



SATYA

Truthful in Thought, Word, and Actions

YES! WE CAN PEACEBUILDERS March/April 2024

“To learn to recognize and respect the SACRED in every person, including ourselves, and in every piece of CREATION. The acts of the nonviolent person help to free this DIVINE in the opponent from obscurity or captivity.

From - The Decalogue for a Spirituality of Nonviolence



100 STEPS TO PEACE

By Ruth Ann Angus

I've never gone up or down the 100 steps of the Centennial Staircase at Centennial Park in Morro Bay, California but I've stood at the top and marveled at the view. Right next to the top of the stairs are two benches, one facing the Old Town section of Morro Bay and one facing the waterfront

and the immense granite structure of Morro Rock. Either way, the view tells one a lot about this small town on the middle coast of California.

There is an independent spirit in Morro Bay and residents are protective of it, with its now almost eradicated fishing fleet, its funky waterfront shops, and the tasty fare of its restaurants. Mostly they appreciate living in a diverse and often spectacular nature setting.

Small communities often suffer with extreme differences with how their town should run. This can make for colorful and rousing city council meetings or for meetings that cannot come to any truly supported agreement on any aspect of the issues affecting the population. One thing that brings at least some semblance of agreement is that peace is something everyone desires.

With that in mind, Peacebuilders set forth eight years ago to aid in bringing about better understanding of living in a positive peaceful community. This has been done with programs offered on living the nonviolent life, as well as aiding our youngsters to find and develop their own understanding of living where everyone is valued, no matter their race, ethnic background, financial situation, educational aptitudes, or political persuasion. This has culminated in a collaboration between Peacebuilders, city officials, school officials, students, residents, church goers, city beautifiers, nonprofit organizations, as well as businesses to make Morro Bay a nonviolent city, a city of peace.

A neighbor climbs the 100 steps of the Centennial Stairway from lower Centennial Park, where a giant chessboard exists, to the upper Centennial Park and gardens every day. Thinking about that I envision her climbing each step on an ascent to a totally peaceful

world, each step representing the advance that is being made here in Morro Bay, where the pursuit of peace is part of community DNA. It's humorous to envision the pursuit of peace with a chess game. Sometimes we see life as a game of chess complete with Kings, Queens, and warrior Knights.

Residing at the top of stairway in a special spot in the garden filled with native plants is a small, but mighty peace pole. This pole itself will never bring peace; peace poles don't do that. People can come to this Peace Garden and view the beautifully painted pole amidst the flowers, and take a seat on one of the benches, and look out at the waterfront with shops and restaurants, the bay and harbor with boats gently bobbing in the current, the sandspit, the ocean waves lapping at the breakfronts, and large Morro Rock dominating the scene and try to imagine a world truly at peace – no conflicts, no wars, no injustice for anyone. Believe that it can happen. Because it can!



PEACE AND PLANET FOR EARTH DAY IN MORRO BAY, CA

**Sunday April 21, 2024 at 2 PM
Centennial Park on Market Street**

Yes We Can Peacebuilder, a branch of People of Faith for Justice, and in collaboration with the Central Coast Center for an Ecological Civilization is participating in Peace Bene's Campaign Nonviolence Earth Week with a PEACE AND PLANET FOR EARTH DAY event on April 21st at 2 PM at (upper) Centennial Park in Morro Bay, California.

At this event we will dedicate to the city of Morro Bay, an artist rendered Peace Pole installed in the gardens created by the volunteer gardeners of Morro Bay in Bloom. Centennial Park resides on Market Avenue at the top of the bluff overlooking the entire waterfront of Morro Bay. Views from the spot offer a sweeping vista of the waterfront, the bay and harbor, the five-mile sandspit, and the historic Morro Rock. With two benches at the location this peace pole gently transitions the spot into Morro Bay's Peace Garden. Residents and visitors can come, sit on the benches, and enjoy nature's beauty and hopefully meditate on how important it is to bring peace to our troubled world. Morro Bay stands up for peace with two peace proclamations in place and a population that supports nonviolence.

Inspired by the children from Del Mar Elementary School "Sunshine Spreaders" club, Peacebuilders collaborated with Morro Bay in Bloom to create this Peace Garden and install an artist rendered peace pole with the words "May Peace Prevail in the World" in four languages. The event will offer an Earth Connect Blessing by YTT Certified Classical

Ashtanga Yoga Teacher, Dawn Feuerberg and a Sound Ceremony by Jon Nowaczyk of Let's Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio in Morro Bay, a presentation of nature collages created by the Sunshine Spreaders, and a performance by the Ukeladies of Morro Bay who will play and sing songs of peace and earth.

Anyone visiting the Central Coast of California is welcome to join us!



THINGS WE OUGHT TO KNOW

Amidst all the negative and daunting information that comes our way every day, there are some positive peacebuilding efforts taking place and I think we need to know about them to reinforce our own efforts to spread nonviolence principles and strive for peace in the world. Here are a few that I correspond with and receive information as to their work.

I found the listing for the SOLA (South Los Angeles) Community Peace Center in the guidebook , *Invest Yourself* to find volunteer opportunities that Susan Angus, Executive Director of the Commission on Voluntary Action and Service publishes.

SOLA

Sola Community Peace Center in South Los Angeles offers life-transforming peace programs in order to create a more peaceful and just community and world. The programs of Sola began in 2006. Sola Community Peace Center was legally organized in 2019. It provides peace education to young people, families, and community members, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged. It fosters leaders with skills and experience to make a difference locally and globally and enhances self-development of people for achieving life success.

Some programs that SOLA offers:

School Peace – The Creative Peace Project is a school violence prevention/social-emotional learning program in collaboration with USC's **Joint Educational Project (JEP)**. Students learn about peace, non-violent conflict resolution methods and communication skills through meditation and mindfulness, literature, and hands-on fun and creative activities.

Peace Camp – Mini and Big Summer Peace Camp at St. Mark's Lutheran Church –Peace Camp provides a safe, inclusive, and nurturing space for Los Angeles youth to learn peacemaking techniques, take social action, and have fun. During four weeks in the summer, the Peace Camp Staff help campers identify conflicts that they encounter every day, and then guide them through peacemaking techniques like peaceful communication and conflict resolution. Campers learn how to calm themselves through meditation and how to set goals for self-improvement. Campers also study and interact with global conflicts and brainstorm different ways to make a positive impact.

Funding for these programs comes from a variety of organizations and LA City Council.

www.solacommunitypeacecenter.org

The Peace Education Center of the Hudson Valley

The mission of the Peace Education Center of the Hudson Valley is to empower

individuals and organizations to create and sustain ecologically-minded, just, and peaceful communities.

Founded by The Rev Dr Leonisa Ardizzone in 2023, the Peace Education Center of the Hudson Valley offers programs and dialogical space for youth, families, educators, religious professionals, and community members.

The Peace Education Center of the Hudson Valley envisions a community that appreciates the interconnected nature of life, where positive peace is nurtured into existence. Our aim is to support and sustain community efforts to create a more just and peaceful world, through educational and interfaith programming in the Hudson Valley and beyond.

They have Programs for Children, Youth & Families, Programs for Educators, and Community Events and Workshops.

There is the Young Peace-Building Program held once a month for Pre-K through High School youth to explore various themes of peacebuilding in fun, interactive ways. Educators can apply for their yearly Professional Development Program for Educators in the Hudson Valley. This is for teachers, administrators, and support staff who are creative, curious, and committed to bringing peace, justice, and care into their classrooms and beyond.

Community Events and Workshops offers programming through a virtual community of peacebuilders on Patreon. Members will receive monthly learning kits from PECHV curated by their team.

www.pechv.org

All We Can Save Project

Located at 548 Market Street, San Francisco, this organization offers online training to do climate circles, a program created by Dr. Katherine Wilkerson that encourages dialogue about the climate crisis. Circles go through 12 sessions, each with a theme and a free facilitation guide is offered. You can also sign up for their monthly newsletter.

Programs offered are Reading and Reflecting, Educators, Climate Wayfinding, aa=abuilding Climate Community, Climate Emotions, Workplace Climate Action. There are a variety of colorful, artistic posters you can download.

www.allwecansave.earth



NO PRANKS NEEDED: A GOOD FRIDAY RANT

By

Shawnee Baldwin

I only wish this were an April Fool's Day prank. As I end holy week with Good Friday off

from work, I keep asking, “What is so good about a day that an innocent man was murdered?” All that pain and suffering so religious and political leaders could justify their behavior and protect their assets. All those years of conditioning and indoctrination into a faith that regularly falls short of its peace, love and helping fellow humans survive message. While the massacre of more innocent humans in the very land that Jesus walked continues and more “pop up” wars break out here and abroad, we are all in peril even if we are thousands of miles away from the turmoil. When do these war torn refugees get an Easter Sunday? When do they get to experience a resurrection moment?

Beyond the major wars and massive loss of lives occurring simultaneously in Palestine/Gaza/Israel, Haiti, the Congo, Sudan, and still smoldering strife in Yemen, there is a “secret” unreported war being waged on the environment. A spiderweb of intersecting issues – imperialism, colonialism, manifest destiny, eminent domain, land and property theft, economic greed, and resource rape - connect these displays of the massive military death machine. We can see the destruction on our TV, phone, and laptop screens. But no one seems to be addressing ecocide next to the genocide. I recently saw this quote on *This Nonviolent Life*, an offering by Pace e Bene, quoting Polly Higgins who wrote:

Ecocide, the 5th Crime Against Peace.

“Ecocide is a crime against humanity, but its more than that, it’s a crime against nature, it’s a crime against future generations. Ultimately and most importantly, it’s a crime against peace.”

No matter who appears to be winning, we are all losing. Stress levels seem to be on constant alert for the next shoe to drop, the next headline to reveal a situation that rips our heart apart or has us shaking our heads in dismay. Anxiety and fear over what’s next haunts us – OK, maybe it’s only me - as each state primary reveals a repeat nail-biting election come November. But every time I see the destruction on the buildings and the people, I also “see” the chemicals being released on the ground and in the air. I “hear” the blood of the innocents across history crying out from the dirt into which the blood has seeped. That blood is covered in layers of chemicals from ever more “sophisticated” weapons of mass destruction (many manufactured in my own state).

What war and other corporate disasters are doing to the environment is reaching a tipping point. Like a sponge that has reached its capacity and can no longer absorb any more liquid, the land is being polluted quicker than its capacity to heal. According to WorldBeyondWar.org, the U.S. Military is one of the biggest polluters on earth emitting billions of metric tons of greenhouse gases (1.2 billion since 2001), is a large consumer of oil (\$17B/year), and the largest global landholder with 800 foreign military bases in 80 countries.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still recovering from the bombs our government dropped and we were reminded of in the movie ***Oppenheimer***. People are still losing legs when they step on landmines left from civil wars. Veterans are still trying to get compensation for the effects of Agent Orange meted out on the enemy but blowback inhaled and absorbed by the sprayer. Jon Stewart passionately advocates for compensation for chemically induced health issues from the explosions for the first responders to the 9/11 attack on the twin towers in NYC. Never mind all the innocent people we killed and land-polluted in the aftermath when we went in guns blazing to respond to invisible “weapons of mass destruction” under George Bush’s leadership.

“Just following orders” can no longer be a shield for literally blowing up the earth, an excuse to visit pain on others, and unleashing long-term pollution problems. We have already seen what the use of pesticides has done to farm land making it almost impossible to farm, raising crops with little nutrition from its depleted soil. If you remember at the beginning of the Ukraine/Russia war there was concern about the world “bread basket” not

just getting the crop out but would it be edible when we did.

If the land is spoiled by the chemicals of war, who will be able to live on it? No one is a victor if we can't grow the crops or eat the food from chemically laden soil. We can't say we did not know. But we might be reluctant to admit we let it happen on our watch. The earth is experiencing her own Good Friday. Let's hope we get our heads out of the tomb before its too late. Counting on a Resurrection and an Easter Sunday for the earth won't happen is we just sit on our couches wringing our hands.

We can't afford to be April Fools.

(This article was written by Shawnee Baldwin for the April meeting of the Peace e Bene Nonviolence Service Writer's Affinity group.)

LINKS

On The Air Peacebuilder Podcast - April 2024

Listen to a talk between Ruth Ann Angus, Director of Yes We Can Peacebuilders in Morro Bay, California and SanDee Winn of Odessa, Missouri. Winn, who used to have a massage business in Morro Bay, moved to Missouri to be closer to family after watching her business dissolve during the pandemic. We discuss the cultural and political differences between living in California and Missouri -- the Far West versus the Midwest -- on a personal level. Winn has had to adjust to Missouri which appears to be Trump land and growing up in Liberal California. There is a lot different from politics, food, and of course weather between the two. But Winn says she is enjoying learning about the history of Missouri which was once the gateway to the West.

https://soundcloud.com/ruth-ann-angus/podcast-sandee-winn-march-2024?si=678c4a66a9c54f53ad119c45fefe8769&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Jane Thornton of New Thought Musicians Showcase offers this link:

Season of Nonviolence Playlist from emPOWER Music/Arts

[64 Songs in 64 Days - Season for Nonviolence Playlist - emPowerMA](#)

64 songs in 64 days!

Free listening!

The Beatitudes Center

John Dear offers a Zoom program Saturday, April 13th with Michael Nagler

Michael Nagler is an author, lecturer, founder and president of the Metta Center for Nonviolence (See: www.mettacenter.org). He is also professor emeritus of peace studies at U.C. Berkeley and founder of its program. His books include "The Nonviolence Handbook: A Guide for Practical Action;" "The Search for a Nonviolent Future;" and "The Third Harmony: Nonviolence and the New Story of Human Nature."

Visit www.beatitudescenter.org to register.



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