

interhelp



a networking newsletter

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The War on Terrorism: Voices of Dissent

Good and Evil

If it were all so simple!
If only there were evil people somewhere
insidiously committing evil deeds,
and it were necessary only to separate them
from the rest of us and destroy them.
But the line dividing good and evil
cuts through the heart of every human being.
And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

— Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (as reprinted in
YES! Magazine, Winter 2002)

The Illusion of Support for a Military Response

One week after the tragedies in New York, Washington, DC, and western Pennsylvania [the AFSC General Secretary] received word from an AFSC donor in Baltimore that she had been asked to participate in a local newspaper survey. She told the caller that the right question was missing from the survey – there was no alternative offered for a peaceful response.

To her surprise, the newspaper changed the survey, adding a nonviolent option, which, at last count, was selected by 70 percent of those polled. Her suggestion made it possible for every person who took part in the survey to at least consider a nonviolent response, and it was the one most people preferred.

I tell this story to show how much unseen public support may be available for nonviolent alternatives and to illustrate what a difference one voice can make in ways that count a lot.

— From the Quaker Service Bulletin of the
American Friends Service Committee

We hesitate adding to the volume of commentary on the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (so aptly abbreviated 911). We do so in part to account for the tardiness of this issue (our most recent issue came out in June 2001), for as my poem reveals, I was pretty much debilitated by my sadness about the attack and my frustration about the terrible aftermath. It was only upon the completion of that piece that I could emerge from this state.

I write in a spirit of celebration and gratefulness, particularly for U.S. Rep. **Barbara Lee** who stood alone in the Congress against signing a blank check for war and U.S. Sen. **Russell Feingold**, who stood alone in the Senate against the USA Patriot Act, which aims to destroy more of American democracy than any number of terrorists could hope to destroy. In addition, I want to celebrate a number of extraordinarily important sources of information (see page 3) that balance the mainstream media's uncritical support for military action and on page 4, a number of individuals who have spoken out with special brilliance and humanity. The thoughts of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (see sidebar), though written previously, importantly address the concept of a war between "good" and "evil." Finally, the second sidebar calls attention to the fact that the apparent support for a violent solution to the violence of 911 is illusory. Because of its excessive length (for this *Newsletter*), we print only the first and last sections of the poem "I Weep" by your editor (page 2); if you would care for a copy of the entire poem, preferably via e-mail, please let me know at risprin@attglobal.net or by mail at the Interhelp address.

I Weep

by Michael Rice

My bladder awakens me – and I weep.
For three months now, I do not sleep: I weep.
I weep for the pilots, the passengers;
For the firemen and even police
(So lately themselves victimizers
Of the Black, the Foreign, the Other);
I weep for the janitors and cooks;
For the traders and business breakfast goers;
For the orphans, the wives and the husbands,
And the fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers;
I weep as well for the war makers in the Pentagon.

I weep with remembrance –
Each with a face, a name, personhood –
All victims of unspeakable crime.

I weep with frustration and fury
That you, George Bush and The Congress,
Have declared their murder an Act of War –
For you have taken away their names and their faces
And turned them into mere “collateral damage”
In a war against our Nation.

What is this thing, a Nation,
That de-faces the people,
That renders husbands and wives
And daughters and sons
And mothers and fathers
And brothers and sisters
And workers and soldiers
As little more than pawns
To be sacrificed in senseless chess games?

War is futile, war is insane.
Let us honor the dead through whose death
Our Nation has been thrust
Into the rest of the world –
The world that knows unjust mass death –
Let us honor them instead
By joining the world in truth,
Joining as peer not master,
Supporting its institutions,
Embracing the International Criminal Court,
Bringing offenders to the Court.

If their act of terror was an act of war,
You have made soldiers of its perpetrators –
Heroes, for they gave their lives
In their ugly cause, executed so skillfully

If this was an act of war,
It was but an evil twist in an old spiral,
A spiral of violence . . .

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Terrorism comes with the territory
Of world domination, of a world-full
Of people denied simple respect and justice.

Terrorism and simple engine failure
Come with the territory of high technology,
Long supply lines, and abandonment
Of small-scale, local self-reliance,
Of compassionate communities.

There is a part of me that weeps,
That feels the pain of people victimized
By anomie and terrorism.

There is a part of me that analyzes
The complex spiral of justice and injustice,
That is engaged by the battle among the actors.

I pray that the simple part of me that weeps –
That knows only compassion,
That sees Good and Evil as a part of all
And never as the mark of a person,
That sees all beings as parts of a gigantic web –
Will always hold sway over the part
That is enthralled by geopolitical games.

There is no Love without Justice.
But fear that I might be trapped
Into pursuit of Justice without Love
Makes me unwilling to carry a gun,
Lest I use it.

Resources: A Celebration

The Central Struggle of the Post-September 11th Period is this:

Will we see the world through the prism of fear and mutual suspicion generated by the terrorists? Or will we see it through the prism of goodness and generosity demonstrated by the firemen, police, and citizens who risked (and in many cases lost) their lives to save others? It is a battle of fear versus hope. We can choose to live in a world based in fear and filled with suspicion, where we must constantly defend ourselves from the dangers lurking at every turn; or we can acknowledge the shadow elements in the world and in ourselves, guard ourselves from danger to the degree that we are able, but consciously choose to focus our energies on building trust, love, and goodness in the world. Let us choose hope over fear. For TIKKUN, the greatest security will come not through armies or counterviolence, not through revenge or hatred, but through building a world based on love, open-heartedness, and a recognition of the sanctity of everyone on the planet.

“**Democracy Now!**” with Amy Goodman, on Pacifica Radio until a Board takeover by political centrists and corporatists stopped carrying this premier program, broadcasts two hours each weekday over many media (see www.democracynow.org) including the web broadcast on www.wbix.org. There are indications that CN! may soon return to the Pacifica network; the Berkeley station KPFA somehow managed to retain DN! throughout the Pacifica crisis. Goodman follows in the journalistic tradition of I.F.Stone, who carefully avoided the official stories and developed sources and brought news the mainstream media often failed to acknowledge until decades later.

www.commondreams.org (“breaking news and views for the progressive community”) provides material often overlooked or suppressed in mainstream media.

www.starhawk.org has some of the best-written, humane essays on corporate globalization and on the war and on the imperative of activism.

YES! A journal of positive futures. If you do not already subscribe to this superb quarterly, we urge you to do so, by sending a check for \$24 to YES!, 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-2870, or via www.yesmagazine.org. The Winter 2002 issue has a particularly rich offering of 911 articles. Articles from back issues can be accessed on the web address.

The Progressive regularly features the brilliantly humane historian **Howard Zinn**, as well as **Barbara Ehrenreich**, **Molly Ivins**, and numerous other fine commentators, not least the editor Matthew Rothschild himself. The December 2001 issue is only the last in a fine set of monthly offerings. Subscribe for \$32 per year (or find a better deal) at The Progressive, PO Box 421, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0421 or at www.progressive.org.

TIKKUN is a bimonthly magazine edited by Rabbi **Michael Lerner**. The editor is the author of the recent book *Spirit Matters* and is among the leading progressive and spiritually aware Jews. TIKKUN is as valuable for gentiles as it is for Jews and can be had for \$29 per year at TIKKUN Subscription Service, PO Box 460926, Escondito, CA 92046. Or visit www.tikkun.org. The November/December 2001 issue has a particularly fine series of 911 articles, including one on “hot” and “cold” evil by Andrew Kimbrell. (See also the sidebar.)

The SUN is a monthly magazine featuring fine photography and socially aware articles, poetry, and fiction, along with a Readers Write section for which readers are invited (with a half-year lead time) to submit short articles on a different topic each month. Subscriptions are \$17 for six months or \$34 for 12 through The Sun, Subscription Department, PO Box 469061, Escondito, CA 92046-9061, or via www.thesunmagazine.org.

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Actions and people we are grateful for:

The humanity and heroism of firemen and countless others who risked and gave their lives on 9-11.

The humanity of the likes of **Balwina Piecuch** who risked her life and that of her family in 1942 to hide 12-year-old Samuel Oliner from the killers of all his family (whose story is featured in the Winter 2002 issue of YES!)

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian professor and founder of the discipline of Peace Studies whose wise and unemotional words diagnosing 911 and demonstrating the prognosis for various policy options were broadcast on Democracy Now! and are available on videotape from their website. **Howard Zinn**, **Noam Chomsky**, and **Cornel West** are among many other scholars whose profound analyses are often heard on Democracy Now!.

Wendell Berry, for his brilliant essay on “The Futility of War” (YES! Winter 2002) and “Thoughts in the Presence of Fear” on www.oriononline.org (excerpts in sidebar below), and above all, for his poetry and fiction – *Jayber Crow* was at the top of my year’s reading.

Arundhati Roy, Indian activist and author of *The God of Little Things*, for her persistent courage and her article “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” which was published in the British paper, *The Guardian*, and like so much these days, came to me from several watchers by e-mail.

Andrew Kimbrell, whose 911 articles have appeared in YES! and in TIKKUN, and who also has been one of the most brilliant critics of GMO-based agriculture.

Michael Lerner and **Arthur Waskow** whose conscientious spirituality, prolific writing (in books, periodicals and via e-mail), and consistent activism represents, for me, the best and most attractive feature of contemporary Judaism. (Arthur Waskow has been spearheading support in the U.S. for the project by Israel’s Rabbis for Human Rights to replant some of the tens of thousands of Palestinians’ olive trees as well as an interfaith effort to challenge the culture of overwork – see www.shalomctr.org.)

The list of giants of scholarship, analysis, and activism is very long, and I have omitted many comparable voices whose impact on me has been equivalent. *Just don’t let anyone tell you that “Nobody” suggests any alternatives or is serious about opposing the war policy of the U.S. administration – so shamefully endorsed by almost the entire Congress.*

Thoughts in the Presence of Fear

by Wendell Berry

I. The time will soon come when we will not be able to remember the horrors of September 11 without remembering also the unquestioning technological and economic optimism that ended on that day.

II. This optimism rested on the proposition that we were living in a “new world order” and a “new economy” that would “grow” on and on, bringing a prosperity of which every new increment would be “unprecedented.”

...

XXVI. The complexity of our present trouble suggests as never before that we need to change our present concept of education. Education is not properly an industry, and its proper use is not to serve industries, neither by job-training nor by industry-subsidized research. Its proper use is to enable citizens to live lives that are economically, politically, socially, and culturally responsible. This cannot be done by gathering or “accessing” what we now call “information” — which is to say facts without context and therefore without priority. A proper education enables young people to put their lives in order, which means knowing what things are more important than other things; it means putting first things first.

XXVII. The first thing we must begin to teach our children (and learn ourselves) is that we cannot spend and consume endlessly. We have got to learn to save and conserve. We do need a “new economy,” but one that is founded on thrift and care, on saving and conserving, not on excess and waste. An economy based on waste is inherently and hopelessly violent, and war is its inevitable by-product. We need a peaceable economy.

DEEP ECOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSE STORY: SEIZING THE CREATIVE MOMENT.

A Report on a Workshop-Retreat July 25-29, 2001 by Judy Conrad

On a misty July morning in the Katuah bio-region of North Carolina, nestled in the S. Toe River Valley, two ridges northeast from Mt. Mitchell, we experienced a mirror walk. We were paired and alternately guided with closed eyes to fragrant blossoms of flowers and bushes, grass, a tree. The coarseness of the tree's bark was a loving fingertip massage, its rounded torso the perfect hugging partner. I experienced with a new body-awareness my *home*. The trees of North Carolina are the essence of *place* for me. These four days gave me a safe place to share the agony and loss of my grandparents' farm this summer – a peace of wild things lives there. Eighty-six acres were secretly sold by a cousin. In spite of all my efforts, it was then clear-cut.

The retreat was sponsored by Arthur Morgan School. Bob McGahey, a neighbor and member of my deep ecology support group, co-facilitated with Mary Coelho and Elizabeth Dearborn. There were 15 people – 13 from North Carolina.

The uniqueness of the retreat was the interwoven "whole being" experiences – mini-lectures, journaling, discussion coupled with intuitive, creative activities of art, nature and ritual; Joanna Macy's deep ecology work coupled with the scientific-spiritual influence of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme's new creation story. Albert Einstein stated beautifully what the new creation story means to me:

... religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. [1949: *The World As I See It*]

We had lots of time to BE in nature, even a labyrinth walk created by a local artist on the Celo Land Trust. The Elm Dance began each day. We ate luscious locally grown vegetarian meals. We

experienced the Truth Mandala, a Council of All Beings, the Double Circle, Sculpting with Clay. One evening was open to the neighborhood with a lecture-slide presentation of the "Universe Story." Approximately 50 people attended.

We hope this is the first of annual Deep Ecology summer retreats. After 17 years holding the vision, a southeast network is taking root in the soil of my ancestors.

This was written 19 days after 9-11. This poem by Tomas Borgé keeps the vision of compassion and forgiveness I experienced with the Nicaraguan people alive in my heart. Tomas Borgé, one of the original Sandinistas, was tortured, and his wife killed, by Somoza's National Guard. He wrote this poem for his torturers:

Mi Venganza Personal

Oh I will be revenged upon your children
When they've the right to schooling and to flowers.
My vengeance will be sweet when I can sing you
This song born in the freedom and the quiet hours.
My revenge will be to show you all the goodness
I see shining in the eyes of this my people –
"Courageous and unyielding in the battle
But still more constant and more generous in the
victory."
When that day comes, I'll greet you with "good
Morning"
And there will be no beggars left to haunt us.
For you, my brother, I can demand no prison
But call on you to clear your eyes of sadness.
For when you, the one who tortured me, stand forward,
Your eyes downcast and all your strength forgotten,
My revenge will be to reach to you, my brother,
With these the very hands which once you tore and
tortured
Without the power or strength to rob them of their
tenderness.

LAMOILLE VALLEY YOUTH SUMMIT

Wendy Levitis spent the better part of 2000 working part-time for Planned Parenthood in central Vermont, organizing a Youth Summit with 130 students from the seven high schools in the Lamoille Valley in Vermont. The one-day Lamoille Valley Youth Summit entitled "Our Powers Combined," was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2000, at Smugglers' Notch Resort. It was the result of planning work by area youth and community groups in the Lamoille Valley.

In the June 2001 issue we brought you Wendy's instructions to student facilitators. There follows a summary of the resulting youth-generated recommendations and of the process by which participants were selected. Following this report, we print an update on Wendy's related activities.

Goals of the Youth Summit

A major goal of the Youth Summit was to come up with real suggestions for positive and feasible steps to be taken in schools and communities. In January 2000, students and adults embarked on the following year-long process:

1. Over the course of a year, students honed a list of key topics to be addressed.
2. In the final months before the event, students discussed and voted to finalize the topic list and to group topics into 5 core topic areas.
3. Student and adult organizers brainstormed relevant organizations from which adult co-facilitators were recruited. Students who wanted to co-facilitate signed up to do so.
4. Students and adults met at facilitation trainings, were trained in group facilitation skills, and signed on to work together as facilitators of talkshop discussions.
5. Each student-adult pair planned and implemented a directed discussion to address a particular issue and envision concrete solutions. Talkshop groups consisted of 10 to 15 students plus the adult co-facilitator. The premise of the talkshops was open, respectful discussion.

Youth-generated Recommendations from the Youth Summit

Substances

- A proposal for an anonymous, non-punitive Safe Rides program for intoxicated youth — staffed and organized by teens with adult guidance.
- An education program to highlight the effect of alcohol on the brain and the effects of media on student drinking, e.g. alcohol companies sponsoring big sports events.
- Visits by drug users to schools — more Life not Lecture experiences for all students.
- Revised school drug and alcohol policies that spell out treatment options (including working with someone who's "been there") rather than merely suspending or punishing.
- The creation of Alateen programs throughout the county.

Sexuality

- A youth parade, a Dialogue Day, and a support group — all to educate about sexual orientation diversity and to discourage harassment — bringing to light the frequent harassing language used in schools towards bi- and homo-sexual people (e.g. AIDS CURE [sic] FAGS sticker in a school parking lot).
- In-school education about teen pregnancy, prevention and options.
- Peer-to-peer education, with adult guidance, concerning emotional preparedness and sexual health education.
- Improvements in sex ed to teach the importance of valuing oneself.
- Sex ed which is developmentally appropriate, is consistent across the county, and makes contraception readily available.

Healthy Relationships

- A peer support program in which students from all social circles & cliques are trained to talk to their friends as counselors and with the support of adult counselors and/or people in their 20s.
- A mentoring program by young adults (20s) towards learning about how to “do” healthy relationships.
- A teen hotline.
- A room in school where people can go: a support and guidance class.
- Role plays and mini-summits in school to learn/teach each other the issues of relationships.
- Expanded curriculum or visits by outside groups to increase education in school about healthy roles.

Peacekeeping

- An in-school student responsibility agreement by which students would act as a united group to confront acts of name-calling, bullying or harassment.
- Free, accessible, on-going in-school self-defense training for all students.
- A concerted effort to clarify and prevent harassment, bullying and intimidation — this could be a combination of many individual actions for dealing with these problems, but there should be clear limits and information about them.
- An examination of ways of settling disputes which might protect those that are harassed/intimidated.
- The creation of opportunities for people to learn one another’s differences safely.

Mind-Body Connection

- A peer panel on suicide and depression, education on how to act with depressed friends; a network of constant access to peer and professional support.
- A half-day every month in school dedicated to skits similar to the ones at the Youth Summit followed by discussion of self-acceptance and other issues.
- Education about Eating Disorders, healthy eating, and media’s effects on self-image (false idols, e.g., Barbie).
- Regularly scheduled mini-summits in each school to talk about issues and continue work on solutions.

Who Were the Participants?

Editor’s Note: Readers may be surprised at the open-mindedness or political correctness of these Recommendations, particularly with regard to sexual preference, and may wonder at the methods and criteria for selection of student participants. Here is Wendy’s account of that:

“In order to ensure that the students who attended the Youth Summit were not just the rich, the popular, the white, the academically successful, the politically left-leaning, or the anything else in isolation, counselors at each school worked directly with teachers to come up with a list of students who would bring something unique to the Youth Summit, and benefit from it as well. Students representing a variety of political, social, economic, racial, sexual-orientation and academic backgrounds were then nominated to attend — in most schools they were invited to a special assembly of nominees and given a letter of invitation along with a questionnaire concerning their interest in joining Leadership Committees to handle planning work, or in facilitating a discussion at the event. It was important to the students themselves that all “cliques” were represented. Student acceptance of nominations was over 90%, from what I understand. This means that it is unlikely that the students who did end up attending the Youth Summit were a self-selected bunch of unusually progressive or erudite or well-adjusted students. Given their diversity across so many spectra, it was even more impressive to see the way they worked together and the ideas they arrived at together.”

Of her current work, Wendy writes:

“This year I have continued with youth empowerment work in a new, overwhelming but inspiring job at the aptly named Teen Empowerment (TE), a Boston-based nonprofit organization – the brainchild of its Executive Director, Stanley Pollack. TE hires 12 teenagers at each of its sites to work after school for \$8 an hour as social change agents in their schools and communities. The teens who are selected for this competitive job spend the school year determining priority issues to address, deciding what actions to take and getting their peers involved. Two Program Coordinators operate an office and facilitate the youths’ work in each of five sites – four of them Boston public high schools, and the fifth a community-based site which hires teens from several schools. Stanley’s interactive methods for group-building and facilitated brainstorming, as well as an ongoing behavior feedback and contract system which encourages youth to reflect on their own growth and effectiveness, are the cornerstones of the daily work in the group, and one of the

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primary reasons I took the job. Beyond appreciating the impact of the organization's work in the Boston area, I see the applicability of the methods I am learning to innumerable community-reflection and -action projects in other communities.

"I am a Program Coordinator for the Teen Empowerment site housed in a basement office of the former South Boston High School, which many will recall as the site of racial bussing riots in the late 50s. The school, which last year was divided into three small "learning communities" in an effort to ameliorate some of the impersonality and academic failure in the building, continues to struggle with interracial strife, embarrassment about the past, and a lack of adequate resources for both students and teachers. Demographically, the school is now composed almost 40% of African American students, almost 30% of Caucasian students, and under 20% each of Asian, Pacific Island, Latino and other minority students, including sizable communities of Vietnamese, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Cape Verdean and Jamaican students, many of whom are new to the US and to English. The neighborhood continues to be a predominantly Irish Catholic, working-class peninsula of Boston, though it too has been diversified since the days of the riots. Some black students report to me that they feel racially profiled by police and white neighbors when they walk to the T stop after school.

"My group of Youth Organizers is my daily inspiration and the environment in which they study, my daily despair. Graffiti, cursing and filth litter the hallways. Attendance is low among students and teachers and the drop-out rate is high. Drug use in the bathrooms is reported by students as a daily occurrence. Teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are not strangers to these young people. And fights in and around the school are a part of the weekly school experience. I am gathering statistics on these still-impressionistic observations.

"The 5 young women and 7 young men I work with each day range in age from 14 to 17 and bring to the group a vastly diverse set of experiences, personalities, talents and cultural backgrounds. What unites these black, white, Asian and Latino youth who have grown up in the US, Jamaica, Vietnam and Puerto Rico is their daily experience in an underserved inner-city school and their commitment to constructively alter it using their ideas, creativity and organizing sway. The issues they identified as priorities for their work this year include racial tension; teen pregnancy; peer pressure; substance abuse; student violence; student-teacher relationships; school security; academic resources including books, field trips and college prep support; high-stakes standardized testing; and the negative atmosphere

and attitude they perceive among some of their peers. I could not help but notice how closely this list mirrors that generated by the youth I worked with last year in rural, 99% white Vermont high schools. The American teen experience in poor-to-middle-class public schools seems sadly similar whether in a city or farm community. Money and politics (which are somewhat interchangeable) seem to determine the quality of education in American schools, wherever they are.

"To address some of the issues they prioritized, the South Boston Youth Organizers who work with me have begun to plan their first initiatives for the year, which include a survey of student, teacher and administrator perspectives on the prioritized issues, and a positive talent/fashion show. The show, called Three Schools, One Love and designed to direct the latent talent (an anagram!) in the school towards community building and nonviolence, will feature subversive fashion-modeling that challenges the norm of competitive, objectifying and divisive materialism among youth. It will also feature acts by school youth who will sing, dance, step, rap, act and read poetry, all in line with a message of unity, respect and student potential. The messages behind the show will be further articulated via role-plays and speeches prepared and presented by the Youth Organizers themselves. I hope to make videotapes of the January 31st show available.

"Writing or speaking about my work is therapeutic for me. It's hard to keep my perspective on the positive potential of our work, because the environment and the challenges are so depressingly daunting. Stepping back to reflect is essential in my struggle to maintain balance and drive. I am learning that emotional openness to my environment, though it is something I want to preserve, can also be a disability. I am trying to find the middle ground between numbness and revulsion – to keep a sense of compassionate motivation intact without becoming paralyzed or hopeless."

For information on Teen Empowerment or Wendy's work there, please contact Wendy at (617) 672-2929.



News From the Network

Suzy Pearce writes: I am seriously missing Interhelp and you guys, so I was glad when the Newsletter arrived. For a peek at what I do morning noon & night, take a look at www.middlepowers.org. I hope to find a better balance between MPI and the rest of life *soon!* Meanwhile I have wonderful colleagues whom I'd like to link up with the Interhelp folks in some way.

Editor's Note: As an old Interhelper – we met her at a Gathering twelve years ago – and hyper-activist, Suzy knows that a large part of our raison d'être is to provide that balance, promote lightness in our activism, and help prevent burnout. Besides linking up your colleagues with Interhelp by bringing them along to the next Gathering, Suzy, you might consider organizing a one-day anti-burnout workshop for your colleagues (and perhaps other activists). We could provide you with some talented workshop leaders.



Fran Peavey writes: Thanks so much for your donation of \$500 to support the work of Crabgrass. We put it to immediate good use to take young leaders from the Balkans to South Africa. I trust you have read the newsletter. It means a lot to me especially to hear from you all as I carry you as one of the puffs of wind that blows my sails forward. Blessings and Thanks.

Editor's Note: Crabgrass organized a trip to South Africa of 18 men and women in their twenties, some from each country of the former Yugoslavia. There were Serb and Albanian from Kosovo/a, Albanian and Macedonian from Macedonia, all still dealing with the effects of active war in their countries; Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Montenegrans, and Albanians, all recovering from the impact of war on their young lives. The trip coincided with the UN Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances, and included visits with members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and numerous NGOs involved in projects to bridge the racial divide in South Africa. Recognizing the importance of exposing young activists from the ethnically divided Balkan states, the Interhelp Council made a grant to Crabgrass to further this work. A full report of this and other Crabgrass projects is available to contributors to Crabgrass, 3181 Mission St. #30, San Francisco, CA 94110.



Jean Maryborn writes: Thanks for your nice note. I'd like to reconnect with Interhelp; here's a little \$ for newsletter. I'm on the Alliance for Democracy national council – Means too many trips. Once I'm off – soon – I'll try to make next Gathering.

Barry Childers writes: Interesting newsletter as always. The poetry is special and important. Have any of you heard David Whyte? A remarkable man, influencing those we most want to influence at the moment!! As much as I agree with the “anarchists?” (I use the question mark because I still believe in the term as Paul Goodman defined it years ago) I am appalled by their continued violence. PERHAPS it was necessary in the beginning, to get the world's attention. But I believe that now it is mostly counterproductive. . . The good news is that Milosevic is finally in the dock! The bad news is that we haven't really started thinking about how to stop these butchers before they really get going.

Barry also sent copies of the title page, table of contents, and brief excerpts from Ernest Becker's Escape from Evil edited posthumously by his widow in 1955 with the marginal notation: Please read this book! It speaks to our present situation and predicaments. He also recommends as “a great book!!!” To Tame a Hydra: Undermining the culture of violence by Adam Curle.



Deb Bachmann writes (to your editor): It's so great to hear from you and Interhelp. I have such fond, powerful memories of your passion for life, peace and justice. Thank you for continuing the good work of Interhelp as editor.

Since we were last in touch, I have spent time in Kyoto, Japan (4+ years) training as a Shiatsu therapist and instructor. This path (or more like a stream) is very satisfying. I bought a house in a community-centered neighborhood in Madison and remodeled the basement into the Tao Shiatsu Center.

I'm alive and well and loving a wonderful Wisconsin northwoods man with two sons, a big heart, and activist life style.

The address in India is a friend of mine who teaches children English and more. Any extra Interhelp books would be appreciated if they could be sent to her Peace Library as a donation. Maura attended Interhelp workshops that I led in Kyoto eight years ago.

Editor's Note: we miraculously reconnected with Deb after many address changes. She had been not only a very active Interhelper but also a half-time paid Coordinator in earlier days before we scaled back to an all-volunteer organization. Write us if you want the address of the Peace Library in India!

News From the Network

Kevin McVeigh writes: . . . We must call on the best in our national heritage, demand freedom and democracy for all the world's people, encourage our Congress to have the guts to stand up to the President when he exceeds his limits, and re-examine our priorities as a people. We must not allow a wealthy few to profit from war. We must find, in ourselves and with each other, the spiritual perspective that allows us to be whole regardless of the insanity that may rage throughout the world. We must use that spiritual perspective, not to retreat from the world but to act more boldly and more compassionately in it. . . .

On September 11th everything changed, it is said. Perhaps the big change is that we have now joined the rest of the world, where so many experience war, violence, terror and suffering every day. As we commit ourselves to ensuring that this horror does not happen to us again, let us also stop it from happening everywhere. In that lies our hope.



Lynne Schwartz wrote (to Rick Gottesman): I met you in February at Rowe Conference Center. I was there for a work-week, to see if it would work out for me to stay on there - but instead of returning to my job at the Brooklyn Public Library, I ended up coming to Asheville, NC for the summer. My week at Rowe was very meaningful for me, and my contact with Interhelp was an especially important development. I would like to continue a relationship with Interhelp, and wonder if you might be able to put me in touch with Interhelpers in Asheville or in NYC. My life has taken on a different composition than I expected or ever wanted. On a deep level, I believe I "checked out" when I left my job in January for a leave of absence. I needed to take care of my soul in a way I was not able to in my lifestyle. And, coming to Asheville has been a very big step in reclaiming my authenticity. I needed to do some healing with my parents and sister who live here. I wasn't able to function well anymore in Brooklyn. I needed to come to terms with some old things. However, I innocently thought, and dearly hoped, that my coming here would result in reconciliation and acceptance. My parents and sister were horrified when I took my leave of absence. From January through May, they had many questions for me. I could hardly answer them for myself. I wanted to come here to have a chance to communicate better. This has not happened. I have not worked at all since I've been here, although I have been applying for jobs and

considering innovative options. What's clear to me is that I am continuing to grieve the losses, so many of them from Brooklyn, and now the dream that my parents (and their generation) have for me, or had.

I am writing all this to you now because I need to reach out. I need community. I'm looking for housing, either here or in NYC or both. I am aware of my need for balance and also for connection with community. I cannot do this work alone.

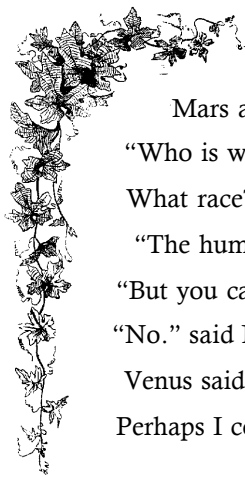
The workshops I saw at Interhelp were very healing and empowering. Having just received the new brochure from Rowe, I wanted to reach out to Interhelp with the hope of being involved with this work, as a community.

Thank you for being there!

Rick adds: I called Judy Conrad that night as planned, asking her for permission for Lynne to call her, to which she of course said yes. I then wrote Lynne back and gave her Judy's address and phone number. Less than a week later, I received an email from Lynne, saying that before she had had a chance to write Judy, she bumped into her in Asheville!



Kirstin George writes to remind us: "While we fight for our lives, let us live lives worth fighting for."

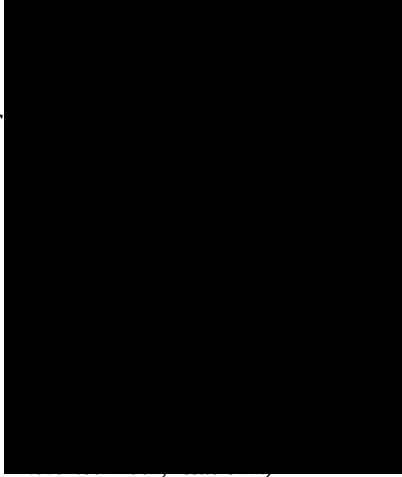


Mars asked the planet Earth,
"Who is winning the race?"
What race?" asked Earth.
"The human race," said Mars.
"But you can't win the human race," said Earth.
"No." said Mars, "but you could lose it."
Venus said, "If you don't interfere,
Perhaps I could help humanity to find itself."



On September 11, 2001, 36,000 children worldwide died of

Where: Poor countries.
News Stories: None
Newspaper articles: None.
Military alerts: None.
Presidential proclamations: None.
Papal messages: None.
Messages of solidarity: None.
Minutes of silence: None.
Homage to the innocent children: None.



Interhelp is an international network of people who share their deepest response to world conditions that threaten human life and the earth. We help one another within our own communities to move through feelings of isolation and hopelessness to empowerment and action. We offer community gatherings and training in despair and empowerment, deep ecology, and personal support systems. We try to integrate deep social concern (and support social activism), personal psychological growth, and our recognition of a nonsectarian spiritual core.

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PLEASE SEND US: *personal news as well as articles or reviews for publication in the Newsletter (as text within e-mail to: risprin@attglobal.net); or a personal note for the editor to share with members of the Interhelp Council; and a contribution as follows:*

___ I enclose a contribution of ___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$25 for the next 4 issues of the Newsletter

___ I contributed recently; please keep sending me the Newsletter

___ Please keep sending me the Newsletter even though I can't contribute just now.

___ I would like to help Interhelp thrive and expand its supportive services and scholarship aid to activists, and am enclosing a tax deductible contribution of: _____).

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Interhelp PO Box 61 Delmar, NY 12054

Interhelp 2002 Winter Gathering

LIVING as if LIFE MATTERS

Rowe Conference Center

February 15-18, 2002

Registration Friday 4-6 pm

Gathering ends Monday (Presidents Day), 3 pm

Contact: Interhelp, P.O. Box 61, Delmar, NY 12054
Rick at 518-355-0744; Sondra at 518-475-1929
rickgott@capital.net



Related Events

January 18-20: Sacred Earth Network, is holding a **Winter Retreat for Activists and Healers** in Petersham, MA. Contact Leslie or Davis at 413-253-6998; see www.icg.org/sen.

January 19-21: **Tikkun Magazine** (see page 3) is sponsoring a conference in New York City to initiate the **The Tikkun Community**. Its goals, like that of Interhelp, combine inner change and the spiritual dimension with a concern for social change activism. The Core Vision and Founding Principles of The Tikkun Community as well as the program for the inaugural conference can be found on www.tikkun.org.

Interhelp, Inc.

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“Listen to these words carefully: The universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. And listen to this: The human is derivative. The planet is primary.”

– Thomas Berry