserves our support and Del Hargrove deserves our thanks. Please take a minute to call your own delegate and senator and urge them to co-sponsor this legislation. Do drop Del Hargrove a note thanking him for his persistence.

In addition to attempting to end the death penalty permanently, Del Hargrove has also called for an im-

mediate moratorium on executions with another bill: **HB296 Death Penalty: Moratorium on Executions (5 year halt)**.

Both these bills may well never make it out of committee if politics as usual are practiced in the House of Delegates. You can follow the progress of any piece of legislation introduced into the General Assembly by going to the website of the VA General Assembly at <http://legis.state.va.us/> and entering a bill number into the "Enter a Bill Number" Box (hb299) on the left side of the webpage.

"Change is always painful being as it is a goodbye." This is a quote from a poem I came across many years ago and it is one that I am reminded of again as I prepare to leave my position as director of Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. As of Feb 14th I will join the staff of the Capital Punishment Project of the national ACLU. My family and I will be moving to the Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina. I will be the Public Education Associate of CPP and as such will be assisting state groups working to end the death penalty. I am aware that it was through my association with RPEC as a volunteer in 1984 when Wendy Northup was director that I attended my first vigil against executions. Thanks to all who have shown me the way on this journey. I look forward to working with you in my new position.

Museum, 2000 E. Cary St., Richmond, Va. on Sunday, February 10th at 2 PM. A discussion will follow including filmmaker Martin Doblmeier. The film explores the

role forgiveness holds in various faith traditions and includes feature stories on the Amish, Ground Zero, and peace-building in Northern Ireland.

Consumers Corner

A Fine Kettle of Fish Revisited

John Gallini and Alisha Gallini

We wrote about seafood six years ago (well, John did). It has been long enough that we thought it would be good to take another look. Indeed, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's "Seafood Watch - Choices for Healthy Oceans" is still online and still offering guidance about seafood choices.

Seafood Watch's mission is to empower consumers and businesses to make choices for healthy oceans. They explain why seafood choices matter on their web-page:

"The choices we make as consumers drive the seafood market place. Your purchasing power can make a difference by supporting those fisheries and fish farms that are better for the environment, while at the same time relieving pressure on others that are not doing as well.

Some of the key problems that help us evaluate whether a fishery is sustainable include the level of bycatch observed, the fishing methods and their impact, if it is farmed—how it is farmed, and how well the fishery or aquaculture operation is managed. With nearly 75% of the world's fisheries either fully fished or overfished, these issues are more important than ever. By using the Seafood Watch pocket guide you are making choices based on the best available information and supporting environmentally friendly fisheries and aquaculture operations."

The "Seafood Watch" page provides an extensive list of types of seafood and categorizes each type according to these issues. Thus some seafood is harvested by dragging the ocean floor, which causes great harm to the habitat required by many species. Other seafood has been harvested so extensively that the species are close to extinction. And some fish are harvested in ways that harm other fish that are not useful.

They also discuss aquaculture, asking if fish farming is the answer: "The best way to raise fish may be inland, far from coastal waters where wild fish feed and breed. Tilapia, a plant-eating fish, is easy to raise, and produces protein for people without using wild fish as feed. Catfish and trout are raised inland in the United States. All of these fish can be delicious alternatives to ocean-farmed shrimp and salmon. Even shrimp and salmon farming can be moved inland, where wastes are easier to handle. U.S. shrimp farmers are experimenting with enclosed, recirculating systems that filter wastewater and can be located far from the coast."

Here is an example of the basis for their rating of farmed salmon.

"There are many environmental problems related to farming salmon.

Consumer Note

The vast majority of salmon farmed today are Atlantic salmon. A small quantity of Pacific salmon - Chinook and Coho are also farmed, so it's important to always ask whether the salmon you are buying is "wild" or "farmed".

Health Alert

Salmon farmers may use pesticides and antibiotics to control outbreaks of disease. When consumers eat this fish, the residues from the chemicals may affect their health or interfere with medicines they're taking. Environmental Defense has issued a health advisory for farmed salmon due to high levels of PCBs and dioxins. For more information, visit their Oceans Alive web site (www.oceansalive.org).

(Continued on page 8)

Consumers Corner

"A Fine Kettle of Fish Revisited"

John Gallini and Alisha Gallini

(Continued from page 7)

Summary

Most salmon are farmed in open pens and cages in coastal waters. Waste from these farms is released directly into the ocean. Parasites and diseases from farmed salmon can spread to wild fish swimming near the farms.

One of the biggest concerns is the amount of food required to raise salmon in farms. It generally takes three pounds of wild fish to grow one pound of farmed salmon.

Segments of the salmon farming industry are improving their practices, but the environmental impact is still increasing because production has risen more than 400% in the last decade. In the market, there is currently no way to tell which salmon are coming from the more-sustainable farms, so for now we ask you to avoid farmed salmon and choose wild-caught salmon instead. "

Using this type of analysis Seafood Watch provides a list, putting each species into one of three categories: Best Choice, Caution, and Avoid. In recent years, they have provided a number of lists for various regions of the country

Here are some of the Best Choice and Avoid types for the Southeast, along with some prices for Best Choice products at local markets. Most products are well labeled, but ask if there is a question. Ellwood-Thompson has a large display board hanging above the fish counter with the Monterey Bay Aquarium ratings plainly shown.

<i>Best Choices</i>	Prices (\$/lb)		
	<i>Ukrop's</i>	Kroger	Ellwood-Thompson
Catfish, and Striped Bass farmed	6.79	3.99 (catfish)	6.99
Croaker, Atlantic	4.99		
Salmon, wild-caught (Alaska)	9.98	6.99 (China)	12.99
Bay scallops, farmed		3.99	
Trout, rainbow, farmed		4.99	
Tilapia, farmed	7.49	4.99	7.49
Tuna (Yellowfin U.S. Atlantic)	8.99	7.99	

To check your own favorites, go to the website at <http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/seafoodwatch.asp>.

Avoid These Products

- Chilean Sea Bass, Monkfish and Orange Roughy
- Cod (Atlantic/Icelandic) and Swordfish (Atlantic)
- Salmon, farmed
- Scallops, sea
- Shrimp (imported, wild or farmed)
- Tilapia (Taiwan and China, farmed)

What if the War in Iraq Had Happened in Virginia?

Most Americans know, approximately, the number of American service men and women killed in the War in Iraq – just over 3,800 as of October 2008. With recent news stories on the medical treatment for returning veterans, many Americans also know approximately the number of American service personnel who have been wounded – just over 28,000. These unadorned numbers do not convey the tragic loss of life, the pain and suffering of the wounded, or the grief of their families. Yet despite knowing the number of U.S. dead and wounded, few Americans understand how many Iraqi civilians have been affected by the war. In part, it may be because estimates of Iraqi civilian deaths vary widely. In part, it may be because the numbers are so large that they just lose meaning. How does anyone make sense of it? One way is ask a simple question: What if the War in Iraq – however terrible to contemplate – had happened here in Virginia?

In 2006, the population of Virginia was just over 28.5% of the population of Iraq (7.6 million v. 26.8 million). Taking that percentage of the estimates of the dead, the displaced, the refugees and the hungry gives some idea of what it would be like if the War in Iraq had happened here.

Civilian Deaths

There are several widely quoted sources on Iraqi civilian deaths. Iraq Body Count (IBC) reports “documented civilian deaths from violence.” Its data is drawn from “cross-checked media reports, hospital, morgue, [non-government official] and official figures to produce a credible record of known deaths and incidents.” IBC recognizes that its methods undercount the dead. As of December 5, 2007, IBC reported be-

tween 77,922 and 84,894 Iraqi civilian deaths.

If the War in Iraq had happened in Virginia, the IBC estimate would correlate to about 23,000 deaths – or about the population of Fredericksburg, or Hopewell.

A second source is a study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Al Mustansiriya University in Baghdad. It was published in October 2006 by the British medical journal, *The Lancet*. The study estimated deaths from all causes – violent and non-violent – over and above the death rate in Iraq before the war. It was based on a nationwide survey in Iraq between May and July 2006. The study estimated that more than 650,000 people died in Iraq since the invasion, beyond those that would have been expected based on pre-war mortality. More than 90% of the deaths were caused by violence, primarily gunshots. The validity of the study and the accuracy of its results have been debated – some (including IBC) have said that the sample was too small or biased; others have defended the methods as the most scientific and valid available.

If the War in Iraq had happened in Virginia, the estimate as published in *The Lancet* would correlate to almost 187,000 deaths. This is more than the population of Newport News, and almost the entire population of the City of Richmond.

Iraqis Internally Displaced and Those Who are Refugees

Iraqi civilians who have left their homes for other parts of the country are said to be “internally displaced.” Iraqis who have fled their country entirely are refugees.

The U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) estimates that 2 million Iraqis are refugees living in another country and another 1.9 million

Iraqis have been internally displaced. These estimates would correlate to over 560,000 Virginians, the combined population of Henrico and Chesterfield.

The Hungry, The Children

UNAMI estimates that 4 million Iraqi civilians are “acutely food insecure and entirely dependent on public distribution system.” That would correspond to more than 1.1 million Virginians – about the combined populations of Fairfax County and the City of Portsmouth.

According to a report by Save the Children, in 2005 one in eight Iraqi children died of disease or violence before reaching their fifth birthday. The report notes that even before the war, Iraq had a poor record for children’s health. The number is too painful to compare.

Conclusion

American service men and women have served bravely in Iraq – no one says otherwise. Their losses have been severe. Many more Americans have been killed in Iraq than were lost at Pearl Harbor. Americans should also know, however, of the death and suffering of the Iraqi people. It is said that there is a bit of God in each of us – every man, woman and child. Think of that when you try to understand, by whatever means you can, what has happened to so many innocent men, women, and children in Iraq.

Note:

This article was written by a member of RPEC who was closely involved in the Eyes Wide Open project, and who has requested that his or her name not be published in this instance.

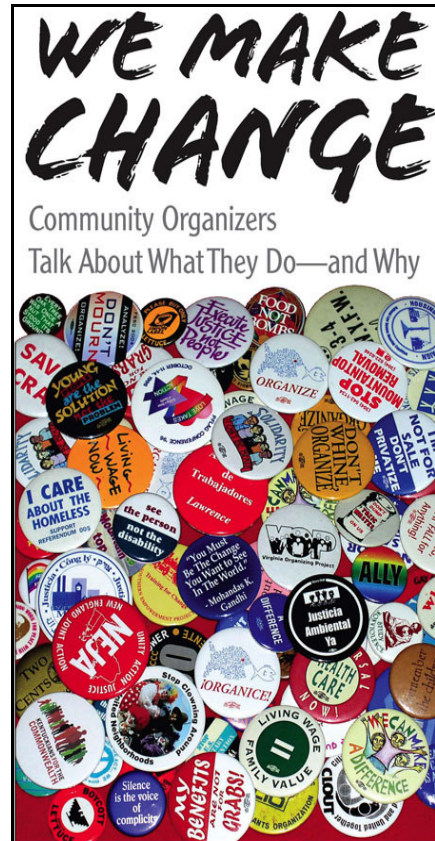
WE MAKE CHANGE: COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY DO—AND WHY

Edited by Kristin Layng Szakos and Joe Szakos.

Reviewed by Mary Atwell

This is a difficult book to review because it contains so many different angles on the topic of community organizing. Chapters begin by presenting several pages of statements from people involved in organizing activities. The statements range in length from a sentence or two to a page. Each represents an organizer's answer to a question posed by the editors: What is community organizing? Where do organizers come from? How did you start organizing? Why organize? What makes a good organizer? How does organizing change lives? What are your proudest achievements? Which defeats were hardest to take? What advice would you share with aspiring organizers? The second part of each chapter involves profiles of individual organizers in their own words. It is, as befits a work on community organizing, a participatory effort.

I read the book from front to back, although I suspect this is not the ideal or even the intended way to get the most from it. Rather, one might read a single chapter and discuss it with a class or a group of people interested in exploring or developing a strategy for organizing. It would be instructive, for example, to talk about the variety of responses to what makes a good organizer. Each quality mentioned seems necessary but not sufficient. One needs a passion for social justice, "fire in the belly," but also patience, good people skills and relationship-building techniques, curiosity, intelligence, organization, optimism, good listening habits, courage, stamina,



perseverance, and belief. As there are few paragons who embody all those characteristics, one might conclude that every organizer needs . . . an organization made up of many people who bring a variety of gifts and talents.

Something that stuck me as an admirer but an outsider to the world of organizing was the ability of many people interviewed for the book to transfer their skills and commitment from one issue to another. Community organizers worked to empower and bring change to groups marginalized and excluded from the mainstream of decision making. But many described careers with a tremendous amount of geographic and job mobility. What the variety of

jobs had in common seemed to be a dedication to convincing people that they both deserved better and had the power to affect their own futures. And, it seemed, in transforming people's consciousness to believe in themselves—despite great odds and some failures—the organizers derived their satisfaction and indeed the will to continue in work that offers few tangible rewards and little recognition.

As a person involved in educating college students, I read this book with one eye on how it might serve as an inspiration and example to young people contemplating their life's work. Only a small number of every generation are likely to become professional organizers, but a significant percentage could be encouraged to contemplate how they can turn their energies toward building better communities. The editors wisely included a list of books and movies that had been meaningful to those profiled in *We Make Change*. That list could be a fine resource for wider consciousness raising.

Mary Atwell is Professor of Criminal Justice at Radford University. She has served as a member of the Boards of Directors of the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley; Planned Parenthood of the Blue Ridge; and Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (VADP). She has published three books, most recently WRETCHED SISTERS: EXAMINING GENDER AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (Peter Lang, 2007).



CALENDAR

Meetings of Local Groups

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| Every Sunday | Food Not Bombs Richmond-Meal Sharing , 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 for details |
| Every 3rd Wed.
Every Thursday | Amnesty International , University of Richmond campus. Contact Ray Hilliard at 289-8289
Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY) , 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line. |
| Every 3rd Saturday | Equality Virginia , 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816. |
| Every 4th Saturday
Every 2nd Saturday | Pax Christi Peace Community - Call Paula Powdermaker for details - 355-7395
Walk for Peace - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Meet at the Boulevard entrance of the Virginia Museum. Wear black. |
| 1st & 3rd Weds. | The Hanover County Umbrella of Peace group - 10:00 AM In the Parish House of Immanuel Episcopal Church, 3263 Old Church Road, Mechanicsville, VA, 23111. For more information, contact 804-781-1602. |

UPCOMING EVENTS

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| February 10 | Screening of film “The Power of Forgiveness” followed by discussion led by the director, at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. For more information contact Colleen Barranger, 804-622-5128. |
| February 19 | Living Simply: Making Green & Just Choices— at the VCU Student Commons, beginning at 7 p.m. This forum, which is free and open to the public, will examine a variety of ways that people in the Richmond region can live in ways that promote simple living and environmental justice. For more information, contact the Peace Center at rpec@rpec.org or 232-1002. |
| April 9 | RPEC’s Annual Membership Meeting— 7 p.m. at the Friends (Quaker) Meetinghouse on Kensington Avenue. |
| April 26 | The Richmond Youth Peace Project’s 4th annual Youth Peace Summit. The Summit will again take place at 5 th Baptist Church, 1415 W. Cary St., from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The event is free to all young people aged 12-19. Interested young people should email their contact information to the Peace Center at rypp@rpec.org, or call the Peace Center offices |

Take Action! 83 Ways to Change the World

In 2004, Noah Scalin (former Board Chair of RPEC) and Chris Humes created an artistic exhibit titled “*Plant the Piece*”. The exhibit was created to encourage discussion on solutions for an increasingly violent world and was inspired by the techniques and philosophies of Japanese radical gardener Masanobu Fukuoka. Fukuoka said, “The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.” The exhibit comprised a collection of “guns” made from red clay, dry organic compost, and a mixture of annual-perennial species of wildflowers native



and naturalized to any area. They can grow when left directly on the surface of the ground.

We are pleased to announce that Plant The Piece was chosen to be part of "Take Action! 83 Ways to Change the World"- an exhibition at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden. Along with the exhibits, there will be programs with seminars, films and performances by visiting artists. For more information about the Museum and the exhibit, visit...

<http://www.worldculture.se/>



**Richmond Peace
Education Center**

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