

Getting Centered – the dignity of all life

by Elizabeth Stinson, Director

This is the 20th year of publication of the *Peace Press*.

For two decades the *Peace Press* has been a consistent vehicle for those questioning the misuse of power that has resulted in human suffering.

Sonoma County activism has provided the necessary nurturing of a publication that continues to be lovingly hand collated by Peace Center members. The *Peace Press* is a publication that continues to evolve and reflect the potential for change, highlighting when, where and how human survival and dignity can benefit from truth as well as resiliency.

We are grateful to our members for their long-term commitment to reflection, change and the human potential to be a contributor to the improvement of the human condition in a non-violent way. Always, there is a non-violent choice. We commit to non-violence as the core, the seed, the pure and necessary ideal for all response.

When all life is regarded as having dignity, non-violence is the only civilized response.

We are aware that it is not enough to put a magnifying glass on the issues, we also need to seek responses appropriate and productive to the problems. No matter how immense.

When I sit quietly with the reality that the Center was created by thousands of committed volunteer hours, is run by thousands of “committed to positive change” volunteer hours by members and board members present and past.

The valued Volunteer hours are the heartbeat of the Center, the fiber of the *Peace Press* and our hope for positive evolution of the human condition. Volunteer hours represent the potential for change, the commitment to humanity and the reflection of past changes and growth of the social justice movement in Sonoma County and the Northbay.

Years ago a few members of the social justice community had a vision. Their vision included a historical as well as current written record of the non-violent struggle for human dignity and social justice for all people – an ideal not lost, an ideal worth working toward for a lifetime and again.

We thank the founders and the many volunteers over time and we honor their intentions, their vision and their hope... which keeps us continually working for change.

Respectfully yours,elizabeth

Parenting In Sanctuary – a personal experience

by Elizabeth Stinson

During the death squad activities in El Salvador and Guatemala of the 80's and the early 90's many community activists found themselves in the position of being asked to provide a safe, “sanctuary” home for people who were being threatened, tortured and hunted by the death squads. In West Marin there existed an alternative community of families that had students in an alternative classroom. It was in my involvement in the open classroom that resulted in my being asked to become involved in the sanctuary movement. I was asked to provide a safe place for a little boy, whose father had been assassinated for his work founding a human rights office in San Salvador in very dangerous times. Herbert Anaya had

tired of hearing the stories of the “disappeared” speaking to mothers, wives, fathers whose children, husbands, cousins, parents had “disappeared”. Herbert began going to the shallow graves found on the sides of roads, behind houses, next to ditches and document, photographing the fallen. In his notebook, he provided a record of the missing, so that family members, loved ones could answer their grief. He provided a record of atrocity so that the crimes against his people, his neighbors, his family would not be ignored.

For this work he was murdered.

The death squads were trained, funded and facilitated by the Reagan administration at the School of the Americas. One morning Herbert went out to start his car to take his children to school. The children heard shots. They ran out the door to watch their father bleed to death on the ground next to his car. The children ran back through their house and out the back door. They were taken, traumatized and in shock, to school. From school they were brought up north. The Families who gathered to host them were unprepared for what was to become a learning experience, an honor and some of the most challenging times of our lives. I cannot speak of the experience for my children by birth and in sanctuary, but for me, my life was enriched, altered and shaped differently than it would have been had I not seen and heard first hand through the children about the horror that was inflicted on the people of El Salvador.

At first for me it was Rafa, a tiny boy who threw himself out of bed in terror in the night. A little boy who threw himself on the floor of the car when a car drove up behind us in the dark. A little boy who crawled below the windows after sunset, out of fear of being shot through a window. A little boy who rocked, nightly on the floor of the bedroom. A little boy who did not understand why the California rain did not warm him like the rain of El Salvador.

We realized the importance of having all the children together on weekends. They often came to my home, then in Sebastopol. At the time I was liaison to UNPO for the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota (Souix Nation). The children were reassured by the many natives who were in and out of the home. They understood the meaning of their Mayan heritage and found comfort in the ceremonies. They would sleep together in one big lump. If one had a bad dream, they would come into my bed, within a short time, I had a circular lump of five children, reassured by each others’ presence. Rosa, Gloria, Neto, Rafa and Edith lived with us and the wonderful sanctuary families of Marin between 1988 and 1994. My three children grew up thinking everyone had sisters and brothers in El Salvador that immigration forced to go home, who returned in the middle of the night, often, stayed for months, sometimes years, with new injuries and continued trauma, denied by the government that funded, armed and trained the torturers.

I continue to love them and am honored to know their truth and be part of a ” “safe-holding” community in a very dangerous world. They are adults now in spite of the efforts of the death squads. Rosa is an activist, Gloria, a Labor attorney, Rafa, also an attorney. Edith graduated from medical school in Cuba last month. Her picture was on the front page of the paper in El Salvador and in Cuba. Neto works hard, is a wonderful uncle to Rosas two children and works for their mother Mirna, who is now a Supreme Court Justice in El Salvador. They remain committed to the rebuilding of El Salvador and exposing U.S crimes against their people.

I thank Earl Herr and Michael Knappman for all their help and commitment to the health and care of my children.

Receiving Sanctuary – a personal experience

by Rosa Anaya, El Salvador

There is something about sanctuary that I will never understand, that I can't actually explain, because I only now realize after reading what you sent us. I will start at the end. "Sanctuary" does not mean a "safe place to be", what it means to be in sanctuary is to have people like you do what humanity should be doing. I am sure that there are many people from my country that left under worse circumstances than we did. We were very lucky to have my mother still alive and were able to bury my father.

I know that there are many others in "safe places," even in Marin, but have never experienced the love that we had from being in sanctuary. I learned of hate, of heroic acts, of struggle, martyrdom and admiration from my people. But I met real love from those like you who took us in, people who were not able to look away knowing that we needed help. Families took us in to their houses like their own children, you shared with us your most precious treasure which was your family, fed us not only delicious food but love, made us recuperate the trust of humans, let us know that it was not normal that people killed people, tortured people, disappeared people. Yes, we went through a lot of very difficult moments, but at the same time we had something that many people will never have in all their life. We know of looking at people's eyes and being able to clearly see straight in to their soul. Any one of the families that took us in to sanctuary could have said no, any one of those families could have continued their lives like nothing was happening in my country. Any one of those families could have ignored us completely, but they didn't. I owe the Lakota people a great treasure, and that is to have guided me back to the mother earth womb, to remember her heart's beat through people like you, to remember that we humans are not the only living thing here and that we are not the only living things that suffer. There is something that I can't explain, but it is there, something that I can almost touch, something that will be with me until my last day on earth, something that can not be taken away from me no matter what happens with my body or the circumstances that my brain has to go through. "Sanctuary" does not mean a "safe place to be." What it means to be in sanctuary is to have people like you do what you did for my family and for my people and for me. Thank you all.

Peace Press – Celebrating 20 Years!

by Susan Lamont

With this issue, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Peace Press*. We celebrate 20 years of bringing a nonviolent vision to Sonoma County. We celebrate 20 years of bringing neglected and subverted truth to light. We celebrate 20 years of passionate community.

The Peace & Justice Center (which has existed under several different names) was founded to address many peace and social justice problems and opportunities. But foremost, at that time, was the intervention by the United States into the affairs of Latin America. In a bit of serendipity, we selected Latin America and the School of the Americas as the focus for this issue well before David Anderson reminded us of this anniversary.

It's certainly possible to get discouraged when you realize that we are confronting the same struggles in 2006 that we confronted in 1986. John Negroponte and Elliot Abrams hold positions of influence with the Bush Administration. The United States helped mastermind a coup (ultimately unsuccessful!) against Hugo Chavez. The US military is heavily involved in several countries, most notably Colombia. But I've always been an optimist. I believe that this

is a long struggle, which will eventually prove successful for the people of Latin America, if not for the policy makers in this country. And I truly believe that the situation in Latin America would have been worse were it not for the work of communities like the Peace & Justice Center and newsletters like the *Peace Press*.

The cover of this 20th anniversary issue was drawn by Michele Bottaro, who was inspired by the art on the original cover. We're including a reprint of an article on Latin America from that first issue. And there was even a weekly vigil every Friday!

The founders of the *Peace Press* wrote in their premier issue, "This issue is the first to roll off our own presses, operated by a collective of volunteer printers! This fulfills a long-time dream of the movement..." We'd like to thank those who had the courage, inspiration and stamina to inaugurate the *Peace Press*. I'm already looking forward to the 30th anniversary issue and I know we'll be celebrating a vibrant and more independent Latin America.

The individuals who were responsible for "midwifing the birth of [that inaugural] issue were: Jill Abrams, Marjorie Cerletti, Darlene Comingore, Pam Davis, Rebel Fagin, Lenore Flanders, Eric Fried, Lauren Hawkins, Lucy Forest, Shirley Johnston, Paul Kaplan, Robin and Barry Latham-Ponneck, Dale McCarty, Sandy McKivens, Esther Newill, Cheryl Rayner, Gay Robinson, George Romandy, Adrienne Swensen, Shirley Thatcher, the printers' collective, and a heroic battalion of collators." Thank you!

El Salvador Wants You

The following article about peace work in Central America appeared in the first issue of the *Peace Press*:
by Eric Fried – September 1986

In May, 82 US solidarity activists visited El Salvador (including Sonoma County's Tanya Brannan). They participated in the gigantic May 1 demonstration, and met with members of the broad opposition to the US-backed government, including labor union members, church and human rights activists, students and displaced people. One of the commitments made by the US delegates was to organize a large, international conference on peace in El Salvador, to be held in San Salvador on October 15.

The conference will enable US activists to meet their counterparts in El Salvador, explore alternatives for an end to US military intervention and a peaceful resolution of the war, and bring back information usually screened out by the US media and government. This historic meeting will inspire hundreds of US citizens to work harder, better, more creatively for peace in El Salvador. When the activists return, they will fan out all over the country, speaking and showing slides, raising money, generating letters, telegrams and calls to Congress, and building the anti-war movement.

Currently, about five people from Sonoma County are planning to attend, including myself. Many of us devote countless unpaid hours to the peace movement and so cannot afford to pay our whole way (about \$800). We need your help. If you believe in what we are doing, but cannot go yourself, give us your financial support. Send \$25, \$50, \$100, \$5, whatever you can, to PPCA, 540 Pacific Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95405, and earmark it for E. S. Scholarship Fund.

New Forms of Political Intervention

by Jack Wikse

In 1823 the Monroe Doctrine declared Latin America as within the US “sphere of influence.” In 1901 the Platt Amendment asserted the right to interfere in Cuba’s internal affairs at any time. Cuba was forced to cede Guantanamo Bay to the US “in perpetuity.” In 1908 Panama was separated by US military force from Columbia for the building of the canal. These are examples of the classic forms of US intervention: “...the United States has paid off client regimes, either directly or through rigged trade, to keep them docile and loyal. We have taught state terrorism to thousands of Latin American military and police officials at the army’s School of the Americas (SOA)... We have utilized the CIA and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bring about ‘regime changes’ via coups, assassinations, or economic destabilizations and have bombed or openly invaded countries that have openly broken with or opposed our hegemony.” (C. Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire*, p.69).

This pattern of US intervention was thoroughly documented in *The Pinochet File* (New Press, W.W. Norton, 2004, the National Security Archive). CIA sponsored covert operations in Chile during the early 1970’s included kidnapping, assassination, acts of “false flag” terrorism, fomenting a military coup, funding political parties and media groups and supporting commercial espionage—or state-sponsored information piracy. This pattern is well known, and on-going: since 1989, the US has established a string of 35 new military bases between Poland and Pakistan, extending its “sphere of influence.”

But by the mid 1980’s propping up repressive military dictatorships and apartheid regimes began to have diminishing returns. The democracy movement developed in the Soviet sphere, and non-violent movements throughout the world were successful—the fall of Marcos in the Philippines and the Shah in Iran, Mandela’s rise to power and his program of forgiveness in South Africa. A string of humiliating retreats (Vietnam, the Iran hostage fiasco, the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut) set the stage for the Goldwater-Nichols Act (1986) which reorganized the Pentagon’s global reach into five commands (including outer space) under the direction of a newly empowered chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Colin Powell). This “essentially normalized the US military occupation of the planet” (Carroll, *The House of War*, p.446).

Still, more sophisticated forms of intervention were deemed necessary. In addition to the extension and consolidation of the militarism of old, these new forms of intervention are increasingly being brought together by combinations of governmental and non-governmental organizations, think tanks, financial institutions and, multilateral agencies and private corporations under the rhetoric of “nation building” or “democracy promotion.” There is a new public relations framing for US intervention abroad. It is being organized under the label of “polyarchy”—what used to be called “pluralism.” This is the claim that US government is the just product of competing elites, who are responsible to a popular electorate—a form of “democratic elitism.” This is another way of talking about “oligarchy”—the rule of the few. Now that “Liberty is on the march,” this idea is being outsourced as polyarchy. This year the US is expected to spend \$2 billion on “polyarchy promotion,” to develop what William I. Robinson calls the “social order for global capitalism” (See his “Promoting Polyarchy: The New US Political Intervention in Latin America,” www.tanbou.com).

The new US political intervention network of quasi-governmental organizations include the National Endowment for Democracy and the foreign policy arms of the Republican and Democratic parties (the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs); The Center for Democracy, the Center for International

Private Enterprise and the Free Trade Institute. Through this network today, projects that the CIA used to carry out have been consolidated and privatized. In Chile, Nicaragua and Panama this network has functioned to promote “polyarchic” or “modernized” elites tied to international banking and trade, supporting transition from dictatorship to a neoliberal restructuring of the society consistent with transnational capital interests.

To reflect these changes, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced at the beginning of this year the creation of the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization authorized by President Bush shifting \$100 million from the Pentagon to the State Department for “post-conflict” operations. This coordination of political intervention by a restructured State Department she has termed “Transformational Diplomacy.” (www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm).

In the light of these new forms of intervention, the Peace and Justice movement must develop ways to support truth rather than propaganda, diplomacy rather than elite mobilization, and non-violence rather than full-spectrum militarization of the planet.

A Brief History of the School of the Americas

by Susan Lamont and SOA Watch (www.soaw.org)

The US military’s School of the Americas (SOA) (nicknamed School of the Assassins) has a long history as a key tool in US intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean. The school was opened in Panama in 1946. By the 1970’s, Somoza’s Nicaraguan National Guard was being trained there. During El Salvador’s civil war, the Salvadoran military also trained there.

In 1983, Father Roy Bourgeois, who later founded SOA Watch, was arrested for the first time for trying to interfere with the activities of the SOA. And in 1984, the school was forced out of Panama and relocated to Fort Benning, Georgia.

On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests, their co-worker and her teenage daughter were massacred in El Salvador. A US Congressional Task Force reported that most of the killers were trained at SOA at Ft. Benning. Since then, mounting evidence proves soldiers who trained there are and continue to be responsible for the worst human rights abuses in Latin America.

Founded by Fr. Roy Bourgeois, SOA Watch began in a tiny apartment outside the main gate of Ft. Benning in 1990. The vigils and activities quickly grew, drawing upon the knowledge and experience of many in the US who had worked with people in Latin America in the 1970’s and 80’s. The Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County grew out of that same knowledge and experience.

In 1996, the Pentagon was forced to release SOA training manuals. Numerous passages encourage torture, extortion, and “neutralizing” and are permeated with contempt for law and democracy.

In 1998, over 2,000 vigilers crossed the line (stepped onto Ft. Benning). It was one of the largest civil disobedience actions since the Vietnam War. There were no prosecutions. Since that time, however, and particularly under the Bush administration, prosecutions have grown and the penalties have become more severe. At the same time, the numbers participating in the annual November gathering have almost doubled, growing to 19,000 in 2005. In 2002, the courts acknowledged the right to assemble as endowed by the First

Amendment and granted SOA Watch the right to continue gathering at the gates each November.

SOA Watch delegations have been meeting with the leaders of Latin American countries to persuade them to break their ties with SOA. In 2004, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced that he would no longer send troops to train at SOA. And this year, Uruguay and Argentina made the same decision.

Today, SOA Watch is a large, grassroots movement rooted in solidarity with the people most affected by the SOA – the poor and oppressed. The main goal of SOA Watch is to close the SOA, but also to change oppressive US foreign policy in Latin America by educating the public, lobbying Congress and participating in creative, nonviolent action. In response to the success of constituent pressure on Congress, the Pentagon launched a public relations campaign to give the SOA a new image. Their most brazen act was to simply rename the school “The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC)” in January 2001.

Despite cosmetic changes that have occurred throughout the last decade, clearly in response to grassroots exposure, people of conscience all over the world continue to call for an end to this institution that is connected to so much bloodshed and suffering.

SOA Watch has active and hard-working groups in the US and abroad. It draws much of its strength from faith communities, student groups, national and local labor unions and veterans groups around the country. And it is the hope of the Peace & Justice Center, through publishing this issue of the *Peace Press*, that more members of the peace and social justice movements in Sonoma County will be inspired to attend the SOA Watch vigil in Ft. Benning this November.

Close the School of Assassins – Vigil and Direct Action

by SOA Watch – www.SOAW.org

November marks the anniversary of the assassination of 14-year-old Celina Ramos, her mother and six Jesuit priests in El Salvador in 1989. Nineteen of the 26 Salvadoran army officers cited by a UN Truth Commission as responsible for this atrocity were trained at the School of the Americas (SOA). Since 1990, people have gathered at the gates of Fort Benning, home of the SOA, to memorialize these eight people and all those who have died at the hands of soldiers trained at this school – as well as to take action in opposition to this training and the racism, repression and failed policy it represents.

In November of 2005, 19,000 people raised their voices for justice at the Vigil to Close the SOA. Thousands listened to the stories of social movement leaders and torture survivors from across the Americas and varied musical performances. Scores of people participated in workshops and caucuses, attended film showings, networked with others and left feeling more inspired in their work for social transformation.

Here is a brief look at the weekend and prior week’s events:

Monday, November 13 – Wednesday, November 15, 2005: SOA Watchers from around the country arrive in Columbus, Georgia to create artwork, puppets and banners for the Vigil.

Thursday, November 16, 2005: Nonviolence trainings, organizing trainings and film showings begin. SOA Watch former prisoners and probationers of conscience meet. Peacemaker trainings.

Friday, November 17: Trainings and film showings continue. Labor and student caucuses, the Colombia teach-in, meetings of groups like Veterans for Peace, Witness for Peace, Pax Christi, Catholic Workers and more; anti-racism trainings, direct action planning and event celebrations.

Saturday, November 18: An opening plenary kicks off the days of hope and resistance. Rally at the gates from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with music and speakers from across the Americas. Cultural events, a concert, organizing meetings, the Ignation teach-in, and a spokes-council meeting for affinity groups and final direct action preparation happen in the evening after the rally.

Sunday, November 19: Massive memorial service and symbolic funeral procession at gates of Fort Benning, followed by puppets and festival of resistance, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Why I Went to Fort Benning, Georgia

Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been tortured, raped, assassinated, "disappeared," massacred and forced into refuge by paramilitary trained at the School of the Americas. It is appalling to me, and I am very ashamed and angry that my country promotes and runs this school in order to control the economic and political systems of other countries. Consequently, I chose to go to Fort Benning last November to say "**Stop it now, Close this school!**" Stop doing this in my name and with my tax dollar.

It was very affirming to witness the large number of high school and college students from all over the country who came to protest the actions of our country. The solemn funeral procession on Sunday during which the names and ages of the victims of the oppression are chanted and the processors hold up a cross while answering "presente" is truly moving. So much suffering! I am in awe of the brave, committed souls who "cross the line" which is an act of civil disobedience that causes them to be arrested, to pay a monetary fine and often spend time in a federal prison. They "walk the talk."

Tess Hagemann, Pax Christi Sonoma County

I view SOA Watch as my yearly pilgrimage to Mecca. It is a time when I come together with people from around the country who share my values, my ideals, my commitment to justice. Together, we grieve for the actions of our country that create more suffering in the world, and renew our determination to make our country reflect our values of love and compassion with all the world's people. I always leave SOA Watch feeling spiritually fulfilled and emotionally recharged—ready to plunge back into the hard work of peacemaking.

Medea Benjamin, Global Exchange and Code Pink

One day I asked Bill Quigley why he took the time to represent the "line-crossers" at the SOAW event. Bill is a lawyer, a professor at Loyola, heads the legal team for SOAW non-violent resisters, and many of us are familiar with his work in Haiti and New Orleans and his

essays posted on Common Dreams. I don't remember Bill's exact words, but he said something like " It's the people I meet". We've all been to plenty of protest events. There is something different happening in Columbus, GA. Everyone commits to non-violence. People from all around our nation gather non-violently, solemnly, and joyfully, and some truly committed people choose to trespass onto Fort Benning and spend time in jail. They know that there is a support group for them. Why do I go to Fort Benning? It gives me hope.

John Siler, (asked for no affiliation to be listed)

I first learned about the School of Americas through a class I took at Holy Names University on contemporary Latin America. As I learned of the many atrocities my country inflicts upon other nations in the name of Democracy, I was outraged to think that the country I had so much pride in as a child would be involved in so many shameful activities. After watching a film in class on the fight to close the SOA, I was inspired by the struggle and vowed to do something to contribute. The next fall, it was announced that Father Roy would be speaking at my school. I was called to action by his words. Shortly after his speech, it was announced that our school would send a small delegation to the demonstration that November. I was one of the first to sign up. This November will mark my third trip to Fort Benning. I am inspired to travel across the country every year to protest the SOA when I think of the countless souls silenced by this injustice. I feel I have to speak out for all of those who don't get the chance and say, "Not in my name."

Jennifer Courtright, Class of 2006, Holy Names College

I have witnessed the evil perpetrated by our government through the training of Central American assassins and terrorists, graduates of the School of the Americas, in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and even in Sonoma County with the assassination of our own Mark Pearlman in El Salvador. I have witnessed the fear and terror of El Salvadoran teachers who were kidnapped and tortured. I did body work with young women in Guatemala, daughters and wives of the disappeared. I have listened to the stories of so many Nicaraguans who have suffered under US-trained Contras. And in every experience I am ashamed and outraged with our government's imperialistic methods of control of other countries. When I am in each of these countries, I promise the people, I will return to my country to work to change our countries policies of oppression.

The SOA has a program, throughout the year, of education and lobbying which culminates in the annual vigil of a community of thousands of strong, young and old, committed fellow citizens who speak with one voice for the marginalized people of Central and South America who have no voice here in the US. Sometimes at the vigil our voices can be heard, sometimes there is a deep silence, listening only to the names of the victims, and sometimes there are those who climb the barbed wire fences to demand the closing of the schools using prison as their statements.

I go each year with hope and pray my presence will be that of one more person to make the difference. Come join us. Contact the Peace and Justice Center and let us know that you will be one more voice in the chorus to close the School of the Americas now.

Alice Waco, Board Member, The Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County

Looking for 1000 Grandmothers

by Cathy Webster

Imagine the courage of **One Thousand Grandmothers** standing together at the gates of the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. Imagine the gentle wisdom of one thousand caregivers taking action to stop the teaching of counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, military intelligence and interrogation tactics. Imagine the power of one thousand change-makers saying NO to the perpetuation of crimes against humanity, especially against indigenous communities and children.

At the gates of the US Army's School of the Americas in November 17-19, this is exactly our vision. Inspired by the Holly Near song "A Thousand Grandmothers", we hope to inspire other passionate women (and men) to join us in stopping the madness. The image of our nation's elders taking a stand is one we believe can impact the American psyche. Last fall one of the founders of the Chico Peace Endeavor, Helen Kinnee, died at age 91, after a long life of working for peace. At her memorial service, a young activist sang Holly Near's song, "A Thousand Grandmothers". Inspired by this song and by the arrest that same month of another local grandmother, Dorothy Parker, at the School of the Americas, an idea came to me: What if 1000 grandmothers around America and the world were to take this song as their rallying cry, and hand-in-hand march onto the grounds of the SOA this coming November? What if one thousand of us were willing to accept arrest and imprisonment in an effort to shut down this training school for terrorism?

We are hoping for this to be a grassroots effort. Our strategy is to get at least one group of Grandmothers from each state to organize themselves and go to Fort Benning, GA. If an average of 20 grandmothers (and grandfathers) comes from each state, we would have the wisdom and authority of 1000 elders to shed light on the foolishness of training terrorists in our so called "war on terror." From Chico, we continue to expand our website (www.1000grandmothers.net) to share information and to connect grandmothers around the country. We would also like to connect individual grandmothers to local organizing work. So, we are looking for people and organizations that are willing to be local contacts and to organize your community. If you are interested, please send an email to Sue at sue@1000grandmothers.net. Holly Near has given permission to use her song for promotion of this effort, as long as no money is earned from its use. If you have questions, ideas, or comments, please contact me at athousandgrandmothers@yahoo.com. Please note that if arrest and (probable) imprisonment is not for you right now, your soul force and presence is still critically needed. We hope you will consider joining us this November in Fort Benning, Georgia!

US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean

by Susan Lamont

We hear a lot about the military bases the US maintains throughout the Middle East and Asia, but other than those at Guantanamo and in Colombia, many of us are unfamiliar with our military's presence in Latin America. The network of bases in Latin America and the Caribbean is called its "theater architecture" by US Southern Command (SouthCom). These bases have three purposes: to facilitate our failed drug war, to ensure access to markets and resources such as oil, and to provide support in efforts favoring right-wing elements over populist governments and movements.

Because of citizen opposition, there has been a reluctance on the part of Latin American governments to be seen supporting a large-scale US military presence. The result has been a decentralization of that presence into more and smaller sites. Much of this has been accomplished through Plan Colombia.

Guantanamo Bay Naval Station is the most well known of the bases. Its lease has no termination date and it functions primarily as a logistics base and a prison.

As part of its counter-narcotics operations, the Pentagon has established CSLs (cooperative security locations) in Ecuador, Aruba, Curacao, and El Salvador. There are also 17 radar sites, primarily in Peru and Colombia. There is a missile tracking station on Ascension Island and training and helicopter support in Honduras. There is also a small military presence in Antigua and the Bahamas. Though the United States formally withdrew from Panama in 1999, it continues to have access to airports to transport cargo.

There have been some victories for those who oppose these bases. In 2003, nonviolent protest resulted in the closing of major bases in Vieques, Puerto Rico, though the Navy continues to control 200,000 square miles of ocean offshore for maneuvers. The US military also has an agreement with Costa Rica, but popular opposition has prevented its implementation. And a 50-year presence in Venezuela was terminated by Hugo Chavez in 2004.

Under the Bush administration, some of the functions of the military have been turned over to for-profit, private contractors, such as Dyncorp. US soldiers are also stationed on Latin American bases, ostensibly controlled by host-nations. These are not technically considered US bases, but can function as such. The number of military personnel stationed at these non-US bases has been substantially increased in the past couple of years.

The staff of civilian agencies operating in the region are far outweighed by military and contract employees, which exceeds more than 10,000 people. Because many of these employees are contracted by private companies, monitoring their activities is more difficult. And their presence is a legacy of past armed interventions and wars. Some of the bases were obtained through conquest and are a reminder that diplomacy often plays second fiddle to force. Resentment by local communities is also incurred because US bases do not remedy the ecological damage they cause.

One wonders what truly positive changes could be made if the vast resources used to maintain these bases were employed instead to enhance the lives of those who live in the countries in which the bases operate.

This information was provided by John Lindsay-Poland of Foreign Policy In Focus www.fpif.org.

Bolivarian Revolution Challenges Neoliberalism Indigenous movements vs. imperialism

by Rebel Fagin

Neoliberalism is the global economic imperialism of our time. It began at the 1944 Bretton-Woods Conference with the creation of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Through these agencies the lending class controls the debts of the emerging Third World. Whoever controls the debt controls the economic output of the debtor.

Sometimes economic restructuring is needed to service these debts. This may mean turning over a nation's land for growing commercial crops like cotton, instead of food for local markets. The profit, along with the nation's wealth, flows out of the country. The poorest people in the world pay sometimes over 50% of their gross domestic product to service debts from First World nations who do not need the money.

One of the tools used by the neo-liberals is the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). This trade agreement enriches the multinational corporations while impoverishing the vast majority of people it touches. In Latin America this danger has not gone unnoticed.

In 1999 Hugo Chavez was elected president under the guiding principles of the Bolivarian Revolution. These principles, embodied in the Venezuelan Constitution, call for the use of Venezuela's resources for the Venezuelans first. This makes him a threat to US-corporate interests, so on April 11, 2002, with the help of the commercial media, a CIA backed coup removed him from office. The Venezuelan people rose up and demanded him back. Three days later the anti-democratic "president", Carmona, fled to Florida and Chavez was reinstated by his people. In May 2004 Colombian paramilitaries attempted to assassinate Chavez. He has remained a constant target of corporate-CIA attacks and media misrepresentations, as has more recently, Evo Morales of Bolivia.

Evo Morales was elected President of Bolivia by a landslide in 2005. His party, MAS translates as Movement Towards Socialism. Collective ownership is an indigenous value so this movement, like many throughout Latin America, has roots deeper than socialism. It is no coincidence that Morales and Chavez are the first indigenous presidents of their respective countries.

Morales' rise followed an IMF economic restructuring that had resulted in the privatization of water. It made the gathering of rainwater a crime of theft. People hit the streets. Late in 2003 President Sanchez de Lozada was ousted and democracy evolved in the streets of La Paz.

In Argentina the government, in an attempt to satisfy an IMF loan, collapsed their economy in 2003. Since then Nestor Kirchner has come to power. He will work with the IMF, but he won't sign loan agreements he can't keep. Washington is trying to court him away from the anti-FTAA crowd. Kirchner needs Washington, but he wants the Bolivarian Revolution.

Leaders in South America see the dangers of the FTAA and have banded together to resist. Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia have signed the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean (ALBA). Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil are cooperating with this agreement. Colombia and Peru have signed with FTAA and Ecuador, as of July, is still undecided.

ALBA states that the commercial access "free trade" requires will be accompanied by provisions for compensation and assistance. The goal is to break the pattern of exploitation of Latin America for the sole benefit of northern industrialists. Several governments in Latin America are coalescing to stop the corporate imperialism that goes under the friendly face of neo-imperialism.

Sources: www.alternet.org, www.globalpolicy.org, www.worldpress.org, www.zmag.org, www.ganashakti.com, www.commondreams.org. Videos: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (c) 2004, *Chavez, Venezuela* (c) 2004, *The Fourth World War* (c) 2004.

Veterans Support Lt. Ehren Watada

by Shepherd Bliss

Army Lt. Ehren Watada's father Bob Watada gave full support to his courageous son's refusal to deploy to Iraq when he spoke Aug. 22 at the Peace and Justice Center. I was glad to be one of the military veterans who heard the dignified, humble father stand up for his son by traveling from their family home in Hawaii to tell his story.

Lt. Watada is considered brave and patriotic among the veterans' community of which I am a part. Some local vets were among the hundreds who flanked Lt. Watada when he spoke in August at the Veterans for Peace National Convention in Seattle.

I resigned my Army commission to challenge the Vietnam War. That resignation was probably the most important act of my 62 years; I am so glad that I did not go and support the killing of innocent people in a war that Americans and the world eventually would come to see was unjust, illegal, un-winnable and immoral.

Once again, each individual man or woman in the service is faced with a moral decision with respect to the Iraq War. "I was just following orders" was not a good defense at the Nuremburg Trials and will not hold up in court for the war crime trials that will probably follow the Iraq War.

Regardless of what the Army does to Lt. Watada, he is likely to be the first of more officers who will either refuse deployment to an immoral, illegal war or resign. The Pentagon admits that over 40,000 soldiers have already left the military without permission since the Iraq War began. Over 500,000 left during the Vietnam War.

Many retired generals and other officers have spoken out publicly against the Iraq War, as active duty officers have in private. They do the military and country a great service, at a time when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld disgraces our military by leading it to engage in torture, massacres, and war crimes that bring us dishonor.

Two films were shown in Sonoma County the same day that Mr. Watada spoke. The award-winning "Sir! No Sir!" documents GI resistance to the Vietnam War, which helped stop that war. "Homefront" is a new film by Sonoma State Professor Michael Little about a soldier on leave challenged by a high school girlfriend to follow the example of someone who was honorably discharged in 2004 when he turned in his rifle at the Abu Graib prison. Those films will continue to be shown in the days to come.

Our Veterans' Writing Group has existed for over a dozen years, meeting in Sonoma County since 1996. Our book "Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace," edited by award-winning author Maxine Hong Kingston, was published by Koa Books in September. It includes nonfiction, poetry, and fiction by 80 veterans. Though the members of our group have a diversity of political views, we support people taking courageous actions based on their consciences, like Lt. Watada has done. We will have local readings at Copperfield's Books, Quicksilver Mine Co., New College, and Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County. More on our book is available at www.vowvop.org and on Lt. Watada at www.thankyoult.org.

Shepherd Bliss, sb3@pon.net, owns Kokopelli Farm in Sebastopol and has contributed to three anti-war books since 9/11.

Election in Mexico – A Struggle for Justice

by Marta Berlanga

A 16th century indigenous chronicler describes the beginning of a slaughter by the soldiers of Pedro de Alvarado in the sacred patio of the main temple of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). *“They ran in among the dancers, forcing their way to the place where the drums were played. They attacked the man who was drumming and cut off his arms. Then they cut off his head, and it rolled across the floor.*

They attacked all the celebrants, stabbing them, spearing them, striking them with their swords. They attacked some of them from behind, and these fell instantly to the ground with their entrails hanging out. Others they beheaded: they cut off their heads, or split their heads to pieces.

They struck others in the shoulders, and their arms were torn from their bodies. They wounded some in the thigh and some in the calf.

They slashed others in the abdomen, and their entrails all spilled to the ground. Some attempted to run away, but their intestines dragged as they ran; they seemed to tangle their feet in their own entrails. No matter how they tried to save themselves, they could find no escape.”

Following the preliminary announcement of the results of the Mexican presidential election held on July 2, thousands of poor and old people, peasant organizations, activist groups and other supporters of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who was pronounced the second place candidate in the voting, took to the streets of downtown Mexico City. They have been joined by women’s groups, indigenous people, gays and lesbians, and other neighborhood and grassroots voters, declaring that conservative candidate Felipe Calderon’s announced victory is the result of voter fraud, including disqualified, lost, misplaced and hidden ballots.

Since the early weeks of July, when the protest reached the 2.5 million people mark, the Zocalo and Reforma Avenue—one of Mexico City’s main boulevards—have been occupied and now stretch for seven miles through areas where many of the city’s luxury hotels and corporate headquarters are located. Living, meeting and concert spaces as well as communal kitchens and recreation areas have been set up. In a city with more than 2.5 million people unemployed, a joyous and hopeful community thrives. Vendors sell what few things they can. Charming street poets and merchants draw attention to their meager wares with good-humored shouts and political songs. People are happy. A revolutionary spirit, newly embodied, especially in the presence of many women and mothers, has been awakened in long ignored and unrepresented people. Much hope has been placed in the success of Lopez Obrador.

A partial recount of 9% of all the ballots cast narrowed the margin of Calderon’s lead, which was originally said to be about one half of one percent. Each partial reexamination of the ballots has seen a shrinking of the lead. Requests for a complete counting of all disqualified and hidden ballots were ignored by Mexico’s election court that stated that it did not have the authority to order such action. Obrador’s backers dispute such claims.

Obrador has said that he will establish a parallel government to counter the one legitimized by Mexico’s elite. He has called for a national convention in the Zocalo with a million delegates to declare that all political authority rests in the hands of the people as

stated in the constitution. There are plans to launch street protests of government privatization and free trade reforms, form a Cabinet, set policy and choose a capital.

There is a tradition of the parallel government in Mexico. During the 1862-67 French invasion, while Emperor Maximilian controlled the country, Benito Juarez established a resistance government until his armies expelled the foreigners. A convention near the end of the 1910-17 Revolution helped end the chaos and create a stable government and constitution.

Yearly on September 16 in downtown Mexico City, the military parades in the Zocalo to commemorate the nation's war for independence from Spain. The night before, the president holds a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the call to arms. Lopez Obrador told his supporters to lift the camps and make way for the parade. It is unclear whether the camps will return after the ceremonies.

The resistance knows how to wait, but it does not give up. The people have raised their heads with pride! They will not get discouraged! They resist today because they resisted yesterday. They will resist tomorrow because in each citizen of Mexico is the roots of the civil and peaceful struggle that is part of Mexican history. The people believe that they can help the nation become a better place for future generations. It is time to reaffirm the citizen's rights and the ideals of freedom, democracy and justice.

Marta Berlanga was born in Mexico City. She is a Family Mentor for the Santa Rosa School District.

NAFTA and Immigration – Cause and Effect

by Debra Birkinshaw

The North American “Free Trade Agreement”: There is nothing “free” about it, and there is some question about whether there is actual “agreement” between the US and other countries concerning trade. The US uses coercion by threatening to limit access to its own markets.

As a volunteer ESL teacher at the Centro Laboral de Graton, I am deeply affected by the plight of the day laborers I encounter there. Everyone I've met has endured a similar struggle. They left Oaxaca, Mexico, were torn from their families, and in many cases, risked their lives to cross the US border in search of the livelihood lost to them when NAFTA took effect in 1994.

“The Bush Administration has sought to control immigration at the border, but that's virtually impossible,” states Harley Shaiken, director of UC Berkeley's Center for Latin America Studies. “The beginnings of immigration are in the displacement of farmers in Mexico.”

Under NAFTA, Mexican corn farmers are unable to counteract US importation of crops. Prices have fallen dramatically, resulting in loss of income and subsequent poverty. With the phasing out of protective tariffs and governmental cash subsidies by January 2008, the outlook is bleak. “There's no way peasant farmers in Oaxaca are going to be competitive with highly subsidized, very productive farms in Iowa,” Shaiken emphasizes. Thus, the migration over the US border, in search of gainful employment is fueled by US trade policies.

I had the opportunity to speak with Gervacio Peña, a local activist with “Frente Indígena.” He is from Oaxaca, and corroborates the experience of Mexican farmers described by Shaiken. Gervacio is gravely concerned about the way the migrant workers are treated in our county. “The pay they get is not equal to what they contribute. There are very poor living-conditions people sleeping under bridges. (Vineyard owners) want them to work—pick grapes—but they don’t want to provide housing.” Gervacio stresses the need to “educate our community about reforming immigration laws.”

To learn more about how to support these efforts, contact Davin Cárdenas at the Graton Labor Center, (707) 829-1864.

Sources: *Frontera Norte Sur*, Aug-Sept. 2006: www.nmsu.edu/~frontera/immi.html, *SF Chronicle* 7/31/06, www.bilaterals.org/article-print.php3?id_article=5715.

***The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War* by Gioconda Belli**

Book review by Serena Coltrane-Briscoe

Born into Nicaragua’s upper class in 1950, Gioconda Belli describes her political awakening and ensuing leftist involvement in this captivating memoir. Always anti-Somoza, her family engaged in politics to a minor extent, but in 1970 Belli made a drastic leap to join ranks with the Sandinistas. *The Country Under My Skin* weaves Belli’s personal stories with the history of the Sandinista Revolution. She takes the reader from her childhood in 1952 through a chronological reading of the events of her own life, which become ever more linked to the political climate of her country as time progresses. Belli writes of growing up surrounded by Managua’s high society, being educated abroad, becoming a debutante, and soon a young bride. She gives birth to two daughters, and upon her re-entrance to the work world, begins to meet artists, poets, and socialists who lure her into the revolutionary movement. In her early twenties, she begins a double life, hiding her Sandinista involvement from her husband and family.

Belli grows and changes throughout the book, eventually separating from her husband, as the Revolution takes on a greater role in her life. She describes her friendships and relationships with other revolutionaries, and tells of the unities and divisions that occur among the Sandinistas, describing their workings and methods. Belli describes the dangerous missions she is assigned, taking us with her as she is nearly discovered or caught on many occasions. She is finally forced into exile, during which time she meets statesmen such as El Salvador’s General Torrijos and Cuba’s Fidel Castro. Belli takes us through the Sandinista take-over and beyond to describe the subsequent US interventions that led to the ultimate demise of the Sandinista government.

In a thoughtful, beautifully written reflection of her own journey and the Revolution that she lived, Gioconda Belli leaves us with much to consider about life, politics, and humanity.

PJC section

PJC Annual Dinner and Auction

The annual dinner and auction of the Center for Peace and Justice of Sonoma County will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2006 at the Sebastopol Veterans Building.

The silent auction and pre-dinner sharing opens at 4:00 pm and the dinner is scheduled for 6:30, followed by the award ceremony honoring community activists.

The dinner/auction is our principle fundraiser. We also celebrate our Center and each other in our peace community. We are a strong and influential voice in Sonoma County.

We are looking forward to an interesting and enjoyable evening together. This year we are commemorating the life and work of Rabbi Michael Robinson.

We always have a great auction. Come early to bid and please look around your home for any exciting items to donate. Call Alice at 545-1798 to arrange to drop off items.

Peacemaker of the Year Award: Rebel Fagin

by Barry Latham-Ponneck

I first met Rebel Fagin in the late 70's just after 3 Mile Island's near meltdown, which activated myself, and brought me to the door's of SONOMoreAtomics where we met. SONOMoreAtomics was always on the verge of abject poverty, so Rebel and I decided to put on a fund raiser, which became the first in a series of wonderful "free" outside concerts in the Cotati Plaza. Rebel booked the bands, and worked as stage manager. Thus was born a beautiful and at times stressful partnership, which we named Bar/Hyperdrive_productions. I was the Bar, Rebel was . . . ?

The concerts were great! 5 or 6 bands playing all day in the warm summer.

As I can remember the concerts were: Stop Diablo Jam, Rock against Radiation, Bohemian Boogie, Between the Bombs, and Bohemian Blast.

Rebel and I were both Non-Violently trained at the Cotati Cabaret, by our two good friends, Monty Walters & Darlene Comingore, just in time for 1981 massive demonstration at Diablo Canyon, where both of us were arrested for Civil Disobedience (CD).

Rebel began accumulating CD arrests, at such pillars of freedom, justice and the Amerikan way: Lawrence Livermore Labs, Rancho Seco (SMUD office), Concord Naval Weapons Station, and up in the sleepy little town of Fortuna, in a protest to save the great northwest Redwoods.

Rebel was very eclectic in his political work, nuclear power, Central American solidarity work, environmental activism, where there was injustice, greed, falsehoods, Rebel was there to right the wrongs – with his body, his mind and his words. Among his numerous talents, Rebel is an articulate, poignant, and prolific poet.

Rebel brought his passion, knowledge and political savvy to the classroom where he teaches at Healdsburg High. A number of years ago Rebel was instrumental in establishing "the progressive club", an on-campus student club that as it's name implies, is taking a progressive stand on issues such as the draft, the WAR, and immigrant rights.

Rebel Fagin is an honorable man, a renaissance man if you will, and a man who I am proud to have as a friend.

Russ and Mary Jorgensen Courage of Commitment Award: Rabbi Michael Robinson

Rabbi Michael Robinson dedicated his life to promoting justice and seeking peace and reconciliation in social conflicts such as the American Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Nicaraguan Contra War, and the Israel-Palestine Conflict. He served on the Sonoma County Task Force on Homelessness as chair for five years, on the advisory board for Children's Village and Habitat for Humanity, as a monitor for Sonoma Land Trust, as an outspoken advocate of the Living Wage Coalition, a dedicated member of the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center, and a Community Evaluator for Project Censored.

Rabbi Robinson agitated locally for economic justice and racial equality on specific issues such as affirmative action, civilian review boards, free press, access to health care, marriage equality, and affordable housing. He put his beliefs on the line by being arrested at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory protesting the development of nuclear arms, blocking the entrance to South African Embassy, to the United Nations and to the street leading to the Chinese embassy as part of the Fellowship of Reconciliation protest against all nuclear powers. In 1992 he helped in the creation of the African-American Jewish Coalition for Justice in Seattle to "promote economic justice, combat hate crimes, and develop goodwill and mutual cooperation between the members of both communities in order to build a more equitable and just society."

In 1994 after Santa Rosa outlawed homeless people from sleeping in their cars, he organized a "sleep-in" for homeless. It was a source of frustration that he couldn't get arrested. "We protested against the ordinance against families sleeping in their cars with sleep-ins for three months in front of City Hall and the police station. We never could move City Hall."

For a quarter of a century, Rabbi Robinson has been on the board of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, one of the oldest interfaith peace organizations in the country. Through the group, he has visited the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in the past, to gain perspective on their life experience. "I'm not pro-Palestinian and I'm not pro-Israel – I'm pro-humanity. I've struggled to keep my integrity and to do what I needed to do and be what I needed to be, in a difficult world."

Community Award: The Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County

The Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County (CIRSC) is a coalition of individuals and community organizations formed to educate, propose and mobilize the immigrant community around legal and social issues that affect them and their families. CIRSC supports a comprehensive Immigration Reform and advocates for a respect of the dignity and the civil rights of immigrants.

CIRSC has organized some of the largest marches in Sonoma County history. It believes that the immigrant community stands together in order to work, produce, and contribute to this county. CIRSC adheres to such principles of solidarity as No to the militarization of the border, No to the criminalization of immigrant communities, No to the guest worker program and No to HR4437. They say Yes to legalization for undocumented immigrants, Yes to immigrant family re-unification, Yes to a humane path to citizenship, Yes to labor rights and living wages for all workers, and Yes to non-hypocritical border policies. CIRSC hopes to emphasize the commonalities amongst citizens and non-citizens alike as opposed to solely focusing on what divides us.

New Social Contract Update

by Susan Lamont and Jack Wikse

On Thursday, August 17th, the Board held its second public discussion of its 2-plus year project, the New Social Contract. We met to discuss the framework of the project. The goal is to articulate a peaceful and just world, not just in terms of lofty visions, but the specifics for making it happen.

We are not meeting to re-invent the wheel. There are many very articulate and beautiful contracts, vision statements, and platforms already in existence. But most of them are very short on details of the “how”. Even within our peace community, there are doubters about the possibility of making these visions real. If *they* aren’t convinced, imagine how the mainstream public feels!

Just as there are many models out there, so are there many suggestions for ways in which to bring these models to life. Our job is to do the research and networking necessary to bring these ideas together into a coherent whole. The result will be “position papers” on each subject showing paths toward change and connections between topic areas. Our goal is not only to make change desirable, but to make its possibility believable and even inevitable.

At the meeting we discussed the problems we may face. How will we protect against fragmentation between the issue areas? Will there be an overall vision that will connect the topics? How will we know if we are successful? This will not be an easy process and I imagine that we will revisit these concerns many times.

Because our position papers must be in keeping with the Center’s Mission Statement and because non-violence is central to that statement, we discussed what it would mean to think of the topics from that standpoint? It was suggested that we should be developing a partnership model of participatory process in what we do – as opposed to decision-making through domination that doesn’t solve problems. It was said that violence is not simply a matter of domination, but has to do with what is destructive. Non-violence is therefore creative and inventive. We wondered how we might foster leadership accountable to non-violent values that will affirm quality-of-life needs. Assumptions about “artificial scarcity” affect how we think of ourselves as pitted against one another as competitive individuals, not as “social beings”.

A very different assumption would be that there is enough good for all (Gandhi’s “enough for every man’s need, not for every man’s greed”), and we are able to collaborate with and support one another. We need to educate and work on ourselves (“teach peace”) in order to face the depth and subtlety of pervasive everyday violence. Our discussion and questions brought us back to our views of a dialogal, “partnership” process. The question “How do we change a whole paradigm?” led us to think again about a shared meaning for “violence”.

We had originally planned to begin our discussion of specific topics with the September 21st meeting, but the group became so engrossed in the discussion of process and of violence/non-violence, that we chose to continue that discussion at the next meeting. From the beginning, this project has been presented as collaborative work without a top-down dictation of process or scheduling. Therefore, the decision of the group over-rode any previously determined schedule. Therefore, pending the results of the upcoming meeting (which will take place before the *Peace Press* goes to print), the first discussion of a specific topic will be held on October 19th. Check the on-line calendar or call the Center for final details.

Anthology of Poems by Veterans

A new poetry anthology, *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace*, compiled by author Maxine Hong Kingston, was celebrated at Paradise Ridge Winery's sculpture grove on Sunday, Sept. 10th. The author, who has been working with war veterans for many years, selected the poems from her students' work. The audience was deeply moved by the four veterans who spoke from their memories of soldiering not only for the sake of healing, but to clearly illustrate the irrevocable costs of war. Also presented that day was the completion of *The Peace or War Wall*, a collaborative ceramic sculpture that contains 90 masks made by many local artists. Words on peace topics from other poets, as well works from visual artists were also represented in the Grove. There will be another reading from *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace* at the Peace and Justice Center on Friday, October 6th at 7:00pm.