

8th Day Center for Justice



CENTERINGS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF 8TH DAY CENTER FOR JUSTICE

Image from the Democracy Cell Project - www.democracycellproject.net



As the presidential elections draw near, we dedicate this issue of Centerings to unpacking democracy. By considering different perspectives, we get a picture of democracy that is far more inclusive and just than our present model. Perspectives of the poor and disenfranchised can help us create a democratic system based on equity and inclusivity.

In their article, staff members Liz Deligio and Erin Cox examine what democracy would look like through an 8th Day lens. Liz and Erin explore democracy through 8th Day's values of sacredness, inter-connectedness, mutuality, cooperation, and nonviolence. 8th Day calls for a democracy that values the sacredness of all creation, not just power and resources for an elite few. Democracy does not mean force or domination; rather, it is founded in the principle of nonviolence. Violence destroys cooperation and prevents mutual relationships. A democracy based on nonviolence would promote cooperation, mutuality, interrelatedness, and appreciation of the sacred.

James Thwinda of Chicago Jobs With Justice examines democracy around the issue of labor and the right to unionize. In his article, James discusses how unions are an enrichment not only to community but also to a democratic lifestyle. He states: "Political participation rises with income, higher incomes build a strong middle class, and a strong middle class contributes to social stability." Unions help bring this into the democratic process, as union workers are more likely to vote and be engaged in civic matters. As matters stand now, corporate power prevents this process from happening in a healthy, democratic way. When corporations prevent workers from organizing, they rob laborers of their fundamental right to participate in civic life.

challenges of HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and high-school dropout rates in communities of color. With hope and anticipation, Naomi says, we can celebrate that day when the earth community embraces a democracy that sees all creation as sacred.

Democracy is explored through an immigrant/migrant lens by Bernadine Karge, an immigration attorney. When one unpacks some of the present immigration laws, one uncovers a system that is unfair and unwelcoming to the newcomer, especially if that newcomer hails from a country with a language and culture vastly different from our own. One immigrant woman states that democracy means the freedom to speak, the right to migrate, a community that cares for one another, and most importantly, is open to life. We are called to re-look at our system of democracy. Is our present democratic system "open to life?" It is essential that we work towards a democratic system that allows this openness in its many forms.

Kathleen Desautels unpacks democracy through the three principles of The Universe Story by Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry. These three principles—differentiation, interiority/subjectivity, and communion—teach us the importance of reverencing diversity and the sacredness of all creation. Militarism, a product of a patriarchal, top-down model, prevents true democracy from happening in a genuine way. Rather, a democracy based on The Universe Story would be a system that honors creation in all its forms, not destroy them as military systems do. Decision-making, in such a system, would not reflect an elite, top-down model, but one that would address the concerns and problems of all citizens. This form of democracy creates "green businesses" that pay fair wages, trades fairly, promotes the arts, and builds rehabilitation centers rather than prisons.

8th Day does not endorse a particular candidate, but we do raise the questions around the essential elements that constitute a true democracy. Is a particular candidate supportive of unions? What are his or her views on the fairness/unfairness of our present im/migration laws? Does he or she have strategies toward healing our unjust systems of im/migration, economic inequity, and law enforcement? What is a candidate's view toward the environment and/or the climate crisis? What views does a candidate have towards the war in Iraq or towards militarism in general? When you go to cast your vote, you might want to consider these questions.

Brian McLaughlin, in his third year at 8th Day, is a Brother in the Society of Divine Word Missionaries.

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In "This Is the Hour," environmentalist Naomi Davis celebrates—in advance—the hypothetical triumph of Earth Day, 2008 with a democracy that promotes clean air technologies, reduces greenhouse gases, finds ways to stabilize the climate, faces the

DEMOCRACY {Through an 8th Day Lens}

BY: LIZ DELIGIO AND ERIN COX

“Dewey’s view of democracy was that democracy is not an end in itself, it’s a means by which people discover and extend and manifest their fundamental human nature and human rights, which is rooted in freedom and solidarity and a choice of both work and other forms of participation in a social order and free individual existence... Democracy produces free people, he said. That’s the ultimate aim of a democratic society; not the production of goods, but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality.”

- Noam Chomsky, political activist, reflecting on John Dewey (American philosopher and educator, 1859-1952)

In the US, the notion of true democracy is something yet to be achieved. Our history has shown that we are willing to sacrifice many of the defining values of a democracy to ensure the “pre-eminence” of elite groups within the US and far beyond its borders. The bloated value of capital gain creates whole segments of the population who are fundamentally blocked from having a voice in the systems that ignore and destroy their human right to income, housing, healthcare, and education. Differences in beliefs, cultures, and ideologies are being exploited to justify the violence, warfare and environmental destruction by the power elites. Democracy, in its best form, is an ongoing process of creation for the people of the world. This article is a reflection on how the beliefs and values we hold as a Center impact our vision of democracy.

SACRED AND INTER-RELATED

“Sacred is everything, each being, each energy of the universe. Sacred means the life of the universe and its evolution. From this perspective we can conclude that everything is sacred, and there is nothing that is not sacred – this is not word-play. Sacred must become a concept larger than it was hitherto. Sacred is now not limited to space and time.”

- Ivone Gebara, Brazilian theologian

The belief that the universe is sacred and inter-related is the premise from which 8th Day begins its work, even when we are discussing democracy and forms of government. This is not to sacralize one form of government and to remove the neces-

sary “secular” separation but to say that at 8th Day we always begin with the idea that what we touch, hold, are, try for, relate to is sacred in its own right. And because we believe it is sacred we also believe we are sacred. And that means that the connection between each of us is sacred as well. We do not exist in parts and pieces linked loosely with strings of energy but are one, an evolving universe, with such a multiplicity of expressions as to be humbling and inspiring at once.

How does this relate in a concrete manner to a vision of democracy? If democracy can be understood as an ongoing attempt to socialize power and resources so that all communities and individuals have equal access regardless of their race, gender, class, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, we must begin with a sense of inter-relatedness.

Can a system(s) embody the radical equality of democracy without a sense of inter-relatedness? Martin Luther King Jr., pointed to this when he said, “a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere...” Hence no system or form of popular governance will succeed unless it can root itself in the belief of inter-relation and then work concretely from that sense of relationship. Piecemeal democracy is not democracy at all – and we have seen this fail in the US time and time again. The struggle for communities of color and women to gain access to the rights that the Constitution guaranteed to most white men, shows that we know “we the people” means all people not just the elite few.

The concept of “sacred” is a trickier piece to explore as a universal value of democracy. How do we utilize a concept of “sacred” in a pluralistic world where the concept could be understood by diverse people in a variety of ways, some of whom may not be uplifted by the word but discomfited with “religious” language in a public dialogue and model of power? As Gebara writes: “Sacred must become a concept larger than it was hitherto.” In other words *sacred* must become a concept that can be expressed through a diversity of terms or expressions. For example, a popularly known and upheld idea is that life in its multiplicity of forms has value that is “self-evident”, as our Constitution declares; the very presence of life itself indicates value. This means in the future declaring not “we the people” but “we the earth, air, water, land, people, four legged, two legged, winged etc...” declare these truths to be self-evident...” as earth community struggles to live out a truly democratic governance that embraces the value and inter-relation of all parts of the universe.

(continued on next pg.)

MUTUALITY, COOPERATION, AND NONVIOLENCE

8th Day makes intentional efforts to model the vision of an alternative world guided by values of mutuality, nonviolence, cooperation in our internal and external work. 8th Day models the values of mutuality and cooperation in an effort to extend relationships with different social movements to develop solidarity and build an alternative democratic collective of grassroots organizations.

Recently 8th Day invited representatives from a variety of local peace and justice initiatives to a round table discussion centered on how to move forward as activists and social movements toward creating a truly participative democracy. Mutuality at the table became evident as each person shared his/her own perspectives on the direction of the movement, drawing from different ideologies, experiences and cultural backgrounds. Despite some differences of opinion and analysis, this process of dialogue contributed to a form of cooperation and relationship building among those present as we continue to work toward a common goal of living in a more just society.

The Center promotes the value of consensual decision-making where each member can freely express and has equal weight in coming to a collective group decision. Through mutuality each member actively listens to one another so that all voices are heard. Diversity of ideologies, age, experience, and beliefs works to enhance the richness of the debate and dialogue. Once a decision is reached, all members cooperate despite their differences, to carry out the will of the group through collective action. Through this process, the Center engages in radical change by living out the visions of the world that we want to create. We believe that these values have a fundamental place in a democratic process whether of a small group or of a nation. Movements by grassroots communities model a vision of a democracy rooted in the will of the people that relies on mutuality and cooperation as a governing tool.

NONVIOLENCE

Once we move into a deeply held notion of inter-relatedness we then reflect on our use of violence. Inter-relation will not survive as a value we struggle to live out or deepen if we continue to match solutions of violence to our democratic system. As long as we believe that force is a part of a democracy we will never have a true democracy, and certainly will not be able to “bring” democracy to the rest of the world. True democracy needs an ethic of nonviolence to survive as a model of socialized power and resources built on a foundation of radical equality, complete inclusion, consensual decision-making and dialog. An ethic of nonviolence would cement the commitment to mutuality and cooperation as well as the belief in the sacred inter-relationships of a lived communal struggle.

A true model of democracy is a fluid process, always changing, deepening, evolving and molded by the participative collective

body of the public. However, a remaining constant in this process is the collective understanding that violence destroys mutuality and cooperation, eliminates inter-relationship, and relies on the objectification of the other over the knowledge of the inherent value of all. No democracy exists without these values.

“Democracy is not a spectator sport.”

*- Marian Wright Edelman,
Children’s Defense Fund President*

It can be difficult when we begin the work of “visioning” what we want to see to not get mired in all that we do see every day. The deep inequities that have marked most of the US history might lead us to believe that democracy is no more than a method to ensure that the very few get the most resources, rights, and voice. The concept explored by Dewey that, “the ultimate aim of a democratic society is not the production of goods, but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality,” may seem like an unrealistic ideal.

Our culture teaches us to devalue ideals as “utopian” and outside our reach, to not work for a collective good rooted in a sense of abundance but for individual good rooted in a sense of scarcity. This manipulation of fear does make the work for a “true” democracy challenging but it does not render it impossible. Which is more possible, to continue to live in: the model we have, a model that has created global climate change, war, famine, and widespread poverty or to work for full peace with justice? Nonviolence, mutuality, cooperation and a belief in the sacred and inter-related nature of creation may seem “utopian”, but in practical application they provide much better outcomes than domination and violence. Ultimately the choice is ours, and no government no matter how brutal can take that choice away – we can only give that choice away when we choose to believe that no other world is possible. As Edelman writes, “democracy is not a spectator sport;” it is a participative, organic model that needs all voices at the table to be complete. The invitation to the table stands. Will you join us?

Liz Deligio is staff at 8th Day for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, La Crosse, WI.

Erin Cox is an intern from Loyola U., Chicago, Masters in Social Justice Justice Program. She is expected to graduate in Aug., 2008. Erin has been involved in a variety of projects at the Center ranging from involvement in anti-war activism, Catholic Worker movement, migration issues, to injustice in Central and South America.

UNPACKING DEMOCRACY “Give Us Free”

BY: BERNADINE KARGE, OP, JD

“Who planted those trees so close together?” was my question when I saw the fence made of leafy tree limbs, bound together with barbed wire to keep the cattle in the pasture and off the road in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. This image remains with me as a metaphor for immigrants who have severed their lifelines and are transplanted in another nation. Individually, the immigrants, like the trees, may or may not re-root. However, they continue to share the breath of life in the struggle for fullness of life.

Democracy (*demokratia*) comes from two Greek roots: *demos*— meaning people and *kratia* signifying power. People Power. Power of the People. Power to the People. For more than 20 years I have worked as an attorney with immigrants. Some have come to America by choice. Others have come here by chance.

Underlying our immigration laws is the reality that the US has always used and needed immigrant labor. Many persons were brought here against their will. They came by chance. Perhaps you have seen the film, the opera or read the book *AMISTAD*. (*Amistad* means *friendship* in Spanish). This is the story of the struggle of the Africans who commandeered the slave ship *Amistad* in their efforts to gain their liberty in the early 1800’s. During the course of their first trial in New Haven, CT, Cinque, the main character, speaks his first words of English. “Give us free.” The judge does not appreciate this outburst in court. Cinque is admonished and silenced. However, “Give us free” is his cry for himself and for the other Africans on trial and in shackles. They simply wanted to be free to return to their home. Through the democratic *struggle* they prevailed.

Two concepts to keep in mind: Immigration laws are federal - made by Congress in Washington, DC; and immigration laws change. For example, the first federal immigration law was the citizenship law of 1795 which allowed “free, white persons with two years of residence in the US to become citizens.” A few years later, the residence requirement was changed to five years.

For those who come to the US by choice, the usual way for most people is to obtain their lawful permanent resident (LPR) status - “green card” - either through a family or employer-sponsored petition. A permanent resident can petition for naturalization to become a citizen after five years as an LPR, or if married to a US citizen in three years.

In 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act (Amnesty) was passed that allowed people to self-petition to get LPR status if they could prove that they were here without documents since before 1/1/82 or that they worked in qualifying agricultural labor, Special Agricultural Work (SAW), during the early 1980s.



Photo is from a rally in response to the deportation of Elvira Arellano, Aug. 2007, who was in sanctuary in a Chicago church for nearly a year.

I asked a Mexican-American friend who got her LPR status through Amnesty what democracy means to her. Her response was “Being strong enough to decide about who you are or who you should be.” To her, democracy means the freedom to speak, to come and go. Democracy in action for her is people who care about people, who care about making a better life, and being open to life. As a US citizen she has served as an election judge and assisted Spanish-speaking voters in negotiating the voting process.

Carlota came to the US as a student and returned to her country. However, both she and her country had changed to the degree that even though life was difficult in the US, she had more choices and opportunities in the US. She returned with an employer-sponsored visa and became a citizen in Nov. ,2007. She remarked that in her country, her vote counted more than her vote does here. In her native Chile, one vote counts for one person on the presidential ballot, unlike our presidential system where one vote counts for a delegate who votes for the president. Are new citizens calling us to re-look at our form of democracy?

Immigrants, like the trees in my image re-root in varying degrees and suffer the barbs for freedom, choice, people power, friendship—all in the struggle for democracy. “Give us free.”

Bernadine Karge, OP, is currently a staff attorney for the Chicago Legal Clinic, a private not-for-profit organization serving the working poor in the Chicagoland area.

The Right to Organize Is Indispensable Nutrient for Democracy

BY: JAMES THINDWA

There are variations to the definition of democracy, but one seems to encapsulate them all: When power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

The operative term here is “exercised.” Although Americans have come to take for granted the idea and practice of democracy, few are aware of the severe limits being imposed on it by the growing power of corporations. Nowhere is this suppression more evident than in America’s workplaces. In the US today, notwithstanding the rhetoric of democracy, the right of workers to join a union is seriously imperiled. Many workers find themselves unable to freely unionize because employers use elaborate strategies to frustrate that process. Yet the right to join a union is one of the most fundamental tenets of democratic rule. In the US it is enshrined in the First Amendment rights of association, free speech and assembly.

Beyond the settled question of its constitutionality, participation in a union both strengthens democracy and enriches community life. It is widely acknowledged that political participation rises with income, higher incomes build a strong middle class, and a strong middle class contributes to social stability. Therefore labor unions, in as much as they elevate the standard of living of workers, are indispensable to the functioning of democracy. A study by the AFL-CIO found that unionized workers are more likely than their non-union counterparts to vote and be civically engaged. With the additional free time accorded by better wages, union workers can spend more time learning about politics and government, and volunteering in all kinds of activities that strengthen their communities. Unions play an important role in providing such education and encouraging participation.

Furthermore, unions “float all boats” as the saying goes. That means if the majority of workers in a given area are union members, then the union wage prevails. On the other hand, if the majority of work is done non-union, what prevails is the average between the union rate and non union rate, which is almost always lower. The national weekly median average income in

2006 for a non-union service sector worker, which includes healthcare support, food prep, and janitorial services, was \$404 or \$10 per hour. On the other hand, a union worker in that same sector averaged \$629 per week, or more than \$15 per hour. And, the trend of substantially higher wages for unionized workers applies in every sector. For example in the construction industry, a non-union worker averaged only \$582 per week in the same period, while unionized workers averaged \$933 per week, nearly \$10 per hour more.

Beyond the economic stability and political empowerment of workers that unions generate, labor as a national institution serves as a legitimate counterweight to runaway corporate power. There is little doubt that in recent years,

corporations have amassed enormous power, much to the detriment of worker and community interests. That power is evident in the failure of Congress to raise the minimum wage for 10 years (1997 to 2007); passage of “free trade” agreements that favor corporate profits over worker, environmental and human rights concerns; the militarization of our foreign policy; the shredding of our social safety-net; attacks on the right of workers to organize; the roll-back of environmental and food safety regulations; and much more. There is no other

national institution better positioned to challenge this corporate power than labor. Nowhere is this role more visible than in the 2008 presidential campaign season as unions flex their political muscle by contributing money and deploying workers in the service of their preferred candidates.

Contemporary democracies have been shaped by the strength of their middle classes. The American middle class has been undermined by the assault on unions, with ominous implications for the future of democracy. A stronger labor movement is indispensable to the restoration of the middle-class and the rebuilding of democracy in this country.

James Thindwa is executive director of Chicago Jobs With Justice, a labor-community coalition committed to defending workers rights and promoting social and economic justice.



Militarism – Hazard to Democracy and Contradiction to the Universe Story

BY: KATHLEEN DESAUTELS, SP

All creatures except the humans are born knowing how to live in harmony. When will we humans ever learn?

- From the Sioux tradition

To talk of militarism in the same breath as democracy is to speak of two conflicting concepts. Democracy at the very least speaks of social equality – literally “rule by the people” that promotes a government working for the common good of all its citizens. Militarism on the other hand is by definition the “predominance of the armed forces in the administration or policy of the state...” (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

History demonstrates the more militarized a society becomes the more the democratic principles “of the people, by the people, for the people” are thwarted in both theory and practice. The fact of the matter is that the more one militarizes society the less democratic it is by definition because the military is a strict hierarchical system. Historian Howard Zinn, author of *A People’s History of the United States*, tells us “Americans have been taught that their nation is civilized and humane. But, too often, US actions have been uncivilized and inhumane.” We only have to examine the preventable wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and threat to use nuclear weapons to remind us of this truth.

Wangeri Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2004, states, “There comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, a time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.” The hope she speaks of is more than simply a change of the person or party at election time this coming November. Given the state of US politics the most lasting good the elections can do is to open the political space for organizing a nonviolent revolution needed to transform the political/economic/social systems into what real democracy can become.

Such a democracy would promote the principles or patterns best described in Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme’s book, *The Universe Story* – that of “differentiation, subjectivity, and communion”. Briefly, these principles teach a 13.5 billion-year-old story honoring the web of life in its diversity, uniqueness, and interdependency. The interconnecting energies create a unity, a kind of “holy communion” among all in the cosmos. And, as such, challenge humankind to live their ethical imperatives and their related values of justice, mercy, and love. Imagine a transformed society with a vision of honoring the uniqueness of all peoples, reverencing the other with dignity as subject not object, and creating in us a compassion for all peoples and cultures, especially the oppressed of the world.

Such a vision is where a transformed society’s loyalties lie...not in the military might of protecting borders, land, and



corporations at the expense of people on the margins and Earth. Such a cosmic-worldview would promote decision-making that reflects participation from the bottom-up rather than from the privileged few at the top. It would support a revolution of attitude and values in which economic poli-

cies would promote fair trade, not free trade. Tax monies now maintaining the inflated military industrial complex would be allocated to the creation of “green” manufacturing businesses, public-works jobs repairing roads, bridges, and levees. To building rehabilitation centers rather than Maximum Security Prisons. With such a view immigrants would be welcomed instead of scapegoated, and International Treaties and Conventions honored instead of ignored. A progressive tax code would allow the government to fund universal health care, quality education for all children, and increase social programs including the arts.

A cosmic-worldview would demand that conflicts be resolved by negotiating, not by preventable war-making. It would call for citizens to renounce the federal government’s authority to institute marshal law, arrest a wide swath of dissidents (citizen and non-citizen alike), and detain people without legal or constitutional recourse, as is now the case. It would mean overturning the *Patriot Acts I and II* with their extreme powers given to intelligence officers and other law enforcement personnel – both foreign and domestic – that permit monitoring and interception of email, warrant-less searches, and increased surveillance with little judicial scrutiny. It would reject *The Homeland Security Act*, which like the *PATRIOT Act*, is a further incursion on American civil liberties.

“Security,” says Anne Wilson Schaefer, renowned writer and lecturer, “is an attempt to try to make the universe static so that we feel (emphasis mine) safe.” If *The Universe Story* teaches us anything it is that to be static won’t make the world safer. Quite the opposite - such security would end all life’s possibilities for any preferred future. The ethical imperatives implied in the principles of differentiation, subjectivity, and communion remind us it is possible, as the Sioux tradition suggests, to live in harmony as all other creatures do. It simply takes the political will to make it happen. It’s past time to begin – again!

Kathleen Desautels, a *Sister of Providence*, *St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN*, is in her 21st year at 8th Day.

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**We have been telling people this is the Eleventh Hour,
Now you must go back and tell them this is the Hour.**

On April 22, 2008 at 11am, with prayer, libation, and drumming to the ancestors, African Americans Southsiders will tell us all this is the hour – the hour to remember and celebrate – **IN ADVANCE** – our triumph.

We declared it was the hour to honor our treasures and let our errors go. We celebrated our fruits and our nurturing new way. With courage, we weighed each word, stepped up, and spoke a new world. We did not look back, but let the power of our vision keep us lifted to the new land. Our sacred story had its great turning, and in an endless sea of upturned faces we now feel our personal triumph. With a freedom dance, we delivered ourselves. Our battle won, we now remember our means.

Whether we were moving forward or backward is a matter of perspective. Local living economies and green villages had lost their vogue as we globalized. In communities of color, poverty systems seemed intractable – health challenges of malnutrition, lead, asthma, autism, and HIV/AIDS; mis-education, drop-outs and underemployment; hyper-incarceration and recidivism; gang, gun, and domestic violence; state-supported single-mother households; and parents looking on as their generations repeated the cycle. We wondered if we might ever escape our matrix.

WE LOOK BACK NOW IN WONDER AT OUR TRIUMPH:

How did we produce the rapid transition to clean energy technologies, stabilize our climate, and reduce greenhouse gases 90% during the era of peak oil?

How did we move from a country with \$300 billion subsidies for an oil industry with 11-figure profits; with state corrections expenditures increasing 4 times faster than higher education, to one where – truly – no child was left behind?

How did we shift from a paradigm in which decisions for all cultures and nations were made by rooms of only whites and an environmental movement which thought that it was only white to seeding our boards and committees with diverse perspectives?

How did we eliminate a prison system employing more than half a million people, incarcerating over 2 million people – 70% people of color, generating 13% African American ex-offenders without a right to vote, and replace our military industrial complex war on drugs with a war on homelessness and health care abuse?

How did the water wars end in peace and plenty and transform our culture of consumerism into a culture of stewardship and conservation?

How did *The Eight Principles of Green Village Building* become one of our standards, with the “green economy campus” as its heart, and “development without displacement” as its soul;



Attending a Public Forum in Chicago on Climate Change are: Back Row (l to r): Lan Richart, Tim Montague, Julie Pavuk, Stephanie Dernek. Front Row: Dave Kraft, Naomi Davis, Brendan Daley, Pam Richart, David Thompson, TaNisha Lee. Brendan and TaNisha are with the City of Chicago and David is with the U. of Chicago. Others are part of the Climate Justice Chicago.

“neighbor-owned businesses” as its mortar; and “renewed sense of place” as its spirit?

Some say the great turning was triggered by the *Multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit* where wise ones declared *The 17 Principles of Environmental Justice*.

Some say the *Clinton Global Initiative* and its multi-pronged approach to climate change tipped us back.

Mostly, our communities point to tiny ripples around the world which converged to turn the tide.

Like one day: April 22, 2008 when with prayer, libation, and drumming at 11am on 65th & Halsted, Chicago, Kennedy King College celebrated *Urban Earth Day* and declared its role as “green hub” to a community in crisis.

Our journey began when we told ourselves, “...This Is The Hour,” when we said, “We Are The Ones.” The sacred story of how we beat back corporate personhood and a global poverty industry and returned our towns, tools, talents to local cooperatives with amazing grace is recorded at length in *The Book of the Great Turning*. To complete it, your name must be written. Fortunes were made and lives were lost. We must consecrate the story. You must share the role you played. If you played no role, thank a merciful Creator that you lived to share the fruit. You must tell your children, and your children must tell theirs. This is how it came to pass: howwedidit.org

Naomi Davis of *Daughter’s Trust* and *Blacks in Green (BIG)*: *Blacks in Green* works to target robust black participation in the emerging green economy and promote a new paradigm for economic development. She works toward the establishment of green, self-sustaining, mixed-income, micro-villages in blighted, gentrifying, or colonized African-American communities.

Significant Media Changes in Recent Years Have Implications For Advocacy, Democracy

BY: THOM CLARK

Is corporate media losing out to an Internet-driven independent media? Would such a shift lead to journalism that matters – as opposed to that which entertains us with celebrity divorce, political scandal and the latest tornado video? And what are the implications of such a shift for human rights advocates trying to get their story out?

The changes in the media landscape are striking. In the nation's third largest media market, the **Chicago Tribune has been sold to a real estate developer; the Chicago Sun-Times just laid off 20 percent of its staff; and the historic black newspaper, the Chicago Defender, has slimmed down from daily to weekly publication.**

In the last year alone, largely from budget pressures, the Chicago bureaus of all three major newsmagazines—Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report—have closed, with many of those former bureau staffers losing their jobs entirely and not being shifted to other locations. Even on the broadcast side – with Clear Channel using one newsroom for seven radio stations and TV network bureaus disappearing – the resources for collecting and distributing news are shifting radically.

Some will cheer the demise of traditional media that often marginalizes the poor, perpetuates victimization of women, places immigrants in the middle of border volleys over security or jobs, then ignores covering organized labor at all! But as we are also seeing in a presidential election year, with news cable ratings soaring on a wave of intense voter interest months before final ballots are cast, traditional media still plays a role in influencing which candidates and issues get play.

If there are fewer reporters to cover stories for traditional media outlets, how will social justice activists get their news out? Staging a press conference in front of a government building – never a guaranteed draw for the network cameras – may not be as important if one's intended audience is only watching YouTube or Facebook. Increased use of community media outlets – cable access, ethnic weeklies, low-power radio (like 8th Day's weekly show), and strategic use of the web – will become an essential tool in any activist's media kit.

Ultimately, continued fragmentation of the news media and the migration of the telling of stories to the Internet mean that those organizations that have stories to tell will need to become much more proficient at communicating and packaging their stories—and, at identifying relevant reporters, editors and outlets who will be accessible and interested in their stories.

Thom Clark is cofounder of the Community Media Workshop at Columbia College (where he also teaches journalism) which helps nonprofit communicators and journalists tell news stories that matter. He hosts a weekly CAN TV21 cable program and monthly public affairs radio show.

HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP

<http://www.rockridgenation.org> - Progressive message guru George Lakoff's *Don't Think of An Elephant* home base think tank. It's a bit grass-tops oriented, in search of grassroots practitioners.

www.thepraxisproject.org/irc/media.html - With practical experience on health, tobacco and post-Katrina communications work, the Praxis Project brings an important race perspective to its "meta-messaging" and media work.

www.opportunityagenda.org - The Opportunity Agenda works across social justice issues to build public support for greater opportunity in America, especially through better media coverage that shifts the public debate.

www.freepress.net/ownership/chart.php?chart=main - An interactive chart produced by Free Press from information collected by Columbia Journalism Review's Who Owns What? The US media landscape is dominated by corporations that have concentrated their control over what we see, hear and read.

www.stopbigmedia.com/=whackamurdoch - Interactive online game to generate grassroots response to media consolidation.

www.npcommunicator.org - Web 2.0 news blog aggregator for nonprofit communicators.

TAKE ACTION, UPCOMING CONFERENCES OF NOTE:

4th National Conference for Media Reform

June 6 - 8, 2008 Minneapolis, MN

Drawing 3,500 participants — from policy makers & grassroots organizations to journalists and media experts — the conference will focus on: Policy; Journalism & Independent Media; Media Reform; Civil Rights, Social Justice, and Media; and the Next Frontier. More Info: www.freepress.net

MAKING MEDIA CONNECTIONS

June 11 - 12, 2008 Chicago IL

Community Media Workshop's annual gathering of nonprofit communicators, journalists and media relation professionals. Learn how to access old and new media for getting your organization's story into the public square. Keynotes by NBC5 investigative reporter Rene Ferguson and nonprofit blogger Beth Kanter. Many workshops and panels this year cover online media strategies. More info by calling the Community Media Workshop at Columbia College 312-344-6400 or at www.newstips.org.

Allied Media Conference

June 20 - 22, 2008, Detroit, MI

A weekend-long gathering of alternative media-makers and social justice activists – from community organizers and daring filmmakers to radio producers and web designers, and artists whose work "makes revolution irresistible."

www.alliedmediaconference.org

Associate in Action

BY: ADELE BACH

In the fall of 2004, I began attending the peace vigils with 8th Day. Having started the week after 9/11, the hour-long vigils continue to be held at the Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago. There I join the group and hold a peace sign or hand out informational flyers to the commuters who hurry past us on the sidewalk or climb up out of the subway stairs. Engaging in these actions has been transforming.

Following 9/11, as I watched the evening news about those killed or wounded in Iraq, I remembered the war in Vietnam and those of my generation still paying the price. I could picture my former middle-school students, with fresh-faced zeal, being forced to repeat history. Through literature and writing, I had urged students to take risks, voice their opinions, respect the views of others and continually ask questions. These were skills necessary to keep democracy alive. After all the years spent encouraging students to raise their voices, I decided it was the right time and place to raise my own.

Each Tuesday morning, I found the commuters were often grateful to receive the peace flier and sometimes engaged us in dialogue, as we exercised our freedom of speech. I had only encountered one exception. In April, an unknown businessman in a biker helmet slammed purposefully into my left shoulder when I offered him the flier. It was not the only collision I experienced that day. Kathy Kelly, visiting from Voices for Creative Nonviolence, came to kneel in the lobby of the Federal Building and lay out photos of those killed in Iraq. Suddenly, my commitment to the cause was colliding with my own self-preservation. I had not signed up for this. I retreated silently, disappearing before arrests were made.

Week after week, however, I continued to attend the vigils and stand, in every type of harsh Chicago weather, with joyful people, committed with total focus to a peaceful world. By October, my concept of self-preservation had changed.

When the staff at 8th Day participated in the "Occupation Project," an action to end war funding and the occupation of



Adele Bach attends the Tuesday morning vigil.

Iraq, I took my place in the elevator up to Senator Durbin's office. We talked intermittently with staffers and waited for answers we knew would not suffice. I never felt as peaceful as I did sitting on the carpet in Senator Durbin's office, paging through a coffee table book on Abraham Lincoln, awaiting the outcome. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers from Homeland Security soon joined us. After their warning, and our refusal to leave, we were arrested, handcuffed, frisked and issued a ticket for non-compliance with signs and directives.

In January, our group appeared before the judge, a former civil rights activist. He told us that he respected our intentions but we needed to "know the time and the place."

I remember the last beer I had with my college buddy, Gerry, before he left for Vietnam. He was killed within the year. In remembrance of Gerry and considering the state our country is in at the present time, I can't help but believe *this is our time and this is our place.*

Adele Bach, a volunteer for 8th Day since 2004, was a middle school teacher for 30 years. She has an Ed.D in Critical Pedagogy from U. of St. Thomas, 2005.

Become an Associate of 8th Day Center for Justice

By making a donation to 8th Day you'll receive *Centerings*, our quarterly magazine, urgent action bulletins, our e-zine (environment focused email alerts) and access to our extensive book and video libraries. And know that you are a critical piece to the work of the 8th Day Center for Justice.

Checks can be made out to 8th Day Center for Justice, or donate online at our website, <http://www.8thdaycenter.org>.

- Much Peace, 8th Day Center Staff

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DOVETALES

STAFF MEMBER WILL BE GREATLY MISSED



After nearly 22 years at 8th Day, Dorothy Pagosa will be leaving at the end of May to take a position in the central leadership of her congregation, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis.

We congratulate Dorothy on her new position, knowing she will be greatly missed here. She will be installed in her new position July 1.

In her time at 8th Day, Dorothy has worked on homeless issues and poverty, especially with Homeless On the Move for Equality and the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and also on issues of stopping torture with the Coalition to Protect People's Rights, Coalition to Ground Boeing Torture Flights, and SOA Watch.

Dorothy spent three months in prison for non-violent civil disobedience to close the School of the Americas and joined others at 8th Day to confront George H.W. Bush about the death of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter and the US involvement in this tragedy. She was involved with the Pledge of Resistance and Sanctuary movement in the late 80s. Most recently she has worked against the war in Iraq and the diminishment of civil rights. Dorothy has been treasurer at 8th Day and social justice director for her congregation.

NO WAR ON IRAN

The No War on Iran Coalition, of which 8th Day is a founding member, brought former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter and Ambassador Edward Peck to Chicago in January. Despite a cold, snowy night, a crowd of 350 persons gathered to hear Ritter and Peck about the Bush administration's focus on attacking Iran using similar arguments for

the illegal and immoral attack against Iraq, that is, unless the people act, they said. For more info, see the recent Bulletin "US to Attack Iran Unless the People Act" at www.8thdaycenter.org/resources/bulletins.html

LESBIAN/GAY WORKSHOP RETREAT

A workshop, retreat for lesbian/gay Catholics, parents, pastoral ministers, and other interested persons, will take place at Siena Center, Racine WI, May 23-25, 2008. Presented by Fr. Anthony Gittins, CSSp, the weekend will focus on Jesus' life and ministry of radical inclusiveness. The retreat will develop the text from Eph. 2:12-22, present some insights about Jesus' outreach to all the wrong people, and offer ways his disciples are called to emulate the Teacher. Fee: \$165 before April 1; \$185 after April 1. Checks by May 9 to New Ways Ministry, 4012 29th St., Mount Rainier, MD 20712. Fr. Gittins, professor at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, is author of 11 books, and former missionary in Sierra Leone.

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS



Hank Lankford, originally from Lone Wolf, OK, has joined 8th Day as a Claretian volunteer until Jan., '09. Hank has one remaining semester at the U. of OK where he is studying anthropology and history.



Francis Diyaolu, a priest from the diocese of Abeokuta, in southwest Nigeria, is a student in the Loyola U., Chicago, Social Justice Masters' program. Francis will be volunteering until summer when he will return to Nigeria to be part of a diocesan peace and justice office.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN in early March installed a Biomass boiler that burns wood or

grasses at an intense heat to produce a gas. The gas burns to provide steam for their Motherhouse buildings. Local municipalities and companies cooperate by hauling their cut trees or wind damage to the campus to supply the fuel and in turn saves the landfill. Some 100 trees are being planted to sequester any carbon excess from the burning gas. This is just one of several strategies used by the Congregation to address the problem of climate change.

DVD'S IN OUR LIBRARY

We have two dvd's in our library on Immigration that can be loaned out. One is **Dying to Get In**, by Brett Tolley, which lasts 39 minutes. It follows men, women and children who are hoping to trade a life of desperation and poverty for one of hope and opportunity. The other is **Crossing Arizona**, a Rain Lake production, which is 75 minutes long. It addresses issues with the influx of migrants, the rising death toll which has elicited impassioned responses about human rights, culture, class and national security.

IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

There is current legislation in the works in Congress; HB4088, which is called the **Save Act**..referring to the saving of US interests. Immigration lawyers and others are pleading with us to contact Senators and Representatives and say "**No**" to the Save Act. Information at www.Thomas.loc.gov

MIGRANT TRAIL WALK 2008

The Migrant Trail Walk this year will take place May 29th – June 2nd. For the last two years Stephanie Dernek, staff for SVD's and volunteer Julie Pavuk participated in this 75-mile journey from Sásabe, Sonora to Tucson, AZ to be in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers who have walked this trail and lost their lives. For more information contact Stephanie here at 8th Day Center for Justice.

Witness for Peace Delegation to Colombia

BILATERAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MILITARY REPRESSION

Aug. 24th – Sept. 3rd

DELEGATES WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO

Meet with community leaders, displaced persons and human rights defenders. Meet with members of a resistance community. Learn how to educate and advocate to US citizens and Policy makers

APPLICATION DUE

August 1st, with \$150 deposit. Full payment due August 7th.

COST

\$1300 plus airfare. Includes meals, accommodations, facilitation, translation, and transportation within Colombia. Fundraising tips and consultation available.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

visit www.witnessforpeace.org

OR CONTACT

8th Day Center at 312.641.5151

Katie Varatta, katievaratta@yahoo.com

Erin Cox, erincox_xu03@yahoo.com

Gwen Farry, gwenbvm@aol.com

TRIP IS JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS

Witness for Peace ~ www.witnessforpeace.org

EPICA ~ www.epica.org

School of Americas Watch ~ www.soaw.org

8th Day Center for Justice ~ www.8thdaycenter.org

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