

SONOMA COUNTY

# peace press

Publication of the Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County

**FOR JUSTICE SO THAT ALL MAY LIVE IN PEACE**

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Guard Our Food from Nuclear Accidents
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*[click here to see more](#)*



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**Deadline to submit articles for the Dec 2023/Jan 2024 issue, is Nov. 15.**

Email articles with title on the document, in MSWord to [zenekar2@gmail.com](mailto:zenekar2@gmail.com)  
(put PEACE PRESS in all caps on subject line)

Word limit up to 900 words (negotiable).

Shorter pieces welcome about local actions and events.

**Authors are encouraged to delineate fact from opinion and wherever possible to substantiate their facts with references. Include ways readers can engage with the movement for peace and social justice.**

We welcome poems but limited to approx. 30 lines.

### EDITING POLICY

The Editorial Collective selects articles that serve the movement for peace and social justice to inspire and motivate readers to positive action. Articles are edited for clarity, syntax, grammar, length and spelling. If needed, authors will be contacted to assist with editing.

Submissions must contain author's name, address, phone number, word count and a brief – one or two sentence bio. Decisions about editing fall within these guidelines and are the final judgment of the Peace Press Editorial Collective.

**Articles are the opinion of the author unless otherwise noted.**

### CALENDAR ITEMS

Events on topics of social justice, environmental, and related items to be placed in the PJC weekly email calendar, can be sent to [peacejusticesonoma@gmail.com](mailto:peacejusticesonoma@gmail.com)  
Include CALENDAR (in caps) on subject line.

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PJC office hours: 1-4 PM, M-F. Best to call ahead to ensure volunteers are available when you visit. To receive the weekly Social Justice e-newsletter, go to: [PJCso.org](http://PJCso.org)

# Events Coming to the PJC

by PJC Board of Directors

We received a letter from a member the other day along with a donation. The writer said how important the Center is and how all of us need to create a new peace movement. We couldn't agree more.

In August the Board of Directors held its monthly meeting in person instead of on zoom. The difference was huge. It was warm, communicative. It reminded us all that we are human beings and not electronic pixels glowing in splendid isolation. Together we can create a more peaceful world.

On Thursday, November 2, Christian Stalberg will present a talk about his trip to Venezuela, and Venezuela's Irreversible Bolivarian Revolution. Come and learn about a different way to structure society, a way that benefits the working class and indigenous peoples. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Read the weekly PJC e-blast for details.

Your Peace & Justice Center will be participating in the Win-

terblast 2023 event in Santa Rosa's South A street SOFA Art District between Juilliard Park and Sebastopol Ave. This family-oriented, fun, street party will be held on November 4, 3:00–8:30 pm. We plan on having a float for the parade. Join us. Stop by the Center. We'll have music, libations and fellowship there waiting for you. If you want to help in the planning, contact us. After all, it is your Peace & Justice Center.

We are pleased to announce the first in a series of teach-ins being held at your Peace & Justice Center. On November 30, Zero Waste Sonoma will present a teach-in on Zero Waste, how to do it and why. Employing Zero Waste practices is one way you can help reduce the impacts of climate change, like fires.

Lots happening at the PJC. Learn all about them by going to [pjsoco.org](http://pjsoco.org) and reading our weekly PJC e-blast. Find something you like, then come out and bathe in the warmth of humanity. Together we can make this a more just and peaceful world. 🌱

## Cultivating a Peace Economy

by Jodie Evans

As peace activists, we feel deeply the pain of war. We feel deeply our brothers and sisters abroad, and right here at home, suffering at the hands of the war economy in which we live. We feel our planet suffering as well. We're not always sure of what to do, but we do know that it's our love for people that causes us to speak out, to resist, risk and fiercely show up in the face of so much adversity.

In the face of the violent culture of genocide and slavery on which our country was built, radical love is an act of rebellion. Our reality is that the dominant culture that we all live in is one of deep-seated violence, and we're all affected by that in our own ways.

*It is up to us who are living in the war-and-terror-based empire that is the US, to change our habits.*

But as we've witnessed from great movements across history, with vision and intention, people change culture. And once culture shifts, political change can happen.

As an anti-war activist, it became clear to me during the Obama administration years – a time when the antiwar movement and peace movement were shriveled to near nothing because few would listen – that we would not end war until we ended the war economy. War serves the war economy, which is the extractive, destructive, oppressive economy that's killing us, our communities, and the planet. That has never been more vividly clear than right now.

At this time in history, we are living through our own mythological flood. Cultures all around the world have stories of floods that have swept through with mass upheaval and destruction. With the

effects of global inequality, climate change, \$2 trillion worth of weapons sold each year, and the impending AI – all these experiments on humanity, are going to bring a violence unlike any seen before. We are witnessing it already, in whole cities being burned to ash by fires in the US and around the world, in floods in Pakistan that have displaced 100 million people, in worsening weather everywhere, in the disappearing permafrost and the droughts and food shortages around the world.

**The local peace economy is the ark that can take us through this flood.**

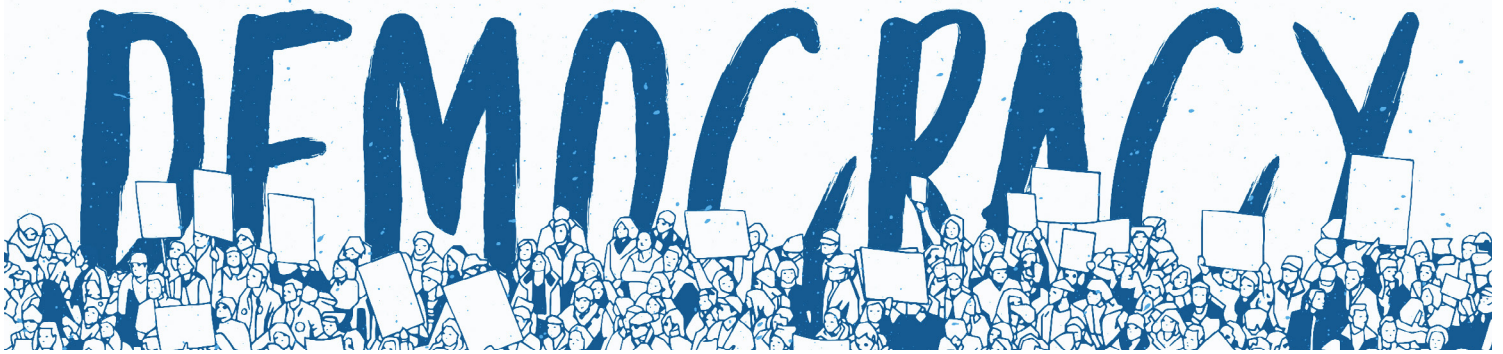
A peace economy is the giving, sharing, thriving, caring economy, without which none of us would be alive. It is the sharing of resources, and the remembrance that there is enough abundance for all of us on this planet. It is the return to a culture that understands true value and that wealth exist in nurturing life, love and joy. It is the uplifting of all people.

The US empire has actively destroyed the very concept of peace economy since its founding, by the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Indigenous peoples who lived in a way that sustained life and humanity. We can see now that this system of domination, colonialism and greed has risen to a crescendo of violence, destruction, and the contortions of humanity.

As we look out at the power structures, and the level of violence in our world, we can feel small, fragile, and incapable. While we didn't create the war economy, we are all a part of it. It has forced our habits. It has forced our behaviors. The first thing we can do is to begin to shift our investment of energy away from the war economy.

The realities of living through COVID did a very good job of teaching us what is essential for life, and teaching us how locked we are in an enslavement to the war economy. Divesting ourselves from the war economy is a cyclical, ever-winding journey that will

*Cultivating a Peace Economy...see page 20*



# Imagining a Thriving Democracy

by Paul Robbins

“People are aware that they cannot continue in the same old way, but they are immobilized because they cannot imagine an alternative. We need a vision that recognizes that we are at one of the great turning points in human history, when the survival of our planet and the restoration of our humanity require a great sea change in our ecological, economic, political, and spiritual values.”

– Grace Lee Boggs

I invite you to imagine what a thriving democracy would be for you. What would you see happening around you? In your community? In society?

A minimal democracy could be described as having at least the right to vote easily without interference. It would also give everyone a right to participate in public conversation about the issues of the time, the impact of the issues, and what the solutions would be. Tragically, we don’t even have that right now in the USA.

Stepping ahead a bit, a participatory democracy could be described as one that is pluralistic and inclusive. It would be multiracial, multiethnic, multiclass, and multigenerational. In a participatory democracy everyone is engaging together in public decision-making.

Moving further into what is possible, a thriving democracy would also be a social democracy. In my imagined social democracy, there would be a human right to societal action for:

- Clean air, water, and soil
- Food
- Housing
- Health care
- Life-long education
- A living wage
- Comfortable retirement
- Leisure

Stretching our imaginations further, there would be democracy everywhere, to include work. There would be worker-owned and directed enterprises in every community.

None of the above is fantasy. There are examples all around the world if we take the time to explore. However, you won’t hear it or read it in the “news business,” because in capitalism “business” trumps the “news.”

For example, permanent real estate cooperatives (PRECs) are built on land trusts where the property is owned by the members of the cooperative, and the members manage the property as well. Check out the East Bay [Permanent Real Estate Cooperative](#). Other examples are the worker-owned and managed cooperatives in Mon-

dragon in the Basque region of Spain and throughout the Indian state of Kerala.

Looking at public education, which is essential for a culture of democracy, the USA is the only rich country that does not have a constitutional right to an education. In fact, 50 years ago in *San Antonio vs Rodriguez*, the US Supreme Court ruled that there is no such federal right. As a consequence, the education gaps between states are greater than that within states. However, a movement is afoot to change that, and [you may join the struggle](#).

Students nationwide are also taking leadership roles to make a quality education their right. They have developed a draft [National Student Bill of Rights](#) which encourages people to engage in the process of evolving and establishing such a bill of rights. Imagine students in Sonoma County issuing “report cards” at meetings of

*How does my description of a thriving democracy here in Sonoma County match your imagination? What would you add? What would be your priority?*

their school boards, city councils, county officials, and state and national legislators, showing all the ways that the students are being failed in their rights and demanding redress. Such action would be formative for our next generation of leaders in creating a thriving democracy.

Further, since voting rights is paramount in even a minimal democracy, why don’t students have a right to vote on issues that affect them? Why don’t immigrants and all residents of our communities have a right to vote on issues that affect all of us?

Clearly there is much work to be done to make real a thriving democracy, but it is possible. It’s difficult, yes, and may take generations, but why are we waiting? I assure you that you will find yourself living a life in community with great meaning and joy in the struggle together. That life will fill your heart and strengthen your imagination.

So now I invite you to stretch further. How does my description of a thriving democracy here in Sonoma County match your imagination? What would you add? What would be your priority? To what would you commit to embody a participatory democracy right

*Imagining a Thriving Democracy...see page 21*

# NAACP – Celebrating 70 Years of Civil Rights and Social Justice in Sonoma County

by *Danielle Garduño*

Many of us have heard of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and may know a member or two. The NAACP is full of rich history, both nationally and locally. As the Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP celebrates its seventieth anniversary, our branch encourages community members to learn more about our history and join us in the fight for racial equity and social justice.

## History

Created on February 12, 1900, the NAACP is the home of grassroots activism for civil rights and social justice with members across the country advocating, agitating, and litigating for the civil rights due to Black Americans. The vision of the NAACP is envisioning an inclusive community rooted in liberation, where all people can exercise their civil and human rights without discrimination. The NAACP's mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all people of color. Working to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes, the NAACP has more than 2,200 units with over two million members throughout the United States.

## Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP

The Santa Rosa-Sonoma County branch of the NAACP is our local unit, and is celebrating its 70-year anniversary. The branch was co-founded by Gilbert Gray and O. Platt Williams in 1953, after securing 300 memberships and receiving its national charter. The original membership included the Santa Rosa City Council and Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Williams became the branch's first president, with Mr. Gray serving as the vice president and Rev. Ann Gray-Byrd serving as the branch's first Secretary.

The branch quickly went to work, tackling issues of housing discrimination, equal opportunity in education and employment, segregated businesses and prejudice in lending. In 1959, members arranged for, and sponsored, Melva Joy Patillo (Beals), one of the Little Rock Nine, to come to Santa Rosa and complete high school at Montgomery High School. Members also picketed Kress and Woolworth stores and participated in sit-ins, protesting segregated lunch counters in the South, and those still segregated in Santa Rosa.

In the mid-1970s, the branch began a watch patrol program in response to incidents of police brutality. The program deployed "monitors" who tailed police officers on duty to watch and observe their interactions with community members. The branch also worked to provide opportunities for young people through the development of youth memberships and programming, as well as actively participated in local and state elections, registering voters and providing education on candidates.

Currently, the branch has 150 active members and is led by President Kirstyne Lange, First Vice President Nzinga Woods, and second Vice President Dmitra Smith. The branch is supported by Secretary Danielle Garduño, Assistant Secretary Lindsey Franco, and Treasurer Regina Brennan. Over the last few years, the branch has undertaken many activities and initiatives, including participating in

the development of various local housing elements; advocating for environmental justice issues and solutions, participating in efforts to ensure transparency of local governments and law enforcement agencies, elevating the voices of youth and providing opportunities for young people to be civically and socially engaged, advocating for individuals experiencing homelessness and creating programs to increase access to mental health services and culturally representative clinicians and therapists for Black community members and other people of color.

While the branch holds regular monthly membership meetings, the bulk of the work takes place in committees. These committees include Criminal Justice, Education, Economic Development, Environmental Justice, Freedom Fund, Health, Housing, Membership, Veterans Affairs, and YouthWorks. Members are encouraged to participate in at least one committee with a commitment of 4-6 hours per month.

## Civil Rights, Social Justice, and You

There are many reasons to become a member of the Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP. Being a member offers individuals an opportunity to give back to their community through advocacy, education and civic engagement. Members make a difference each and every day in the fight for justice and equity, and our branch relies on the commitment and dedication of our members to help us stand up to racial disparities that are still too prevalent in our community and across the country. Being a member of the Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP also allows members to work with activists and organizers in the local branch – organize marches, rallies, and direct action campaigns to bring attention to local issues, support access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, advocate for laws and policies to improve our community, participate in voter registration and "get out the vote" campaigns and attend national events, regional conferences, and trainings to sharpen individual and collective advocacy and leadership skills.

Memberships range from \$10 annually for youth and \$30 annually for adults to a variety of lifetime membership options. For more information about membership and to join the Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP, [please visit the local chapter website](#) or [send an email](#).

References: Gray-Byrd, A. and Graves, S. (2011). *Glimpses: A History of African Americans in Santa Rosa, California*. (A copy can be found at the Sonoma County Library) NAACP (2003): [Our History](#). 🙌

*Become a member of the local chapter of NAACP*



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# Oct. 22 Movement to End Police Brutality: The Work Continues

by Susan Lamont

The irony of the killing of 13-year-old Andy Lopez by Sonoma County Sheriff's Deputy Erick Gelhaus on October 22, the International Day Against Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation, was not lost on those who had been active against this national scourge for many years. We continue this work in his name and in the hope of reducing the number of future victims.

This October 22 will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Andy's killing. As in past years, a memorial will be held that Sunday afternoon at Andy's Unity Park at Moorland and West Robles Avenues. Plans have not been finalized nor a time chosen at the time of this writing, but there will most likely be a short religious ceremony because of the faith of Andy's family. In the past this has been followed by a community gathering around a shared meal. The Peace & Justice Center will be apprised of the final plans and there will also be posts on Facebook.

The organizing for the International Day Against Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation began in 1996, and the founders selected the October date because students would be back in school and the day would fall before November elections. The organizers' mission "is to mobilize those directly under the gun of police terror, alongside those who are relatively immune to state violence, to derail the atrocities of police brutality, mass incarceration, and political repression."

This is exactly what happened after Andy was killed. People of color, especially students, took to the streets many times, while making their grievances heard at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and city council meetings. Those of us with greater privilege were there in support, also taking the role of chastising politicians who demanded calm and civility from a community that had long been ignored.

This mass action forced the board to create a task force that

would make recommendations. They mandated three months of work. This made clear the supervisors' distance from the problem and ignorance of its severity. They eventually expanded the work to fifteen months.

Of the twenty-one recommendations, only three were accepted by the board of supervisors. The most significant was the creation of IOLERO – the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Oversight. It began with a minimal budget and no power, as advocated by Supervisors David Rabbitt and Shirlee Zane and the Sheriff. Through the hard work of advocates Measure P made it to the ballot, was passed by two-thirds of the electorate and, as a result, IOLERO has more money, more staff, subpoena power and the right to conduct investigations alongside the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Up until now, it could only review the sheriff's investigations.

But IOLERO still has no real power to enforce changes on sheriff's office policy. Current state law prohibits this. It can only make recommendations. The sheriff's office doesn't even have to respond to the recommendations, though sometimes it does, usually by rejecting them.

That leaves us with the power that got us this far – public opinion and activist pressure. So, what do we do?

There are four major levers of public power: IOLERO, particularly through its Community Advisory Council (attend their meetings!), CLEAN – the Committee For Law Enforcement Accountability Now, the same group that wrote Measure P, North Bay Organizing Project's Police Accountability Task Force (sign up for their newsletter!) and individual activists who attend meetings and draw attention to the problems and solutions (be a noise maker!).

One positive change outside the sheriff's office has been greater coverage of IOLERO's work by the *Press Democrat*. This has come

[Oct. 22 Movement to End Police Brutality...see page 20](#)

## BOOK REVIEW: Democracy At Work: A Cure for Capitalism

by Dana Bellwether

In his new book, *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism*, Richard Wolff, professor emeritus of economics at the University of Massachusetts and author of *Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do About It*, lays out the process by which capitalism benefits those who already have access to exceptional amounts of money, at the expense of those who are just getting by, if that.

Someone in a comfortable material position gets the funds to buy materials and a plant, and to hire workers. The workers' labor adds a great deal to the materials' value – as a table is much more valuable than separate pieces of wood. But the workers don't get the value of their labor, minus the cost of materials and plant. They are hired cheaply.

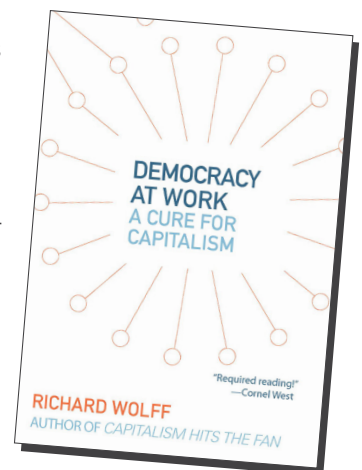
However, under a rational economic system, any group of people who could make a good case for their competence to organize a certain kind of business could get a government loan to start one. They would then collect the value of their labor in the form of cash, considerably more than what they get as capitalist wages. Besides that, they'd be making all the business's decisions themselves – how much to spend on marketing, how much for on-site childcare for parent workers, etc.

How would a workers' co-op make decisions without its vendors giving up in despair of ever hearing back from the business, and without throwing darts at a spinning board? One way is consensus, which in

my experience works fine if you have a month to make the decision. Another is to vote, and if one smaller group within the co-operative consistently loses the vote, let that group make the decision from time to time.

There is one major point I would add, since Wolff seems to assume businesses would be run the same as they are now, insofar as having the co-op members doing the work for which the business, is known and others doing the cleaning, repair, billing and so forth. Personally, I'd want all of my workers' co-op members to learn all of the jobs and rotate positions. One thing feminists learned in the 1970s is that the more people know how to do each job, the harder the group is to derail by taking down one or two central people. 🐿

*Dana Bellwether has worked for 60 years for lasting peace, social & political equality and material sufficiency.*



# How I Went All Electric and Why You Should Too

*Bonnie Allen*

December 8, 2022, was a red-letter day in our household. It's the day that PG&E came to our house and disconnected the gas line. The pipe that goes into the house is capped off and padlocked. We took pictures and everything. The reason I took this step is that my house is now all electric, and yet I was paying a \$4 monthly fee for the gas feed. Not that it's a big deal, but it turns out that I also now get a better rate on my electricity, which is given to encourage people to go all electric.

Last year we went to Sonoma Clean Power's Advanced Energy Center to look at the new, much more efficient electric appliances. I was surprised that some of these were almost free after the state and SCP rebates.

After thinking it over, we found contractors through the Advanced Energy Center and a group called The Switch is On, recommended by HomeIntel's energy coach James Tuleya. (Full disclosure: He contracts with PG&E to promote electrical appliances.) Since we don't have central heating in our small older house and never felt the need for it, we opted for a mini-split heat pump heater to replace our aging gas wall heater and a heat pump water heater in place of our decades-old gas water heater.

## The bad news

I'm not going to kid you. It's expensive to install these appliances. (But help is on the way. See below.) We got bids from numerous contractors, and they were all over the map. Many contractors were unfamiliar with the installation procedure. (In Europe, they're old hat. Most homes now have them.) The contractor with the lowest bid understood exactly what we wanted. The new water heater is in the laundry closet, which had plenty of room, and the virtue of being right next to an outside wall, so the condenser for the unit was installed outside, and we couldn't hear the noise when it fired up. The pipes and wiring were easily routed through the wall, with minimal disruption of what was there already.

Imagine my surprise when I learned the mini-split was not just a heater. It doubles as an air conditioner, depending on the direction the heat is pumped. We had always relied on fans to cool the house as the outdoor temperature dropped in the evening. The heat pump is more efficient than a fan and more effective, because, instead of just blowing air around, it actually removes indoor heat.

Although our installation was expensive, even with the rebates that applied to the appliances, you can do better now, thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act. It provides generous incentives not just for the hardware, but for the installation costs as well.

## Now the good news

Here's the good news about the cost of installing heat pumps and other electrically efficient appliances. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has tax credits for a wide range of energy improvements, from heat pumps to insulating your home. The tax credits are highest for people who earn 80 percent or less of the median income. That amount varies by community. In San Francisco, for instance, the [low-income threshold for a family of four is \\$148,650](#).

Tax credits are only applied to the amount of tax you actually pay. When we installed our solar panels, we got a pretty good tax credit, but we weren't able to use it all because our taxes were too low. But the IRA also will be offering rebates, which are outright

payments for appliances and contractor fees. Only, those rebates will not be available in most states until 2024. A good reason to wait if you can.

## What if you're a renter?

If your household income is below 150 percent of the area median income you can get rebates on appliances that you can take with you when you move. These include portable window-unit heat pumps and tabletop induction burners. You can also talk to your landlord about applying rebates available to multi-family building owners. It's an opportunity to make lasting investments in their property. Under the performance-based rebates program, apartment building owners can get up to \$400,000 for energy efficiency projects.

## Why go all electric?

Several reasons. With our energy supply going renewable by leaps and bounds, using electricity instead of gas is way better for the environment. You will hear people argue that our electricity still comes from power plants that burn fossil fuel. That's getting less and less true. Yes, it's true that natural gas is California's largest energy source. But that amount is only a little over a third of our total energy mix. In fact, as of 2022, non-fossil-fuel power

*With our energy supply going renewable by leaps and bounds, using electricity instead of gas is way better for the environment.*

sources are about 52 percent of our energy mix. Some of that's nuclear. (But if you hate nuclear, you'll be relieved to know that less than nine percent of our electricity comes from nuclear) That's not counting the thousands of rooftop solar installations.

California aims to go 100 percent renewable by 2045. Whether that happens remains to be seen. But you can bet that the renewable percentage will be increasing year by year, as it has in recent years. And if you want to personally go 100 percent clean energy right now, you can sign up for Sonoma Clean Power's Evergreen option. It's only a little more expensive than the basic mix, costing the average homeowner an extra \$13 a month.

## And then there's your family's health

Here's another reason. Gas is bad for your health. Recent studies show that gas heaters and stoves emit indoor pollution that you can't get away from. Our last step was to get rid of our gas stove and oven and replace them with a sizable toaster oven and some induction cookers. That's when we knew we didn't need a gas hookup anymore.

## Resources for further reading:

[Rebates from the IRA](#)

[Energy.gov](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#)

[Virtual home energy assessment from PG&E](#)

[Financial incentives available](#)

[California Energy Commission](#) 🙌

*Bonnie Allen is a writer, biologist and 45-year resident of Petaluma*

# NETWORKING: Towards a Livable Planet – Resilience Hubs

by *Connie Madden*

Sonoma County is something like a great big resilience hub for those who know where to look. Many, of course, are still unaware of the many climate groups and their good works. Still, our true stories motivate people to change toward regeneration, and we've got plenty.

Example: An email just now announced a 9/6 Sebastopol Carbon Conversation at the Sebastopol Grange, *Bikes as Transport*, part of a solution toward ending fossil fuel's dominance as an energy source. This is significant, as transit was found by our Climate Mobilization friends to account for 60 percent of emissions, research that led to pleas to Sonoma County Supervisors to add General Fund money for transit so bus service can be enlarged and improved.

Also just now, Petaluma People's Services (PPS) announced it is purchasing Petaluma Bounty Farm, it's long-time ally in feeding the food insecure in our area. PPS also created and runs SAFE teams – first responders to 911 calls for help which don't require police to calm people in distress – now in five cities.

Knowing the projects and successes of the various groups boosts the energy and efforts of everyone working toward a just transition, and Cool Petaluma, with its more than 300 volunteers signed up and 50 more trained every two months, is a major leader. Through Cool Petaluma events, trainings, and neighborhood meetings, we do get to know our neighbors and rely on them, an early goal of groups working toward transition away from fossil fuels.

Originally a corporate project, Cool Petaluma is now in-house for John Crowley, Natasha Juliana and their co-workers, so that fundraising becomes a major effort as it is for each group mentioned. Cool Petaluma plans add community organizations to their network and John Crowley's Aqus Café and Juliana's WORK space offer themselves for suppers and meetings to build community. I'm sure Cool Petaluma will participate in the Petaluma Repair Fair slated for Nov 4 with Reuse Alliance, at the Petaluma Library.

Here's a cool short story from John C: In Ireland, where he grew up, if you're short an egg or two for supper, he said, you go to your neighbor and ask. He's expecting that kind of neighborliness through Cool Petaluma meet ups. The group brought together a large crowd for its Expo 2023 in May, presenting materials on emergency preparedness, sustainable food, safe and clean transit, efficient buildings and restoring nature. It included a mending circle from Live Oak School and kids activities. Electrify Petaluma brought out 60 professionals in HVAC, architecture and related trades to collaborate on future projects.

Of course, any countdown on climate resilience must include Daily Acts, our dear friends since Trathen Heckman published his free magazine, *Ripples*, in the 1990s, spreading the idea that what we do daily has a ripple effect and our ripples matter. Daily Acts has engaged every city in the county in saving millions of gallons of water, teaching locals how to grow food forests to feed those who walk by, build rain gardens and create gray water systems to reuse household water. His new book, *Take Heart, Take Action* is what he has nudged people to do for many years. Trathen served as President of Transition US, an offshoot of Transition UK, and a deep resource for cultural transformation.

350BayArea deserves a huge shout out for its overall coverage of so many challenges. "More action, less hot air," they say, includ-

ing nudging the air quality district into a commitment to 80 percent GHG reductions by 2050. They won the first zero emission appliance standards in the county. 350BayArea, with chapters in five countries, worked to ensure transition to EVs (electric vehicles), including people at all income levels. Another astonishing mountain they're climbing. I thought 25 percent of new vehicles are EVs but 350BayArea tells me its now 32 percent. And soon all new EVs will be bi-directional, meaning they can power your house in a power shutdown. The group partners with youth groups around the Bay, showing up at pretty much all significant rallies in San Francisco, Sacramento and even San Ramon and the hinterlands. The group addresses the three words offered early by Greta Thunberg, making use of education, media and government must all work toward transition.

The Climate Center is a strong presence in the policy change area. Seeing itself as global, The Climate Center is "Working to rapidly reduce climate pollution at scale starting in California." It's Climate Safe California campaign was endorsed by 2,000 businesses. It engages volunteers to call on government officials to nudge them to support favorable legislation, and it is dedicated to following the latest science (one board member was an author of at least one IPCC report), prioritizing climate justice and securing a just transition for workers. It believes California has the tools to remove more pollution that we generate by 2030.

For reflection on what stories we need to be sharing currently, I'm loving a couple of references, [climateone.org](https://climateone.org)'s podcast, *Fairytales and Fear: Stories of our Future* September 1. The point being we cannot afford to doom scroll or get scared witless, but we do need to address climate chaos. It can be a tricky balance and no one would blame you for getting tired and down, but that's why I much enjoy Instagram's Alaina Wood, sustainability scientist, and her posts @ its the garbage queen featuring Good Climate News of the Week. She finds plenty of hopeful stories while keeping honest about why we need good news. "Helping you not give in to climate doom," is her moniker. 🙌

*Connie Madden is an activist and author and co-owner of Oasis Community Farm outside Petaluma, hosting a Mutual Aid Garden, retreats and occasional music gatherings.*



## Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights

The purpose of the Commission on Human Rights is to promote better human relations among all people in Sonoma County through education, mediation, cooperation with County and community agencies, and by initiating action that fosters the recognition of and an appreciation for the cultural diversity of the community.

Monthly meetings on the 4th Tuesday. [See schedule here.](#)  
Email: [chr@sonoma-county.org](mailto:chr@sonoma-county.org) • [Website](#)





# PeaceRoots Alliance Still Active After All These Years

by Linda Speel

The Farm is in Summertown, Tennessee. It was started in 1971 by several busloads of people who had driven out from San Francisco, California.

In the early days of The Farm Community, Michael O’Gorman led us to the fields in the noble task of growing our own food. He was a leader who inspired others with his selfless dedication. On September 11, 2001, Michael’s daughter was outside the World Trade Center before it collapsed.

Called from his heart to respond, Michael put out a call to the The Farm’s network of friends and family, resulting in several national meetings, an international teleconference, and the ultimate founding of PeaceRoots Alliance in February 2002. Our collective thanks go



to Michael for his continued inspiration and vision.

We started our work with a suggestion by Dave Maize that we order billboards around the country saying, “Peace is Patriotic,” to encourage peace. We did this for some years and had over 200 billboards around the country. Over the years the work of PeaceRoots has inspired several projects, including some that have evolved to become their own independent nonprofits.

## More Than Warmth

More than Warmth is an educational project in which students create cloth squares with images of peace and friendship. These are turned into quilts that are sent to children around the world. The project fosters understanding, knowledge and compassion among cultures through nonviolent, nonpolitical, and nonreligious means.

## Farms Not Arms and The Farmer Veteran Coalition

This is another example of planting a seed, and watching it grow and bear fruit. Having dedicated his life to farming and agriculture, Michael sought a way to bring farmers into the peace movement, coming up with the catchy name for a new project: Farms Not Arms. We began reaching out to like-minded farmers around the country. The Farmer Veteran Coalition continues to grow with thousands of Veterans who have joined across the country. They learn farming skills necessary to show how to run a farm in classrooms and hands-on-work by other experienced farmers. Now Michael O’Gorman has retired and is working on his book and also works on his brother’s family farm in Northern California.

Today, Peaceroots Alliance has a yearly fundraiser in Sebastopol, California, where we raise money to give to our ongoing projects. Locally we give to the following:

- [Redwood Empire Food Bank](#) – For this and other projects
  - [Pine Ridge Reservation](#) – Home garden projects in South Dakota and [Plenty International](#).
  - [Karen’s Nutrition Project](#) – Healthy food for urban kids in Guatemala City
  - [More Than Warmth](#) – Peace quilts for children in troubled areas
- The PeaceRoots Alliance Board members include president Matthew McClure, vice president Robert Tepper and treasurer Gary Hlady, with special help from Derrick Hlady. 🌿

# NBOP Queer Asylum Accompaniment Team's Service

by Gary Carnivele

Queer Asylum Accompaniment (QAA) was formed in 2019 as a mutual aid network to support LGBTQ+ asylum seekers to find refuge in Sonoma County. We try to fulfill the essential needs of queer asylum seekers, including acquiring housing, food, and legal support or connecting them to local social services while they go through the legal asylum process.

In a time when there are more displaced people than ever, LGBTQI+ people are uniquely vulnerable due to systemic, state enabled anti-LGBTQI+ homelands. These factors either displace them in their own country or prevent them from escaping harm. QAA is a program of North Bay Organizing Project, NBOP, a grassroots organization that unites people to build leadership and community-based power for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice.

The following is a profile of one of the queer asylum seekers QAA is presently assisting. The details are accurate, but we are vague about the specifics of the individual's past and have changed their name to protect their identity.

Growing up in a Fundamentalist Christian household in an isolated, tiny village in South America, Gabriela realized at a young age she was different from other children. Gabriela was an exceptional student, a talented young musician, but was not interested in sports, so she was relentlessly bullied at school and in her neighborhood. Her parents were sympathetic but were distressed by the negative things whispered about their child and when the harassment escalated, they agreed to allow Gabriela to avoid physical threats at high school by dropping out. They pressured her to act more masculine, cut her long hair, and attempt to fit in.

Gabriela became more certain of her sexuality, identifying as gay, and decided to leave home, seeking employment in another South American country. After she spent months earning a living and becoming independent, her work permit expired, so Gabriela had no choice but to return home. Now a young adult, the pressure to marry and start her own family began.

Using the Internet, Gabriela learned about the LGBTQI+ community and felt this was her chosen family. She met a woman online, who became a friend and encouraged Gabriela to be her authentic self. More research ensued and after much soul-searching, Gabriela decided she was Transgender and there was no possible way she was going to live her life as a male.

After she had an emotional conversation with her parents, they all agreed it was best that Gabriela move away, start a new life in the capital, and try and get a student visa to attend university and study fashion design in the United States. The corrupt government made a visa impossible without a bride, which wasn't possible. Gabriela conjured up the courage to head for America's southern border. It was a perilous journey involving bus rides, stays in crime-riddled cities, the loss of most of her belongings, and a stay in a Mexican prison, after being caught trying to cross the border.

One chilly, moonless evening, Gabriela, having joined a group of other asylum seekers, felt deep in her soul this was the time she needed to use all her strength and determination in pursuit of the life she desired. In the pitch dark, separated from the others, and heading toward a dim light in the distance, Gabriela sensed she was on the right path. Surprised to find herself at the American border, an imposing barrier separating two countries, Gabriela didn't waiv-

er, fighting hunger and thirst, cold and terrified, she was suddenly bathed in light. She followed the light until an authoritative, but kind voice stated, "You are seeking asylum in the United States."

Soon Gabriela found herself in a detention center, being bounced between two lines separating the genders. A guard noticed Gabriela's confusion and pulled her aside and started to ask questions that only confused her more because she had been studying English for barely a year. Gabriela was brought to an office where a physician asked her many personal questions, confusing even her further. Then after a while, the doctor asked her if she was Transgender, to which she sheepishly nodded. Fortunately, Gabriela's few days in detention, during which she was housed with other trans folks, went by quickly, and her appearance in immigration court brought about her dream – she would be allowed to stay in the US to legally seek asylum. An officer of the court told her, "You are free."



*'Gabriela' thoroughly enjoyed herself at the Sonoma County Fair with Queer Asylum Accompaniment team members. Every place she visits she is filled with wide-eyed wonder and is relishing all aspects of her new life, where she is free to be herself.*  
Photo by Gary Carnivele

Aided by Queer Asylum Accompaniment, Gabriela found her way to Sonoma County and her new life. QAA found her temporary housing with one of the team members, enrolled Gabriela in a SRJC ESL class, and found her a therapist to help her with her trauma. There have been many challenges, but Gabriela has overcome them all and now, less than a year in the US, she feels a new optimism and understanding of who she is.

QAA team members provide emotional support and are thrilled to spend time with Gabriela whenever they are able, and all are impressed with her wide-eyed wonder and thirst for knowledge. Gabriela is excelling in her ESL class, sitting in the front of the classroom, never missing a session, and studying afterwards for hours. The members of the team accompany Gabriela to appointments, but she has learned bus schedules and loves to explore the county. The LGBTQI+ community has embraced Gabriela and she cherishes her new friends and her new home. Positive Images, a non-profit that serves LGBTQI+ youth, offers an adult group meeting where Gabriela finds peer support and comradery.

The Queer Asylum Accompaniment team has grown in number but will welcomes all who would like to help us with our mission to serve asylum seekers, raise funds to assist them, and embrace the newest members of our community with the support they need. [Learn more about QAA](#). If you are ready to join us, you may contact us at 707-225-1302. You can make a donation on the website. 🌱

# Wage Theft Epidemic: Why Unions Matter

by *Martin J. Bennett*

Former employees recently accused two high-profile North Bay employers of stealing their wages. In March, three Petaluma high school students complained that a Subway franchise owner failed to pay wages owed, withheld promised bonuses, and refused to give workers tips from electronic transactions. In June, three former valets at the Bohemian Club's summer camp in Monte Rio, whose clientele includes ultra-wealthy and prominent national elected officials, filed a lawsuit alleging that they were not paid the state minimum wage nor overtime and were denied mandatory rest breaks.

## What is wage theft?

Every year, employers commit wage theft when they fail to pay workers the wages or benefits they are legally owed. Wage theft is a widespread problem, affecting workers across many industries, including hotels, restaurants, retail, day labor, domestic work, and farm work. Low wage workers – including immigrants, women, and people of color – are the hardest hit by this exploitation.

Wage theft costs U.S. workers over **\$50 BILLION EVERY YEAR**

According to the Economic Policy Institute



In July, one of the county's largest vineyard management companies, Lodi-based Vino Farms, settled a lawsuit covering 537 employees in San Joaquin and Sonoma counties for \$1.4 million. These workers alleged that between 2017-2022 Vino Farms did not pay for all hours worked and denied workers mandatory meals and rest breaks.

What is wage theft, and how pervasive is the problem?

Wage theft occurs when an employer does not pay or underpays a worker the wages and benefits they are due. It can take many forms, including paying less than the minimum contractual or overtime wage, failing to pay for all hours worked, withholding benefits like paid sick leave or health insurance; asking employees to work "off-the-clock" before or after their shift, denying workers required meal and rest breaks and withholding gratuities.

In 2014 the Economic Policy Institute reported that an "epidemic of wage theft" costs workers \$50 billion yearly – higher than all burglaries, robberies and car theft combined. Wage theft is most

prevalent in low wage industries such as hospitality, restaurants, fast food, agriculture, residential construction, retail, home care, and domestic work – sectors where immigrants, workers of color, youth, and women comprise the majority of the workforce.

National Employment Law Project researchers in 2009 interviewed 4,387 low-wage workers in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. They utilized an innovative methodology to contact unauthorized immigrants and people working for cash, often missed by conventional surveys. The study found that two-thirds of those surveyed experienced wage theft in the previous week, more than one-quarter were paid less than the minimum wage, 69 percent were denied meal or rest breaks, 70 percent were not paid for off-the-clock work, 76 percent who worked overtime did not receive the required time-and-a-half hourly pay. If workers complained, or attempted to organize a union, 43 percent experienced illegal retaliation, such as discharge or hours cut. On average, low wage workers surveyed lost \$2,634 due to wage theft, out of total annual earnings of \$17,616.

Consequently, workers who are victims of wage theft are three times more likely to live in poverty than those who do not, and 30 percent receive public assistance such as Medi-Cal or food stamps. In addition, wage theft reduces tax revenue, creates unfair competition for responsible employers who must compete with unscrupulous businesses committing wage theft, and means workers have less money to spend locally.

## What can be done?

State and federal agencies tasked with enforcement of wage-and-hour laws are understaffed. The US Department of Labor has just 1,000 wage-and-hour investigators, roughly the number it had 70 years ago when the workforce was seven times smaller. Due to understaffing and a 30 percent job vacancy rate, workers who file a wage theft claim with the California Labor Commissioner's Office wait more than two years for a hearing.

In some California counties, district attorneys are successfully investigating and prosecuting wage theft. Sonoma County District Attorney Carla Rodriguez established a wage theft hotline (833-889-2437) and is investigating several cases, including the above Subway incident. Also, many large cities and counties in California, such as San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego, have established departments of labor standards enforcement. Local government can then collaborate with state and federal agencies to enforce minimum wage, living wage, and prevailing wage laws.

Finally, low-wage workers who are the least likely to experience wage theft are union members. Unions provide collective bargaining power to negotiate guaranteed wages and a grievance procedure to remedy wage violations. Union contracts also establish just cause standards for disciplinary action and empower workers to report violations without fear of retaliation. Campaigns, like that by UNITE HERE Local 2's effort to organize 250 workers at the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, are the most effective way to stop wage theft. ✊

*Martin J. Bennett is Instructor Emeritus of History at Santa Rosa Junior College and a consultant for UNITE HERE Local 2.*

# Class War at the Center of the Big 3 Contract

by Jonathan Melrod

During the years that I worked in auto manufacturing at the American Motors Corporation (then the fourth US auto maker), I cringed at the opening of every Big 3 contract negotiations. I couldn't help but feel that betrayal was in the air as I watched the international United Auto Workers (UAW) presidents, one after the other, open national bargaining with a smile and handshake with each of the top auto bosses. It felt more like a love fest than a slugfest.

Despite the deep concessions auto companies demanded, and won year after year, a compliant, class collaborationist international union followed the same humiliating tradition of extending a handshake of "friendship." That tradition ran diametrically counter to the stance of a militant, fighting rank-and-file ready to assert our own interests and demands in taking on the auto companies.

Not this year. The newly elected reform slate president, Shawn Fain, refused to engage in the back-stabbing handshake, immediately setting a more aggressive tone for the union's bargaining position. The message from the international this year is that the UAW wants more, and intends to do whatever it takes to win substantial improvements after having given up regular cost of living adjustments to wages, and foregoing defined pensions and company funded health care.

As an activist in Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD), a reform caucus within the UAW, I have been phone banking with union members all over the country to stress key demands for this year's negotiations:

**NO EV TIERS** – New battery and component plants **MUST** be under a UAW master agreement.

**JOB SECURITY** – New products must be scheduled for vulnerable existing facilities, like transmission and engine plants that face decimation by new EV production.

**SHORTER WORK WEEK** – Automation should mean a shorter work week with no cut in pay. The new international president Shawn Fain was quoted saying, "We deserve eight hours of work, eight hours of rest, and eight hours of recreation. Forced overtime currently requires excessive hours on the job with less time to enjoy life."

**A JUST TRANSITION** – Protect the environment and climate without compromising UAW members rights, pay and benefits.

Already autoworkers across the country are gearing up for a fight. A boisterous rally took place in Detroit in mid-August, attended by over 1,000 UAW members, who were clearly ready to strike on September 15 if their demands are not met.

Fain has already thrown down the gauntlet. As a longtime employee of Stellantis predecessor, Chrysler, Fain has a particular beef with Stellantis. At an early bargaining session, Fain called the Stellantis proposals trash, threw the proposals into the garbage, and lambasted a Stellantis executive for vacationing in Mexico instead of attending bargaining talks.

Fain and his reform slate were just recently elected to top positions in the UAW. This is the first time in history (One Member One Vote) that rank-and-file UAW members voted directly for their top leaders. Clearly, in voting in the reform slate, their votes spoke volumes about the radical changes they expect.



PAUL SANCYA/AP PHOTO

Speaking at the packed rally in Detroit, Fain laid out basic bargaining terms – a 40 percent pay increase over four years (the same percentage top Big 3 executives have increased their own pay by). He further outlined the need for a wage increase that keeps up with inflation, an end to long and inflexible working hours and abolition of the hated tiered system of relegating younger workers to second class status.

On September 1, the US Energy Department announced that the federal government was extending loans and grants of \$12 billion to auto companies to convert existing factories that build gas-powered cars and trucks into plants that produce hybrid and electric vehicles. Additionally, \$3.5 billion in grants are available to expand the manufacturing of electric vehicle batteries and battery components.

While the Biden administration intends to further subsidize EV plants, there is *no* language or commitment that, despite the federal government using our tax dollars to create new EV production, there is only an "implicit" promise that these jobs will remain union. This so-called promise needs to be expressed rather than implicit, particular from a Biden who crows about being "the union President."

For this very reason, Shawn Fain, breaking with routine endorsement of the Democratic Party presidential candidate has, to date, refused to endorse Biden. The time is long overdue for the unions to no longer blindly endorse the Democratic Party without demanding that the rights and livelihoods of workers are of top priority. For Biden, the auto contract will be a test of his actual willingness to cut loose the profit driven interests of the auto corporations in favor of promoting the interests of the working class.

"This is our time to take back what we are owed. Working together with the companies doesn't work for us," said Fain.

This time, the UAW wants more. Union officials especially want to claw back many of the concessions they made around the time of the Great Recession in 2008. Those concessions included giving up regular cost-of-living adjustments to wages, and forgoing defined benefit pensions and company-funded healthcare coverage for retirees. Stay tuned for September. 🙌

Jon Melrod is author of *Fighting Times: Organizing on the Front Lines of the Class War* (PM Press) which is available at Barnes & Noble in Santa Rosa or directly from [pmpress.org](http://pmpress.org).

# Venezuela's Socialist Communes' Movement

by Christian Stalberg

In August this year I along with 14 other comrades visited Venezuela to experience the commune movement there. Before going I did not know that there was a government sponsored enterprise there that fostered local self-determination. Today there are 45,000 communal councils and over 3,000 communes in Venezuela. As I am keenly interested in local direct democracy, I jumped at the chance to go to Venezuela to learn more. As there are no diplomatic relations between the United States and Venezuela, we had to arrange for our visas at embassies outside of the US. Furthermore, there are no direct flights between Venezuela and the US, so we all had to fly to another country first, and then book separate flights to Caracas.

Venezuela is complex politically. While elements of socialism exist through changes having been instituted in the central govern-

would like to topple the current government so they can seize these currently state-owned oil reserves. The second reason is the level of political literacy amongst the poor enabling them to understand and passionately defend their revolution against the outside forces of imperialism (foreign interference) and neoliberal capitalism.

Chavismo as an ongoing liberatory and defensive positioning against these forces appears to be quite successful. This in spite of the economic hardships experienced because of the sanctions. Whatever the ruling party is doing to foster and maintain a high level of political engagement and literacy to defend the revolution appears to be working. Economic conditions are slowly improving thanks to new and/or strengthened agreements between Venezuela and other countries including China, Iran and Russia.

The formal commune movement in Venezuela dates from 2006

when federal laws institutionalizing communes were adopted. This led to the creation of the Ministry of Communal Economy in 2007, which then in 2009 was combined with the Ministry of Participation and Social Protection and renamed as the Ministry of Communes and Social Protection (I've learned that you can learn a lot about the intention of a government by the names it chooses for its ministries and departments).

Communes form when one or more communal councils agree to join forces and begin a collective economic enterprise providing income and jobs for the comunards. Communal councils were actually taking shape as long ago as the 1980s when barrio resi-



Visiting the Ezequil Zamora commune in Venezuela factory where they produce plastic boards for outdoor children's playgrounds from recycled plastic.

ment since Hugo Chavez's ascendancy to the presidency, Venezuela remains overwhelmingly capitalist. The concentration of wealth with an oligarchy in place trying to restore their feudal privileges of old continues ad nauseum. While there has been some land distribution since the revolution, [88.5% of Venezuela's population is urban](#). Venezuela is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. The reason for this is beyond the scope of this article. By percentage, domestic food production is among the lowest of any country in Latin America with almost total dependency upon food imports. This fact against the backdrop of US economic sanctions has created a standard of living nightmare for the average Venezuelan.

Venezuela's GDP plummeted from \$56B in 2014 to \$700M in 2020 (Carlos Roan, presentation, Caracas, August 12, 2023). It is a well-known fact that government-imposed sanctions only hurt the people of the targeted country, never achieving the stated objective of regime change. In the case of Venezuela, as I see it there are two basic reasons the country has been targeted for sanctions by the US government. The first is that Venezuela has one of the largest proven oil reserves in the world and the US-based oil industry

dents began meeting informally to debate how to bring about local and national change. These barrio assemblies began to network and with the help of some former state employees formed the National Network of Comuneros and Comuneras which provides technical and other assistance to what is now a confederation of communes, now called Union Comunera.

There are both urban and rural communes in Venezuela, ranging in size from just a few households in a neighborhood, to thousands of members spanning a territorial sector. Our brigade visited a half dozen communes and we were not just mere tourists. We stayed, ate and worked alongside the comunards, including having frank, open discussions with them about life in our respective home countries. Of course, the subject of how US sanctions were impacting them was always in the mix of conversation. I found the Venezuelan comunards to be incredibly warm, caring, and welcoming. This despite our own government's evil conduct towards them and their popular, democratically elected government.

While we visited a half dozen communes, I will describe one urban

*Venezuela's Socialist Communes' Movement...see page 21*

# FUKUSHIMA UPDATE:

## US Must Act Now to Guard Our Food from Nuclear Accidents

by Kimberly Roberson

This summer Japan began dumping radioactive wastewater stored at Fukushima Daiichi in to the Pacific Ocean. The *Days* series on Netflix gives an accurate, detailed account of the catastrophic events of March 11, 2011 and the weeks that followed. In scene after scene, the audience sees water sprayed non-stop from hoses on three nuclear reactor meltdowns.

Fukushima also suffered quadruple nuclear corium explosions. Over one million tons of that wastewater now sits in giant tanks on site, much of it still very highly radioactive. Meanwhile, the Japanese fishing industry and citizens are suing Tokyo Power and Electric Company (TEPCO) to put a halt to the dumping, despite promises of monetary compensation due to food bans from China and Hong Kong. Many are asking the United Nations why this dangerous dumping precedent has been allowed to happen.

Scientists and engineers have repeatedly called for independent oversight. Instead, the utility TEPCO is intent on dumping the radioactive wastewater for 30 years, at minimum, with no independent observation. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) approved the final report on July 4 without testing all samples. Onsite filtration known as Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) has failed eight times in 10 years. Suggested alternatives such as vitrification (glassification-to-hazardous waste storage) and an improved cement mitigation plan with no dumping required have been rejected. There actually is more room for storage nearby until an alternative plan is implemented, but Japan chose faulty filtration and an underground sea tunnel route to the Pacific Ocean instead.

People in neighboring countries aren't the only ones concerned. US groups are demanding that the US Food and Drug Administration respond to a citizen petition to lower the current allowable levels of man-made radiation in food, as current non-binding guidelines lag far behind those established in other countries. The US still has one of the most permissive standards for allowable cesium in the world, permitting 12 times the amount as Japan. When cesium is detected, other radionuclides are also present.

Food considered unfit for consumption in Japan is considered by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be perfectly fine. Mothers who fled Japan to the US with their children after March, 2011 were shocked to learn when they arrived here that food would be even less safe than in Japan. FDA has never acted on the citizen petition, and the standard remains woefully inadequate.

Now that ocean dumping has begun, how is the US prepared to deal with the worsening crisis? Do we need to stop eating sushi and tuna altogether, and what about tea, rice, and other food from Japan? The FDA states all food is safe and "within FDA standards." What it doesn't mention is that its standards are weak and unenforceable (non-binding) compared to other countries.

There have been plenty of reassuring news segments and articles stating that the wastewater is "safe," and claiming that anything not filtered will be diluted. Mainstream media rarely digs more deeply, but groups like Fukushima Fallout Awareness Network (FFAN, founded in 2011) are working to inform the public. In one case, a report by TEPCO found that fish caught off the harbor at Fukushima tested at 180 times the level allowed in Japan of the radioactive isotope cesium.

Scientists know that radioactive materials bio-concentrate in the aquatic food chain and bio-accumulate in land-based foods. A significant body of research, due to the ongoing Chernobyl crisis, has found that cellular damage from eating radioactive materials has had serious consequences over decades. More recently, a comprehensive review of 250 studies in the biological consequences of tritium exposure (Mousseau and Todd) found that the "vast majority" of exposures, especially internal ones, could have significantly harmful biological effects. This includes DNA damage, reduced fertility and longevity and increased risk of cancer. A new book "*Exploring Tritium's Dangers*," by Arjun Makhajani, reaches similar conclusions, and makes the urgent case for better public policy to protect human health. Mary Olson's *Gender and Radiation Health Project* found that women and girls are at much higher risk of cancer from man-made radiation than men and boys.

There is no safe level of radiation, every exposure carries risks and should not be taken lightly. Anyone who says that bananas and potato chips have more radiation than nuclear accidents should know that potassium is naturally occurring in these foods, whereas

*What can we do to protect our own families? Be sure to source food very carefully and rethink seafood choices.*

radioactive cesium 134, 137, and hundreds more radionuclides didn't exist until they were created and released into the biosphere.

Japanese officials have publicly stated that part of the relief compensation for their fishing industry will be to redirect food banned in China and elsewhere to countries that have lifted food restrictions (the US and European Union among them). It's no coincidence that, in April 2011, the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP Report 111) stated, "There may be situations where a sustainable agricultural economy is not possible without placing contaminated food on the market. As such foods will be subject to market forces, this will necessitate an effective communication strategy to overcome the negative reactions from consumers outside the contaminated areas."

Recent news and social media photo-ops feature Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and US Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel eating sashimi and other foods from Fukushima. The ambassador tweeted a promise to feed food from Fukushima to his children. In 2021 the FDA lifted all restrictions on Fukushima prefecture foodstuffs bound for the US. More food from the region is heading our way.

What can we do to protect our own families? Be sure to source food very carefully and rethink seafood choices. Tell the FDA to act immediately. FFAN's citizen petition for comment can be found via the companion signature petition at [MoveOn](#). The need to fully transition to renewable energy has never been more urgent. More information at [Fukushima Fallout Awareness Network \(FFAN\)](#) 🌱

*Kimberly Roberson has campaigned for Greenpeace, consulted at New Health Design, and served on the board of the National Association of Nutrition Professionals.*

# Add the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution!

by Elaine Holtz

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment became part of the constitution giving women the right to vote. The [19th Amendment](#) to the US Constitution was ratified 103 years ago, and it is comprised of just 39 words:

1. *The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*
2. *Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.*

After the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, women of color faced racial discrimination and were discouraged from voting through intimidation and fear. It was the passage of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), a landmark civil rights and labor law in the United States that “outlaw’s discrimination based on race, color, religion,” that enabled them to vote.

Many suffragists left public life and activism after the 19th Amendment was enacted, but Alice Paul, a leader of the suffragist’s movement was not among them. In 1923, on the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, Alice Paul announced that she would be working for a new constitutional amendment. This amendment called for absolute equality stating, “Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.” Paul rewrote the proposed amendment in 1943, expanding the language to be more in line with recently passed legislation. The proposed ERA amendment stated, “[Equal-ity of rights under the law](#) shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Proponents assert it would end legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, [employment](#), and other matters.

In the early history of the Equal Rights Amendment, middle class women were supportive, while those speaking for the working class were often opposed, pointing out that employed women needed special protections regarding working conditions and employment hours. With the rise of the [women’s movement in the United States](#) during the 1960s, the ERA garnered increasing support, and was reintroduced by Representative [Martha Griffiths](#) in 1971. It was approved by the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) on October 12, 1971, and by the [U.S. Senate](#) on March 22, 1972, thus submitting the ERA to the [state legislatures](#) for ratification, as provided by [Article V of the US Constitution](#).

Congress had originally set a ratification deadline of March 22, 1979, for the state legislatures to consider the ERA. Through 1977, the amendment received 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. With wide bipartisan support (including that of both major political parties, both houses of Congress, and presidents [Richard Nixon](#), [Gerald Ford](#), and [Jimmy Carter](#)) the ERA seemed destined for ratification until [Phyllis Schlafly](#) mobilized [conservative](#) women in opposition.

These women argued that the ERA would disadvantage housewives, cause women to be [drafted](#) into the military and to lose protections such as [alimony](#), and eliminate the tendency for mothers to obtain custody over their children in divorce cases. Many [labor feminists](#) Proponents assert it would end legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, [employment](#), and other matters.

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These women argued that the ERA would disadvantage housewives, cause women to be [drafted](#) into the military and to lose protections such as [alimony](#), and eliminate the tendency for mothers to obtain custody over their children in divorce cases. Many [labor feminists](#) also opposed the ERA on the basis that it would eliminate protections for women in [labor law](#), though over time more and more unions and labor feminist leaders turned toward supporting it.

Five state legislatures (Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota) voted to revoke their ERA ratifications. The first four rescinded it before the original March 22, 1979 ratification deadline, while the South Dakota legislature did so by voting to [sunset](#) its ratification as of that original deadline. It remains an unresolved legal question as to whether a state can revoke its ratification of a federal constitutional amendment.

In 1978, Congress passed (by simple majorities in each house), and President Carter signed, a joint resolution with the intent of extending the ratification deadline to June 30, 1982. Because no additional state legislatures ratified the ERA between March 22, 1979, and June 30, 1982, the validity of that disputed extension was rendered academic.

Since 1978, attempts have been made in Congress to extend or remove the deadline. In 2010 there was a renewed interest in adoption of the ERA. In 2017, Nevada became the first state to ratify the ERA after the expiration of both deadlines, and Illinois followed in 2018. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal\\_Rights\\_Amendment#cite\\_note-12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_Rights_Amendment#cite_note-12) In 2020, Virginia’s [General Assembly](#) passed a ratification resolution for the ERA, claiming to bring the number of ratifications to 38, however experts and advocates have acknowledged legal uncertainty about the consequences of the Virginian ratification due to expired deadlines and five states’ revocations. To date it still has not been ratified.

There is so much information on this subject and I want to encourage my readers to find out more information about where the ERA stands today and actions we can take at the following links.

Zakiya Thomas is President and CEO of the ERA Coalition and Fund for Women’s Equality [interview](#).

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): [The Time Is Now](#).

Zoom Sonoma County NOW hosts [Zakiya Thomas](#) on the ERA. 🗣️

Elaine Holtz has the *Women’s Spaces* radio program, Mondays, 11 am, on KBBF 89.1 FM,



## Given Time, Sequoias Regenerate After Wildfire

by Jenny Blaker & Maya Khosla

Abundant, verdant, natural regrowth and regeneration is taking place in ancient giant sequoia groves in Sequoia Park and King's Canyon National Park (SEKI). These trees were burned in the 2021 KNP Complex fire, which was ignited by lightning.

Carpets of seedlings are vigorously sprouting from the charred soils, and among the blackened silhouettes life is bursting forth. Be careful not to step on the seedlings. Independent scientists have been on their hands and knees recording dozens, or even hundreds of them per square meter, extrapolating out to tens of thousands per acre over wide areas of the forest. This should be a cause for celebration, for hope and faith in Mother Nature in a world sorely in need of all of these things.

So why, at the very same time, is the National Park Service (NPS) advancing an ambitious and expensive plan to use helicopters, chain saws, and explosives to blow up snags (standing dead trees) in order to introduce and plant thousands of nursery-grown seedlings, when there is demonstrably no need for such human intervention in these age-old processes of growth, death by fire, and regrowth?

Snags are the housing complexes for the wild. They are roosting and nesting habitat for rare creatures like the spotted owl and the rare and secretive mammal, the fisher (a member of the weasel family). The dozens of proposed clearcuts would destroy the fisher's foraging habitat among the burned snags. Why is the NPS not considering the impacts of such noisy intrusion on the wild creatures and their habitat, rather than brushing these concerns aside? The same goes for the potential to inadvertently introduce pathogens and invasive plant species that could threaten these iconic natural ecosystems.

In April and October 2022, National Park Service scientists were devastated by the loss of life, as they saw it then, in the burnt groves. It is well known that sequoias actually need fire to reproduce, and do well in severely burnt areas. However, the NPS formulated an ambitious plan to "save the sequoias" by replanting, and thousands of nursery seedlings are waiting to go. Meanwhile, independent scientists waited a bit longer, and this summer (July/August 2023) have been reporting their findings. There are tens of

thousands of seedlings per acre, over twice the amount projected in NPS estimates.

Rather than celebrate the success of the natural regeneration, the NPS is playing it down, and even, shockingly, allowing cattle and people to trample the sprouting seedlings, which just need to be left in peace to regrow. Surely the first priority of the NPS should be to protect the natural new growth? They have closed the groves to public access, rather than allowing the public to see the regeneration for ourselves.

The NPS conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA), which does not have the clout of a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environment Impact Report (EIR), and which skirts around the potential damage caused by the invasive methods proposed to introduce nursery grown plants.

Take Action now!: Please email Superintendent Clayton Jordan at ([SEKI\\_Superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:SEKI_Superintendent@nps.gov)), Christy Brigham at ([Christy\\_Brigham@nps.gov](mailto:Christy_Brigham@nps.gov)) and Elly Boerke at ([Elly\\_Boerke@nps.gov](mailto:Elly_Boerke@nps.gov)). Ask them to withdraw and cancel SEKI's snag removal and tree planting proposal in wilderness areas in Sequoia National Park and King's Canyon National Park, and to open up the groves, so that the public can see the regrowth for ourselves. Tell them to, at the very least, insist on a full EIS, to weigh the risks and benefits of the plan. The public comment period officially ended August 6, 2023, but as the NPS is still considering public comment, it would be worth sending in yours.

The National Park Service "preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations." Let's ask them to let the sequoias flourish naturally, and protect the wildlife that choose to make their homes in the groves. Then, and only then, can we trust the NPS to let us enjoy and be inspired and educated by the resilience of wild nature, which it is their mandate to protect and preserve. 🙌

*Jenny Blaker is active in efforts to protect forests and a range of local environmental issues. Maya Khosla is a biologist and writer. She was appointed as Sonoma County Poet Laureate for a 2-year term (2018-2020).*



# Maui Wildfire Causes and Motivations?

by Barry Barnett

Land on the Hawaiian Islands consists of some of the last properties owned by Native peoples in the entire United States. And what has “traditionally” happened to the rest of Native-owned land?

Vanguard and Blackrock, two of the biggest venture (read “venture”) capital corporations in the world – and ever scavenging – have in the 21st century tried to buy up land on the islands that the US Marines “liberated” as a side venture in 1897 after the six-month Spanish-American War. It was a very profitable adventure and the real start of the US Empire.

Before the US established Honolulu on Oahu as the capital, Lahaina was the traditional capital of the islands. Now at least 80 percent of the buildings are demolished and well over 115 people are dead (some estimates being much higher), with 1,000 missing at the time the wildfires began August 8, down to 385 on September 4, 27 days later.

The natives and haoles (non-natives, literally “without breath” or Haw) have steadfastly refused to sell to these financial industries, and as other greedy, scheming billionaires are trying to buy up the real estate in order to develop it. They include Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and others. There is much documented evidence demonstrating a planned takeover of the entire real estate of Lahaina by so-called “disaster capitalists,” and the wealthy billionaires are capitalizing on disaster.

You can see many eyewitness scenes and interviews with residents of Lahaina, and nearby areas, on YouTube (if not taken down). Many videos with large numbers of locals attest to a seeming conspiracy – the water supply being shut off in the town (recent population approximately 13,000) when the fires began, no firefighters showing up to fight the sudden catastrophic blazes, police cars pulling up to crowds of traumatized people waiting for shipments of necessities, and blaring on loudspeakers that supplies will not be unloaded with the people shouting in protest. This was followed by the dehumanizing reply, “We don’t know why. That’s just the order that has come down.” And there were boats successfully bringing in food, water, etc., having to break through blockades.

Children were sent home from school, but parents at work were not alerted. Consequently, many children died alone at home. In addition, a disaster alert system described as “the best in the world” never worked to warn of the wildfires, nor during the holocaust. Why?

The cause of the wildfires – multiple blazes firing up independently and then merging – was dangling, untrimmed tree branches and unpruned shrubbery trailing down onto transformers that then ignited and exploded, much the same as PG&E’s reckless negligence in giving their officers raises and bonuses while neglecting to repair defective equipment and failing to clear brush in Northern California (see my article on PG&E, Aug.-Sept. 2020 Peace Press). In this case it was the responsibility of Hawaiian Electric Company, and the transformers blew up like bombs.

Maui County has filed a lawsuit against Hawaiian Electric Company, alleging that this wildfire could have been prevented, and accusing HECO of causing a “fire hurricane.” The suit states that, although the National Weather Service warned that strong winds

from Hurricane Hilary offshore could knock down power lines and ignite a fire that would spread quickly due to dry conditions, and issued a high wind watch and fire warning, HECO “inexcusably kept their power lines energized.” Along with the aforementioned failure to trim shrubbery, which exploded transformers, as well as improper maintenance of power lines and other equipment, high winds snapped power poles, dropping live wires that created more conflagrations.

A Native Hawaiian on Democracy Now! enumerated ways water on the limited landscape of Maui has been diverted by mono cropping agribusinesses, such as vast fields of sugarcane, and pineapples for 130 years. Land privatization, uprooting of native trees, and water depletion turned Maui into a tinderbox, an accident waiting to happen. Today, Hawaii spends \$ billion per year importing up to 90 percent of its food, and has the highest electric rates in the nation.

Maui, and the entire chain of inhabited islands, have seen increasing gentrification in many locales, including Lahaina. A number of YouTube videos posted by Lahaina residents allege that since the area is basically destroyed, there is now a feeding frenzy of outside

*Maui, and the entire chain of inhabited islands, have seen increasing gentrification in many locales, including Lahaina.*

investors contacting real estate developers, offering to buy up virtually all the properties in the town – likely at “fire sale” prices. One woman posted a video begging real estate agents to refuse calls from wealthy people trying to (literally) dislodge homeowners, some of whom have resided there for generations. Another video proclaimed that Mark Zuckerberg has filed lawsuits against hundreds of Native landowners. This is around his estate on Kauai. He is another in a long history of “haoles” forcing Native Hawaiians off their lands, though Zuckerberg claims they will be paid “their fair share.”

Residents at city council meetings received confirmation that three weeks before the fire, Hawaii Governor Josh Green declared an emergency proclamation, using the pretext of “homelessness” to “get people off the streets.” That delegated all authority concerning any emergencies to an unelected bureaucrat, Chief Housing Officer Nani Medeiros. This official in the office of the governor now has power to decide public policy and disbursement of funds. A number of areas on Maui still have no internet as of September 4, and numerous people posting videos attesting to the lack of services, and government interference, have been censored on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

What is the government doing to help people? A \$700 disbursement is being granted to each citizen (and some have reported not receiving it after 20 days). In contrast, HECO (owned by Blackrock) is receiving federal funds totaling \$95 million.

To help, you can donate to The Hawaii Community Foundation, Maui United Way, The American Red Cross, the Maui Mutual Aid Fund, the Maui Food Bank and GoFundMe’s page of guaranteed Maui fundraisers. It’s never too late to donate. 🙏

*Barry Barnett is a political and environmental author and activist.*

# Cameroon: World's Most Neglected Humanitarian Crisis

by Linda Sartor

I was on the steering committee for an exploratory delegation to Cameroon in May 2023. I wrote this article from the report that the four team members produced upon return. The team members spent their time in the Anglophone region in the west of Cameroon.

The people are open, and friendly. With few personal automobiles, life is more interactive than in the USA. The cities are vibrant and bustling. Behind the beauty of the place and cheerful people is deep tragedy and trauma.

During colonization, Cameroon was divided and most of it was under French control. That's now the Francophone area. The smaller portion was under English control (now Anglophone) along with what has become Nigeria. At independence, the Anglophone and Francophone people were together as a federation. While the languages today name the divide, the differences are great, including different monetary systems, different international business alliances, different legal systems, different educational systems, and wholly different cultures.

At the time of independence, the Anglophone regions were a commercial center with much employment, international corporate investment, and expansive infrastructure. Over the years under Francophone domination the Anglophone economy and infrastructure has fallen into shambles. Most of the international corporations are gone, air travel and railroads are gone, and the once well-paved roads now look like one big pothole with remnants of pavement.

In response to the nonviolent demonstrations by Anglophone teachers wanting better working conditions, the Francophone government used violent repression. Lawyers struck to get judges who understood the English law of the Anglophone area. The government arrested what they saw as the demonstration leaders, which included the president and 11 officials of the interim government. This shifted the movement to an actual independence movement.

With the president in jail, the interim government vice president stepped in, but there was a power struggle and numerous factions coalesced. The interim government continues to function but cannot have open elections for fear of being jailed. The conflict is ostensibly between the state military and the armed separatist groups, but it's actually civilians who bear the consequences. By 2019 many of the better off traveled to the diaspora. As the conflict goes on even basic humanitarian needs have reached a crisis level.

The exploratory delegation learned that, in 2020, the conflict recorded about 12,000 deaths, more than 750,000 internally displaced, 60,000 refugees in Nigeria, and 800,000 children out of school. Cameroon was ranked as the world's most neglected humanitarian crisis. Villages, schools and hospitals are burnt during violent clashes between the state military and the separatist fighters, or anytime, the separatists will say the school or hospital personnel are supporting government armies and vice versa.

Affected communities have suffered extensively, experiencing sexual and gender-based violence, mental trauma, loss of livelihood, use of improvised explosive devices, gun violence, harassment of human rights activists, break down of social cohesion, corrupt judicial systems, and lack of freedom of speech. Insecurity and crime such as rape, abduction, kidnap, torture, use of human beings as shields, killing, extortion of money, and direct attacks, continue to increase.

In the west of Cameroon, once or twice a month the separatist groups close a road at two different locations. When, roads shut, no



■ Undisputed Cameroonian territory  
■ Former Southern Cameroons, claimed by separatists

one is allowed to move in any direction. That has a very big impact on civilians who are farming in those areas. They cannot access the area when it's time to harvest, or they may not be able to take their crops to big cities to sell once it is harvested. If they do have access, they have to pay a lot of money for taxes to the separatist groups and to the government army whenever they go through a checkpoint.

One civilian told our delegation members, "Last time, I was taking 100 kg of maize harvested from my land to sell it to Bua market and pay school fees for my three children in secondary school, I reached Bua with 28 kg only because I was pulled over four times on four different checkpoints (one checkpoint for separatists and three for government troops), I had to pay taxes. Since that time, I decided to never cultivate my land in Banga."

If a civilian doesn't pay, they are harassed physically. Some people are killed and no one will report because they fear the deadly consequences. In the affected zones there is no radio, no cellphone coverage, and no human rights defenders to document and report the atrocities that civilians are facing. People disappear and dead bodies are found after days in the bush.

An internally displaced person (IDP) told the delegation with tears running down his face. "I am an IDP, a father, and a grandfather today living a life without hope. My only house was burnt to ashes with my belongings: ID Card, birth certificate, marriage certificate, money and all my professional certificates. I lost my only brother when the military men stormed my community. I ran for safety like every other displaced person living now in Limbe. It's hard to cope here but I'm only trying to make ends meet. My life is in shambles."

One organization was hopeful that this delegation visit was "like the beginning of an open door for desperate voices to be heard. It's a dream come true to know that someone out there has shown concern," they said. 🙏

*Linda Sartor works internationally on Unarmed Civilian Protection teams and locally, is a member of the intentional community known as Monan's Rill, is the PJC Volunteer Coordinator, and a member of the Sonoma County Nonviolence Training Collective.*

# There Will Be No Back to Normal in Israel

by Lois Pearlman

This is the kind of statement radical young Jewish Israeli activists are making on the streets of Israeli towns and cities as they protest against the extreme right wing government their fellow citizens elected in November 2022. An 18-year-old protestor explains further.

“The protest movement has brought things out from under the carpet. The question is what to do with it. Until now there was some kind of compromise on the old order: going to the army and maintaining the status quo. As soon as you try to put things in an extreme direction, it causes many to ask how we agreed to the order that existed here. There is the possibility now for a turning point, a change in order. There will be no back to normal. We need to change the entire system, not just the government,” Yael (no last name) said when interviewed for +972 Magazine by Oren Ziv.

Genuine change, of course, is what Palestinians and their supporters have been working for, fighting for, praying for and sometimes dying for, since the United Nations “gave” more than half of traditional Palestine to the Zionists in 1947. But the only change that has happened in the intervening years is that the Israeli government has grown more and more right wing, until it elected an ultra religious and nationalistic government in November 2022, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. And, like pacman, has gobbled up more and more of the so-called Palestine territories, installing some 700,000 Jewish Israelis in West Bank and East Jerusalem ‘settlements’ that are deemed illegal by international law.

After the recent election, when it became clear that this new government not only openly professed it’s plan to annex all of the West Bank, but also to rescind the liberties that Jewish Israelis enjoy, such as equal rights for women and LGBTQ people, Israelis by the tens of thousands took to the streets to protest. And they are still there. At first the mass protests featured a sea of Israeli flag-waving marchers and the few who dared to agitate for Palestinian rights were shunned or even arrested. But now there is a new consciousness, at least among many youth, that the occupation of Palestinian lands, and the second-class citizenship of Palestinian Israelis, is at the core of what is rotten in Israel.

For the most part, the protesters were, and remain, white Jewish middle-class Israelis who are upset that the new government is invading their comfort zone. But as these protests continue, the Israeli police and military are beginning to give Jewish Israelis a taste of what Palestinians have been facing all along – beatings, arrests, stinky skunk water shot out of cannons. Although, unlike the way they treat Palestinians, soldiers and police have drawn the line at killing Jewish protesters. This is a first for Jewish Israelis.

While these tactics are aimed at ending the protests, they are actually encouraging them. Jewish Israelis have largely ignored the treatment of Palestinians, but now that they have become the targets, their eyes are opening to the larger reality. Some youthful protesters also point to the February 26 pogrom in Huwara as a turning point for them. During that night and the following morning the rampaging settlers burned dozens of homes and vehicles, killed a Palestinian villager and injured some 100 others in Huwara and four other West Bank villages. All of this happened as Israeli soldiers looked on and did nothing to stop it.

Other young people joined the protests when the government rescinded the “reasonableness” clause, which had allowed the Israeli

Supreme Court to invalidate any laws passed by the Knesset that it deemed unreasonable. This was the first strike of the new government, which aims to take away all power from the court. While the court has rarely defended the rights of Palestinians, it has served as the only thing that stands between the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians and total authoritarianism. Many older Israelis, fed up with the country they love, are moving to ex-pat communities in Europe – primarily Italy, Portugal and the city of Berlin.

But will this awakening bring about that desired result, or will the protests fade away and more religious and nationalistic settlers immigrate to Israel to replace the ones who have left, allowing things to morph into the new, some say fascistic normal? With the ultra right wing government giving a green light to settlers and the Israeli Defense Forces to ravage, pillage and destroy Palestinian homes and villages – even more flagrantly than before – things have gotten even worse for Palestinians. And, while the majority of Americans – and even some legislators – are beginning to see the Palestinian perspective on the Palestine/Israel conflict, the Biden administration is still offering unconditional support to Israel, both financially and politically. Who knows where this will all lead? But at least there is a ray of hope. 🌱

*Lois Pearlman is a theater artist, journalist and co-founder of North Coast Coalition for Palestine.*

## Radio Resistance

by Rebel Fagin

Sonoma County has a plethora of political activists and organizations. This isn’t true everywhere. These activists can inspire others to work for peace and justice through their information and their actions. Radio Resistance presents interviews with these activists in order to inform and inspire people to act. It is the show’s rationale for existence.

The interviews are framed by music at either end, including at least one local band. Radio Resistance airs Wednesdays 5-6 on [KWTF, 88.1 FM](#) or [KRJF, 92.3 FM](#). The interviews also play on [KBBF, 89.1 FM](#) Fridays at 11, after Democracy Now and prior to Commentary by Abu-Jamal. You can hear all of the shows [here](#).

So far we have discussed climate change, immigrant rights, health care for all, workers rights, unions, the plight of the unhoused, zero waste, nuclear weapons, justice for Palestine, trans rights, the Musers, Decolonized Mindz, Rascuache, North Bay Organizing Project, Jobs with Justice, food justice, the Sonoma County Tenants Union, the Imaginists, Railroad Square Music Festival, Native American rights, racial justice and more. If you are wondering why I haven’t covered your particular issue, get hold of me at [radioresistanced22@gmail.com](mailto:radioresistanced22@gmail.com) and if your ingredient works in the gumbo that is Radio Resistance, I’ll include it.

Sonoma County is full of activists who are working to make our lives better. Learn about them here, then join the ones that make sense to you, and together we can make the world a better place. We are all suffering at some level, some much more than others, so ban together to create necessary change. These interviews demonstrate some of what we can do to fix things. The rest is up to us. Listen to Radio Resistance to get an idea where and how you can join the struggle for peace through justice. 🌱

# What Can You Do? – No Matter What, Do Something!



PHOTO: SUSAN LAMONT

## *Susan Chunco's speech for being honored on the Peace Wall in Sebastopol*

I can't remember a time when I did not care about people and animals.

Growing up on a farm and seeing friends on my plate turned me into a vegetarian. I am also a lifelong adopter of homeless cats and dogs.

When I was in junior high school, my county began a daycare program for migrant workers' children, who, until then, had spent their time working in the fields with their parents. I volunteered to care for them for a couple of summers. I was not yet fully conscious of the justice issues around migrant workers, but it was a start.

After high school, I worked as a nurse's aide in the local hospital, caring for women and children. I have always helped individuals directly.

And, of course, the 60s, particularly after I attended Woodstock, had a strong influence on me. The anti-war, feminist, civil rights and other movements became part of my life.

Eight years ago, Carolyn Epple and Mikeal O'Toole asked for help in creating an encampment at the vacant Sonoma County Water Agency in Santa Rosa, in response to the growing crisis of homelessness in Sonoma County. It was named Camp Michela, after Michela Wooldridge, who was murdered while living on the streets.

Helping there, watching how the county and city used law enforcement to shuttle people around, seeing how they didn't help, but hindered, listening to the lies, quickly turned me into an advocate. As Camp Michela was being created, the Sonoma County Community Development Commission declared it a failure. To them, only shelters were acceptable — so they did what they could to make it fail.

Working at Camp Michela, which was forced to move to a spot behind the Dollar Tree in Roseland, taught me many things. Number one: Every unhoused person needs a psychiatric evaluation to find out what is needed to help them get off the streets. There is no one answer. Most people have landed on the streets for multiple reasons. It is my experience that all these groups should not be housed together. For instance, those who don't want to end their addictions may hinder the progress of those who do.

At Camp Michela some people cooked, others washed the dishes or cleaned the camp or were part of a loose government. They were treated like adults who had a role to play in improving their lives. It didn't work perfectly, but it was better than the camps in which people are given everything and never required to give anything back.

The camp failed because local government refused to help. They even refused port-a-potties.

The second thing I learned is "Services. Services. Services." We all hear that there aren't enough. In fact, they hardly exist and are decreasing. Caseworkers are rarely seen. Psychiatric help hardly exists. Drug rehab programs keep losing beds. Everything has been too little, too late. A country that can perpetually prepare for and wage war can pay for services, but the unhoused are considered expendable. Your elected representatives may not say that, but actions speak louder than words.

The third thing I learned is that we must listen to the homeless. They are the real experts. Most of us have not been homeless and are viewing this crisis from the outside. My daughter and I were homeless for two weeks many years ago, and were rescued by a kind woman. I was lucky. It was not long enough to make me an expert on the subject. Camp Michela was a model — homeless advocates working together with the unhoused themselves, making decisions together. Not perfect, but better.

And a final thing I believe with all my heart is that no elderly, sick or disabled person should be living on the streets. Whenever I see an old woman with a walker, pulling her belongings behind her, I know that it is a sin that our government allows this.

Some of the people I met at Camp Michela have died. Several have stayed at my apartment for varying lengths of time. That was enough for me to learn that just housing is not enough. Some still stop by. Some are housed, some are employed and many are still struggling, mostly with addiction. Some are lifelong friends.

My very good friend, Ka' Lane Reposa is a success story. I met him at Camp Michela and he is now well housed and continues to work uplifting others.

And what can you do?

First, don't be a NIMBY. You are closer to being on the streets than you think. Our inhumane economic system can end your comfort at any time.

Second, empower the homeless, don't infantilize them. Learned helplessness is real.

Third, let your representatives know how you feel. Speak up for, not against, the unhoused.

Fourth, understand that homelessness is a human-created condition, not created by the people who are unhoused but by those who place profit over people. We need solidarity. We need to prevent homelessness in the first place.

No matter what, do something! Thank you. 🌱

# Time to Take Away Fox's Broadcast Licenses

by Steve Macek and Mitchell Szczepanczyk, Project Censored

On July 3, 2023, members of the [Media and Democracy Project](#), a media watchdog group, [petitioned](#) the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to deny the renewal of the license for Philadelphia's Fox TV station, WTFX. The [filing](#) charged that WTFX had repeatedly promoted a false narrative about the 2020 Presidential election being "stolen" from Donald Trump by the Democrats, "sowing discord in the country" in the process, and ultimately contributing "to harmful and dangerous acts on January 6, 2021." The filing further alleged that the management of the station's owner, the Fox Corporation, deliberately and knowingly "manipulated its audience" by pushing Trump's baseless stolen-election narrative.

Although stripping an established TV station of its broadcast license may seem like an extreme measure, the Fox Corporation's record of malfeasance and its repeated betrayal of the public trust

*More recently, the network has taken to attacking special prosecutor Jack Smith for bringing criminal charges against Trump for illegally retaining federal documents and for Trump's role in inciting the January 6 attack on the US Capitol.*

justifies the action in this case. Indeed, an argument can be made that the FCC should take away every single one of the corporation's broadcast licenses.

Consider the evidence. The Fox Corporation also owns the infamous and widely watched cable channel, Fox News. Transcripts of Fox News coverage during the two weeks after the 2020 election show Fox reporters and opinion-makers [made nearly 600 statements](#) casting doubt on the election outcome or promoting conspiracy theories about the balloting process. Even today Fox News continues to sow doubt about the election among its viewing audience and consistently downplays the subsequent coup attempt of January 6. More recently, the network has taken to [attacking special prosecutor Jack Smith](#) for bringing criminal charges against Trump for illegally retaining federal documents and for Trump's role in inciting the January 6 attack on the US Capitol.

The public got a rare glimpse inside Fox News during the discovery process of a defamation lawsuit brought by Dominion Voting Systems, a manufacturer of voting machines that claimed Fox News hosts and their guests damaged Dominion's reputation. Emails and text messages from Fox Corporation management, including messages between company board chair Rupert Murdoch and former top executive Preston Padden, showed they knew the [claims of election fraud](#) they were broadcasting were "total BS." The emails revealed that the Fox News fact-checking department, "the brain room," believed that allegations made on the network

about Dominion voting machines being rigged were "100% false" and [concluded](#) that there was "no evidence of widespread fraud." On the day before the Dominion trial was slated to begin, the news outlet agreed to a settlement of more than three-quarter-of-a-billion dollars (the largest-known defamation settlement in American history), quite likely because Fox realized they were going to lose. Fox News is still facing a [\\$2.7 billion lawsuit](#) from another voting machine company, Smartmatic, which claims it was also smeared by the company's coverage.

Fox Corporation also faces [a lawsuit brought by Ray Epps](#), a former Marine and participant in the January 6th insurrection, whom Fox claimed was an undercover turncoat to the Trump cause. The Dominion suit "demonstrates a pattern," Epps's attorney said, that Fox has "engaged in lies about the 2020 election, seeking to placate their viewers." In yet another lawsuit, Abby Grossberg, a former Fox News producer who claims she was "bullied, intimidated and coerced" into giving a dishonest deposition in the Dominion case, [decried her former employer](#) as "a big corporate machine that destroys people."

Of course, the media conglomerate's pattern of misconduct long predates the rise of Donald Trump and the "Big Lie" of the allegedly stolen 2020 election. In 2012, Fox-affiliated journalists in Britain intercepted private voicemail messages. The ensuing scandal, dubbed "Hackergate," led to a judicial public inquiry—the Leveson Inquiry, named for its chair, Lord Justice Brian Leveson—that chastised news outlets affiliated with Fox Corporation for "a failure of systems of management and compliance."

Nevertheless, the parade of unethical behavior continued unabated. In 2017, the corporation paid \$90 million to resolve sexual harassment claims against former Fox News anchor Bill O'Reilly and longtime Fox News chief Roger Ailes. The aforementioned whistleblower, Abby Grossberg, described repeated instances of male employees at Fox News bombarding women on staff with [sexist and misogynist insults](#).

Which brings us back to the petition to deny the license of Philadelphia's Fox TV station WTFX.

Broadcast television license holders are obliged to serve the public "interest, convenience, and necessity," and the FCC makes clear a number of [disqualifying criteria](#) against incumbent licensees. These include "an adverse finding... against it or its owners by a court...in a civil or criminal proceeding." Moreover, broadcast license holders can lose their license for [promoting false information](#) if they knew it was false, if broadcasting the false information "directly cause[d] substantial public harm," and "it was foreseeable that [such promotion] would cause such harm." The Media and Democracy Project filing bluntly [charges](#) that "Fox harmed the public by willfully distorting election news."

If the FCC grants the Media and Democracy Project petition, it will need to convene an evidentiary hearing to determine if the facts warrant nonrenewal of Fox's WTFX license and to assess whether or not Fox "lacks the character qualifications required of licensees," as the petition asserts. Although we have no way of knowing the outcome of such a hearing, it would at least force Fox to account for its long history of misconduct.

*Time to Take Away Fox's Broadcast Licenses...see page 21*

## Cultivating a Local Peace Economy... *from page 1*

make you smarter about the world you live in, break out of habits and patterns that enslave you and spend your precious life instead in cultivating a future for all life on the planet.

Creating a local peace economy is about finding ways to create conditions conducive for life. The people you can affect are the people closest to you — and those are the people you are going to need when we are all experiencing the effects of the calamity humanity has put in. Moving through this flood is going to come down to local community support systems.

We know what the impacts of the war economy are, and we suffer from them daily. People who are poor, and people of color in the United States and around the world, are suffering most. It is up to us who are living in the war-and-terror-based empire that is the US, to change our habits.

You only need to practice. I promise you that after nine months of practice (something that I call the “birthing process,” because breaking habits is not easy it brings up grief and the traumas of what living in a war economy entails), you will find you are cultivating a community of caring and sharing, and participating in a great spiraling circle where we are all rising together.

There’s so much we can do all day, every day, to stay engaged and connected, and to nourish the heart with the sense of fulfillment it longs for, which is something the war economy can never provide. This is why we’ve created *Pivots to Peace*.

What I find, as my practices deepen, is that I become a tuning fork for another way of being. One practice that never seems to leave me is the realization of how transactional we have been acculturated to, even as we all know the only things of real value are relationships, even those with ourselves. In this time of rampant narcissism, which reflects the lack of relationship, it becomes our responsibility to be in deeper relationships.

There are no problems to solve. The solving of problems got us here. Too often solving problems just creates more problems. We will never understand the complexities of humanity, but we can be in relationship with, in awe of, and in celebration of complexities. I hope you’ll join us in the *peace economy*. We’ll take you on a beautiful journey of peace and love. 🌱

*Jodie Evans is Cofounder of, CODEPINK: Women for Peace*

## Oct. 22 Movement to End Police Brutality... *from page 4*

about through pressure and work from several sources, including IOLERO and activists. 🌱 It is incumbent upon those who read the *PD* and the above groups to share the information far and wide. That includes increasing the number of people who know that the sheriff’s office, no matter what pretty words it utters, is refusing major change, though some changes have been made. Then, people must be encouraged to express their displeasure directly to the sheriff’s office. Contact the [Sheriff Eddie Engram](#) The sheriff must begin to feel that the status quo actually might lose at the ballot box. Your vote counts the most at the local level.

We’ve made progress, but the biggest hurdles haven’t been scaled. We must stay engaged and informed. We must continue the work. 🌱

# VENEZUELA'S IRREVERSIBLE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION

*Comuna o Nada*

Christian Stalberg will present a talk about his trip to Venezuela. Learn about a different way to structure society – a way that benefits the working class and indigenous peoples.

**Thurs. Nov. 2**  
**PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER**

Doors open 6:30 PM



The brigade at the Escuela Nacional Robinsoniana, the premier political education school for the Bolivarian Revolution.

### Imagining a Thriving Democracy... from page 2

now as we move into the critical elections of 2024?

In the spring of 1981, I was blessed with being able to meet brave people from Poland's Solidarity Movement. Their response to the question of what could they really accomplish when facing a totally authoritarian society was that they were committed to living and acting publicly and privately "as if" they were already living in a society with political rights and workers rights." That statement continues to ring in my head and my heart, in my life's work for creating, together with all of you, a thriving democracy. What would you do with your family, friends, and neighbors right now to begin to live "as if" Sonoma County were a thriving democracy in every way?

I now invite you to consider sharing this article with family, friends, and neighbors and initiate a conversation, perhaps over coffee or even a meal around your dining table. Together, share your imaginations of what you would see around you when Sonoma County has become a thriving democracy. Listen for the unity in your shared vision, because that consensus is a great starting point

for organizing, strategizing, and mobilizing together with like-minded, visionary activists locally.

Ask your family, friends, and neighbors what are electoral reforms that, when enacted, would make it easier to create that thriving democracy. Abolishing the senate filibuster rules? Establishing publicly funded elections? Ending partisan gerrymandering? Abolishing the Electoral College? Passing federal voting rights laws? What else?

Looking for a great starting point? Check out the [North Bay Organizing Project](#) and read about all the issues your neighbors are confronting with smart strategy and full-hearted commitment, such as climate justice, immigrant rights, police accountability, renters rights, youth organizing, and yes, "deep democracy." 🌱

*Paul Robbins is active with the North Bay Organizing Project's Deep Democracy Team and the movement to make a quality education a Constitutional right, along with immediate demands for direct federal involvement and investment in all public schools.*

### Venezuela's Socialist Communes' Movement... from page 11

and one rural. The first commune we visited after arriving in Caracas is El Panal. Occupying a hilltop overlooking the city, El Panal has 1,200 families and over 3,000 inhabitants. The commune includes at least one large several story high rise apartment building. They also have a school; grow some of their own food including corn, fish and pork; a bakery; and small-scale crafts production. While we visited, they were building a laundromat and a credit union. We joined in the work on these projects cleaning and painting. Our brigade presented them with soccer balls and other useful items.

A rural commune we visited in the eastern part of Venezuela in Cumanacoa township was called Las Cinco Fortalezas de la Revolución Bolivariana. Comprised of 5 communal councils, 450 families with 1,249 individuals on 780 hectares of land, 63 of which is

planted in sugar cane. The commune has a service program of growing and distributing food amongst the poorest in their locale. Our brigade had brought with us heirloom vegetable seeds for a number of crops to present to them towards their developing vegetable seed self-sufficiency. There had been a recent storm that had damaged a ceremonial space, so we joined with them in its reconstruction. We toured the sugar cane and vegetable fields, including seeing their recently acquired 100+ year old sugar cane press in action.

There is a great deal more that can be said about the trip. This article barely scratches the surface. I will end by requesting that you contact your congressperson and tell them to end the sanctions against Venezuela. 🌱

*Christian Stalberg is a PhD student in Anthropology & Social Change at the California Institute of Integral Studies.*

### Time to Take Away Fox's Broadcast Licenses... from page 19

To be sure, other American broadcasters have been guilty of airing politically-motivated falsehoods as fact. A classic example is the abysmal performance of the country's TV news operations in the lead-up to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. During this period, CNN, NBC, and other TV networks uncritically boosted now-discredited claims about Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction and State Department lies about connections between Al Qaeda and Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

But Fox Corporation stands in an ignoble class all its own, and the network's vile propaganda and egregious behavior are rightly disparaged by journalists and critics from across the political spec-

trum. Indeed, former Fox executive Preston Padden, who helped build the network to its current prominence, now [believes that Rupert Murdoch and his son and apparent corporate heir Lachlan Murdoch have proven unfit owners](#)" and should no longer be allowed to operate broadcast TV stations in this country.

The FCC would do well to heed the challenge offered by the WTXF petition to deny. 🌱

*Steve Macek is professor of communication and media studies at North Central College and a co-coordinator of [Project Censored's](#) Campus Affiliates Program.*

*Mitchell Szczepanczyk is a software engineer and a longtime organizer and writer with the media activist group [Chicago Media Action](#).*




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District 2 - [David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org](mailto:David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org)

District 3 - [Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org)

District 4 - [James.Gore@sonoma-county.org](mailto:James.Gore@sonoma-county.org)

District 5 - [Linda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Linda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org)

#### State Senator Mike McGuire

50 D St., Ste. 120A, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 576-2771, Fax: (707) 576-2773

[Senator.McGuire@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Senator.McGuire@sen.ca.gov)

#### Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen

District Offices, 9250 Laguna Springs Drive

Suite 220, Elk Grove, CA 95758,

Tel: (916) 670-7888

Capitol Office: State Capitol

P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0010

Tel: (916) 319-2010

#### Assemblymember Jim Wood

50 D Street, Suite 450, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 576-2526, Fax: (707) 576-2297

California Assembly Website: [assembly.ca.gov](http://assembly.ca.gov)

#### U.S. Representative Jared Huffman

1630 Longworth Office Bldg.

Washington, DC 20515

202-225-5161, 202-225-5163 (Fax)

Nearest local office:

999 Fifth Ave., #290, San Raphael 94901

415-258-9657, 415-258-9913 (Fax)

#### U.S. Representative Mike Thompson

231 Cannon Bldg., Washington D.C. 20515

(202) 225-3311, Napa (707) 226-9898

Fax: (202) 225-4335, Santa Rosa (707) 542-7182

Fax (707) 542-2745

[m.thompson@mail.house.gov](mailto:m.thompson@mail.house.gov)

#### U.S. Senator Alejandro Padilla

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Washington, D.C. 20510

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[padilla.senate.gov/content/contact-senator](http://padilla.senate.gov/content/contact-senator)

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[governor@governor.ca.gov](mailto:governor@governor.ca.gov)

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you're watching them.*

# Sonoma County Social Justice Groups

ALL PHONE AREA CODES ARE (707)  
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**350 Sonoma County** – Engaging our community in the work of [350.org](http://350.org) to solve the climate crisis. [350sonomacounty.org](http://350sonomacounty.org)

**ACLU Sonoma Co.**, working to preserve individual working rights and liberties. [sonomaaclu.org](http://sonomaaclu.org)

**Allies Safety Network** – compiling a phone chain/helpline to build a safety network for those at risk of harassment to provide a supportive presence in situations of hateful threats. Join the Network Call List: 583-9168

**Alternatives to Violence** – Presents experiential workshops in personal growth in the community and prisons. 545-1798

**The Climate Center** – Rapid Response Team, [benderjane613@gmail.com](mailto:benderjane613@gmail.com), 707-291-5988 or [info@speakeasies.biz](mailto:info@speakeasies.biz), 707-494-9495. [theclimatecenter.org](http://theclimatecenter.org)

**Comité VIDA** – Defends the human and civil rights of immigrants. 523-1740, [cirsc@yahoo.com](mailto:cirsc@yahoo.com),

**Daily Acts** – Offers sustainable solutions rooted in the power of inspired daily actions. 789-9664, [dailyacts.org](http://dailyacts.org)

**Fukushima Response** – works to inform about the Fukushima melt downs, monitor the consequences, advocate for the shut down of Diablo Canyon. [fukushimaresponse.org](http://fukushimaresponse.org). 823-9203

**Green Party of Sonoma County** – [sonomagreenparty.org](http://sonomagreenparty.org)

**Green Sangha** – Spiritually engaged environmental action. [info@greensangha.org](mailto:info@greensangha.org)

**HPEACE** – Health Professionals for Equality and Community Empowerment. [hpeacesonomacounty.wordpress.com](http://hpeacesonomacounty.wordpress.com)

**Healdsburg Peace Project** – Peace and social justice action group, Healdsburg. 431-1129, [healdsburgpeaceproject.org](http://healdsburgpeaceproject.org)

**Hate Free Petaluma** Progressive organization.

[www.facebook.com/hatefreepetaluma/](http://www.facebook.com/hatefreepetaluma/)

**Homeless Action** – Advocating for people without shelter. 795-2890

**Indivisible Goups** – All the groups are on Facebook.

**Indivisible Sonoma County:** [indivisiblesoco.com](http://indivisiblesoco.com)

**Indivisible Petaluma:** [indivisiblepetaluma@gmail.com](mailto:indivisiblepetaluma@gmail.com),

or follow on Twitter at @IndivisibleLuma

**Indivisible Sebastopol:** [indivisible.wsc@gmail.com](mailto:indivisible.wsc@gmail.com)

**Indivisible Healdsburg**

**Indivisible Windsor**

**LezResist!** A visible unified Lesbian presence in support of each other, and stand in solidarity with the many communities, causes, and policies under attack by the US administration. Info @ [LezResist@gmail.com](mailto:LezResist@gmail.com).

**LGBTQ Connection, Napa & Sonoma Counties** – Sonoma County, 714 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401, 707-582-0552, [emerson@lgbtqconnection.org](mailto:emerson@lgbtqconnection.org)

**Listening for a Change** – Programs support listening and oral history to create a caring community. 578-5420, [listeningforchange.org](http://listeningforchange.org) **MEChA de Sonoma** – Student group that focuses on issues affecting the Chicano/Latino community. [info@mechadesonoma.org](mailto:info@mechadesonoma.org)

**Los Cien** – advances belonging, trust and equity by engaging with community, facilitating honest dialogue, elevating Latinx pride and power in So.Co. [loscien.org](http://loscien.org)

**Metta Center for Nonviolence** – Works to promote and build a nonviolent culture worldwide. 774-6299

**MOVES-Minimizing Occurrences of Violence in Everyday Society** – Stresses nonviolence as the answer to society's ph. 524-1900

**NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People** – Seeks to eliminate racial hatred, racial profiling and discrimination. [naacpsantarosasonomaco.org](http://naacpsantarosasonomaco.org) Email: [naacp.srcs1074b@gmail.com](mailto:naacp.srcs1074b@gmail.com) 707.536.1047

**National Women's History Project** – coordinates observances of Women's History month around the country. 636-2888, [nwhp@aol.com](http://nwhp@aol.com)

**North Bay Jobs with Justice** – organized for better conditions and a living wage for workers. Email: [northbayjobswithjustice@gmail.com](mailto:northbayjobswithjustice@gmail.com), Website: [northbayjobswithjustice.org](http://northbayjobswithjustice.org), [www.facebook.com/nbjwj](http://www.facebook.com/nbjwj) Ph: 346-1187

**North Bay Organizing Project** – a regional community organization. [www.facebook.com/NorthBayOrganizingProject](http://www.facebook.com/NorthBayOrganizingProject) 318-2818

**North Coast Coalition for Palestine** – Brings greater awareness to the plight of the Palestinian people and works to end US military support for Israel. 575-8902. [www.nccpal.org](http://www.nccpal.org) or find us on Facebook.

**NOW of Sonoma County** – local chapter of the National Organization for Women. 545-5036

**Occupy Sonoma County** – Embraces the egalitarian, deep

democracy principles of the Occupy Movement with a regional strategy for effectively organizing county-wide social justice campaigns that are globally relevant. 877-6650, [OccupySonomaCounty.org](http://OccupySonomaCounty.org)

**Organizing for Action:** Progressive organizing project. Contact Linda Hemenway: [whatisworking@gmail.com](mailto:whatisworking@gmail.com) or 707-843-6110 and Facebook

**Peace Alliance** – Mission is to campaign for a cabinet-level US Department of Peace. 838-8647, [maggik3@sonic.net](mailto:maggik3@sonic.net), [thepeacealliance.org](http://thepeacealliance.org)

**Peace Roots Alliance** – We seek to create a peaceful, just and sustainable world for future generations. 765-0196, [Linda@peaceroots.org](mailto:Linda@peaceroots.org)

**Petaluma Blacks for Community Development** – [facebook.com/pb4cd](https://www.facebook.com/pb4cd)

**Petaluma Progressives** – Grassroots, political education and action group. Producers of the Progressive Festival. 763-8134, [info@progressivefestival.org](mailto:info@progressivefestival.org)

**Praxis Peace Institute** – Peace Education organization, 939-2973, [praxispeace.org](http://praxispeace.org)

**Progressive Sonoma** – Peaceful Resistance Network. An umbrella association to network Sonoma's local progressive action groups. [peacefulresistance9.wixsite.com/progressivesonoma](http://peacefulresistance9.wixsite.com/progressivesonoma). Facebook at Peaceful Resistance Sonoma

**Project Censored/Media Freedom Foundation** – Publishes the top 25 most censored news stories each year. [Mickey@projectcensored.org](mailto:Mickey@projectcensored.org). [projectcensored.org](http://projectcensored.org)

**Racial Justice Allies** – Developing anti-racist practices among white social justice activists. 795-2890 [racialjusticeallies@gmail.com](http://racialjusticeallies@gmail.com), [www.racialjusticeallies.org](http://www.racialjusticeallies.org)

**Sonoma County Black Forum:** Our mission is to lead, serve, and thrive, by promoting positive community and youth engagement events. Monthly meetings. [sonomacountyblackforum@gmail.com](mailto:sonomacountyblackforum@gmail.com)

**Physicians for a National Health Program, Sonoma County (PNHP)**. In support of single payer health insurance. 763-1925. [sngold@juno.com](mailto:sngold@juno.com). [pnhpca.org](http://pnhpca.org).

**Sonoma County Climate Activist Network (SoCo CAN!)** Groups and individuals working address and reverse climate change. Meet in months with a 5th Monday, 7-9 PM at the PJC. Info: 595-0320 or [SonomaCountyCAN@gmail.com](mailto:SonomaCountyCAN@gmail.com) (email preferred).

**Sonoma County Coastal Hills:** [gardens@mcn.org](http://gardens@mcn.org)

**Sonoma County Nonviolence Training Collective** offers free trainings in methods and principles for progressive social change and peace. [soconvtc@gmail.com](mailto:soconvtc@gmail.com).

**Sonoma County Resistance** via [change.org](http://change.org)

**Sonoma Solidarity with Standing Rock** – Supporting indigenous rights and fossil fuel resistance. [SonomaSolidarity.org](http://SonomaSolidarity.org), [facebook.com/SonomaNoDAPL](https://www.facebook.com/SonomaNoDAPL). 792-4422.

**Sonoma Valley Peace & Justice** – Peace and social justice group for Sonoma Valley. [audreyvh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:audreyvh@sbcglobal.net)

**Sunrise Movement, Sonoma County Hub** – Our hub believes in the power of mobilizing youth, taking direct and indirect action, building political power, civic engagement, and partnerships. More info: [www.sunrisesoco.org](http://www.sunrisesoco.org) and [facebook.com/SunriseSoCo](https://www.facebook.com/SunriseSoCo)

**SURJ (Showing Up For Racial Justice, Sonoma County)** – [facebook.com/SURJSonomaCounty](https://www.facebook.com/SURJSonomaCounty)

**United Farm Workers** – 1700 Corby Ave., Santa Rosa 528-3039

**United Nations Association** – Builds public understanding and support for the United Nations. Facebook

**Veterans for Peace** – Organization of vets working together for peace and justice through nonviolence. 536-6002

**VIDAS - Vital Immigrant Defense Advocacy and Services** 576 B St Suite 1C, Santa Rosa, CA 95401, [vidaslegal.org](http://vidaslegal.org) Sonoma County, Napa County, Solano County Providing Low-Cost, Immigration Law Services, Advocacy, and Community Education. (707) 523-1740, Spanish/English, Monday-Friday 9am-1pm and 2-5pm

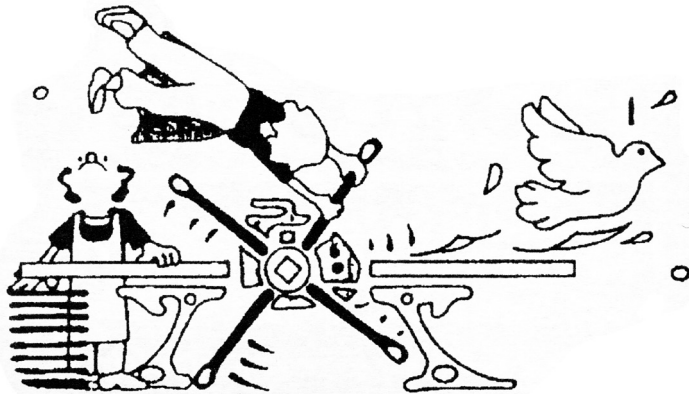
**Legal Assistance Women in Black** – Women who stand in silent vigil to protest war and human rights abuses.

**Women's Justice Center** – Advocacy for victims of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse, particularly in the Latina community. 575-3150, [justicewomen.com](http://justicewomen.com)

For additions or changes, email [zenekar2@gmail.com](mailto:zenekar2@gmail.com) type "PEACE PRESS" on Subject line.



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**Please call (707) 575-8902 or visit [PJCsoco.org](http://PJCsoco.org)**

**REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND UTILIZATION OF THE PJC BUILDING**

*by Madonna Feather-Cruz*

**D**ear Community Members/Neighbors/Friends, I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to share an exciting opportunity that has the potential to greatly benefit our community and foster a spirit of unity and positive change. As you may be aware, our Peace & Justice Center building stands as a symbol of hope and collaboration, and we are reaching out to you to request your support in utilizing this space for a variety of community gatherings.

Our vision is to transform the Peace & Justice Center building into a vibrant hub for community engagement, dialogue, and empowerment. We believe that by opening our doors to a diverse range of activities, we can create an environment where ideas are exchanged, relationships are strengthened, and meaningful conversations take place. Please contact us by going to our home page, [pjcsoco.org](http://pjcsoco.org), and hitting contact us from the top right page corner.

We are kindly requesting your assistance in the following ways:

1. **Community Meetings:** We invite local organizations, clubs, and groups to consider our space for their meetings, workshops, and gatherings. Our facilities are equipped to accommodate various group sizes and can provide a conducive environment for brainstorming, planning, and collaborating.

2. **Film Screenings:** The Peace & Justice Center building offers a comfortable setting for film screenings that educate, inspire, and spark conversations on important social and cultural topics. We encourage filmmakers and enthusiasts to explore this space as a platform for sharing their work and promoting meaningful discussions.

3. **Listening Sessions:** Meaningful dialogue is at the heart of positive change.

We welcome individuals and groups to host listening sessions where community members can share their experiences, perspectives, and concerns. These sessions can help us better understand each other and work towards common goals.

4. **Potluck Gatherings:** Food has a unique way of bringing people together. We encourage the community to organize potluck dinners and gatherings at our center. Sharing meals fosters connections, encourages cross-cultural interactions, and helps build a sense of camaraderie.

5. **Board Meetings:** Non-profit organizations and community groups seeking a conducive space for their board meetings are invited to utilize our facilities. Our aim is to support the administrative functions of local groups and contribute to their success.

6. **Open to the Native Community:** The transformation of the Peace & Justice Center into a vibrant hub for Native American cultural teachings offers an exciting opportunity to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of indigenous traditions within our community. By embracing activities such as storytelling, arts and crafts workshops, Native food demonstrations, and dance practice, the Center becomes a conduit for the preservation and celebration of Native American heritage.

These endeavors create a dynamic space where stories come to life, artistic expressions thrive, traditional culinary practices are shared, and the rhythmic pulse of dance connects individuals to the heart of indigenous cultures. This multi-faceted approach not only enriches our collective knowledge but also promotes a sense of unity and cross-cultural harmony, aligning perfectly with the Center's mission of promoting social justice and inclusivity.