BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE, JUSTICE, and ECOLOGY.
Compiled by Dick Bennett
(#1 March 26, 2008; #2 2009; #3 Jan. 7, 2013).

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"A human being is a part of the whole, called by us, "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest -- a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

~ Albert Einstein

"Illusion works impenetrable
Weaving webs innumerable,
Her gay pictures never fail,
Crowds each other, veil on veil,
Charmer who will be believed,
By man who thirsts to be deceived."

~ Maya by Ralph Waldo Emerson

While gardening recently, a recurrent theme kept tugging at my mind. If it is wise for us to love everything, even our "enemies", how do we love destructive invasive species like the Amur honeysuckle that is sucking the light and life from Fayetteville's understory? To take this further, how do we love pathogenic viruses? Or even further, how do we love the wealthiest rulers of the corporate-military-political complex that incessantly cause massive human and planetary suffering?

A new report from the humanitarian relief organization Oxfam titled "Working For The Few" analyzed data from Credit Suisse and Forbes, and concluded that half of the world's wealth is controlled by 1 percent. Additionally, it was found that the 85 richest people owned as much as the poorer half of the entire human species.

The report states that the consequences of this inequality are troubling:
"This massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems...people are increasingly separated by economic and political power, inevitably heightening social tensions and increasing the risk of societal breakdown."

Due to this immensely detrimental wealth imbalance, the richest few seemingly control the world. Not only do we have perpetual war for corporate profit and exploitation of people, but we are also facing a wholesale destruction of Nature. We are causing the first self inflicted mass extinction event, and apparently committing collective suicide by destroying the real sustainable economy in pursuit of unsustainable cancerous "growth."

Under relentless assault, over half the world's rainforests are razed and impoverished of biodiversity largely for the mere taste of cow flesh. Vast regions of our oceans are filled with collections of plastic particles from our cheap, disposable culture of mindless consumption. Our ability to feed ourselves is being diminished by ignorant, unsustainable factory farming of plants and animals. Millions of tons of soils are eroded and salinized while waters are polluted and made hypoxic with immense volumes of unwelcome chemical fertilizer and animal feces. Thanks to Fukushima, the Pacific Ocean is increasingly antibiotic with large volumes of radioactive waste. This list goes on ad infinitum without even mentioning global warming.

In addition to Fukushima, another glaring issue that has arrested my attention is oil spills. A recent report from McClatchy News found that in 2013 more crude oil was spilled from train wrecks than in the previous forty years. Oil is constantly being spilled in rainforests, oceans, soils and waters everywhere, not to mention the recent chemical spill that polluted water for 300,000 people in West Virginia.

It is safe to say something is very wrong with our current economic and social order when we have near biweekly oil spills and shootings at schools and other public places. Our society is very sick and needs medicine. What is the cause of our viral pandemic of violence and destruction? What is the cure?

Individual humans are not the disease. The sickness is caused by specific infectious ideas and institutions. We can point to the most fundamental political pathogens of democracy corruption by wealth and corporations, and solutions exist to remove the corrupting influence of money from our elections.
We can also isolate the economic vectors of suffering in neoliberal corporate capitalism, free trade, the International Monetary Fund, and a corrupt banking system. Additionally, measuring wealth and societal well being by looking at GDP, growth and stocks instead of happiness, health, education and environmental beauty is simply dumb.

Many alternative models exist for curing our economic disease, including democratizing corporations into worker cooperatives operated in the public interest, and not for profit to a minuscule minority of millionaire capital investors. These investors from foreign countries turn their eyes and hearts from the slave-like conditions and pollution in poorer countries where manufacturing was outsourced to dictatorships with no labor or environmental laws. Effective unions help.

These types of evolutionary measures must be contemplated, but on a deeper level what is the virus within all of us? The primary root cause is our egocentric feeling of separation from others and nature. In Eastern Wisdom, this is known as Maya. We have a culture of violence, fear, hate and greed because we so intensely identify with our apparently separate physical bodies only, and not the deeper unified Self (or Consciousness or G-d) that exists within all. We fail to see our Self in other people and creatures, and consequently fail to have empathy.

Ultimately, the deepest cure for our deadly disease is to realize humans, plants and animals are interconnected not only as one family, but even more fundamentally as one organism. We must start focusing on the positive and similarities in others, while also learning from dark behaviors and events.

We need not imprison the corporate rulers and waterboard them with toxic slime from Fukushima, West Virginia, the Mississippi Dead Zone, or the BP Horizon. Most Americans also take part in reaping the "benefits" of corporate imperialism, so in that sense we are all liable. However, it is specific institutions that oppress us all, and keep us chained to self destructive behavior.

We must all learn that we are all connected and true wealth is happiness, and the current system causes incredible unhappiness, even for the ultra-wealthy. We must all work to purify fear, greed and violence from all economic and political laws and institutions with increasingly universal Love. Internally, Love has always been the one eternal law that truly matters. It is
I have hope for drastic political and economic progress for peace and environmental sanity, but there is something more powerful than hope. It is faith, and I do not mean a dogmatic religious faith in ancient words, but in the most powerful force in the universe. It is Love here and now, nonjudgmental and unconditional. This is the cure, and when Love goes viral all the prison bars, bombs, bullets and bulldozers will rapidly melt into gardening tools.

Informed Citizens

All of OMNI’s newsletters build hope, because the search for knowledge, for reality, and the truth discovered and achieved is positive, while absolutes, arrogance, concealment, denial, evasion, covering up, ignorance, illusion, and wishful thinking leave us where we were or worse. In our HOPE and ACTIVISM and other newsletters we focus on some people, organizations, actions, and plans directly reconstituting the present for or imagining a better world.

Informed Citizens in Action

The Bottom-Up Approach: "Were citizens around the world armed with shared and reliable information, their pressure, country-by-country, could be as effective as a top-down inter-government agreement." (PAUL COLLIER, The Plundered Planet, 239).

Breaking the Frozen Darkness

"Dark and cold we may be, but this
Is no winter now. The frozen misery
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move;
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul we ever took.
Affairs are now soul size."
-Christopher Fry, A Sleep of Prisoners
What’s at stake:  Defending the Importance of Memory in the Struggle for Peace, Justice, and the Environment:  OMNI’s activities to resist Orwell’s “memory hole” in the US (information control by the corporate/military state), to question the doctrine of US “Exceptionalism,” and to restore reality to US history and policy.

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National/International DAYS Re-Visioned, Revised, Renamed

   “Building a Culture of Peace: Reinforcing and Transforming National Days.”

Address  September 21, 2010, Montgomery College.

OMNI’s Memory Whole Part II
**Orwell’s Memory Hole**

A memory hole is any mechanism for INFORMATION CONTROL by censorship, particularly the alteration or disappearance of documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, such as from a website or other archive, that contradict official doctrines, statements, or news, particularly as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened. The concept was first popularized by George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the Party's Ministry of Truth systematically re-created historical documents; in effect, re-writing history to match the often-changing state propaganda. Physically, the censorship begins in the Ministry in offices where documents are rewritten and with chutes leading to enormous furnaces hidden somewhere in the bowels of the building to destroy subversive materials.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s protagonist Winston Smith, who works in the Ministry of Truth, is routinely assigned the task of revising old newspaper articles in order to serve the propaganda interests of the government. For example, Smith may be called to retroactively change a statement about the endless wars to reflect new policies and new cover-ups by the Party. The Party is represented by O'Brien, whose job is not only to destroy the evidence of the past but to erase even the memory of it.

However, INFORMATION CONTROL is more complicated and operates through the countless instances of censorship and of propaganda and their relationships. Here are a few examples of the countless capillaries of transmission regarding population growth, Israelis and US media blaming Palestinians, political prisoners, the Vietnam War, and bombing a hospital in Afghanistan. A memory hole is *any and all* mechanisms of censorship.

**Repeated Omission to Obscure Two Realities**

John Kerry, Secretary of State, in his “Press Statement: World Population Day July 11, 2015” omitted the agency of the DAY—the United Nations. It was not accidental; deletion of reference to the UN by US officials is systematic, because positive reporting of the UN calls into question US history of anti-UN obstruction via underfunding, Security Council vetoes, and other actions. Also in the Statement, no mention is made of the most important device for the “more sustainable and just future” he advocates—contraception. We must urgently "educate girls and empower women," “we must strengthen our partnerships.., shield the innocent, care for refugees, and confront… common threats,” but “we” must also suppress the chief global institution and technology to accomplish these goals. Kerry so euphemizes and generalizes
the catastrophe that a reader could easily forget both the subject and the remedy of population growth in an unsustainable world, while vaguely identifying the US with the accomplishments of the UN.

Omitting Context, Bully Blames Victim

Look at these articles from two days of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: “Israeli Attacked after Restrictions in Jerusalem Eased” (10-8-15). “Cycle of Violence”: “An 18-year old Palestinian woman stabbed an Israeli man who then shot and wounded her….” (10-8-15). “Kerry to Meet on Mideast Attacks: Arab Kills Israeli at Bus Station; 10 Others Hurt” (10-9-15). I haven’t found an authoritative tabulation, but my informal observation finds overwhelming blame of Palestinians for starting each episode of violence. But why the attack? What motivated the attacks? Imagine the articles written from a Palestinian point of view: “Palestinian Woman Seriously Shot after Slightly Stabbing an Israeli Man Amid Hundreds of Palestinians Hurt in Clashes over the Apartheid Occupation.” The Israelis and their US allies have reason to be defensive after the 1967 Arab invasion with tanks and planes, but now the situation is reversed, the Palestinians have screwdrivers and homemade rockets against one of the world’s best armed countries, and they are the victims not the Israelis, but you would never know that from the memory hole reporting in US mainstream newspapers. See the close analysis of an article from The Washington Post by Jim Naureckas for FAIR entitled “Washington Post Reduces Palestinian Victims to a Word Problem.” Naureckas points out that while 8 Israelis have been slain in the past few weeks, 28 Palestinians were killed, some of those and many more wounded or injured in “clashes” with the police. That word is the WP’s “word problem,” for the conflict is no mere “clash.” “The Israeli military—thanks in large part to US military aid—is one of the best-armed in the world; Palestinians whom they ‘clash’ with are typically unarmed or equipped with homemade weapons.” Here is Naureckas’ conclusion: “The violence in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is horrific, and overwhelmingly the victims of it have been Palestinian. To focus on the violence done to Israelis by Palestinians to the near exclusion of Israeli violence against Palestinians is a grotesque distortion of journalism,” and we can add: by the US mainstream media memory hole. To read Naureckas’ essay go to: http://fair.org/home/washington-post-reduces-palestinian-victims-to-a-word-problem/

Omission and Cover-up to Preserve National Myth

If you ask the average U.S. citizen if the country has or had political prisoners, the reply is likely to be no, or yes but few: Most would be astonished to discover the US record is exceeded only by the Soviet Union.

This is an exceptional country, our hyper-patriots declare—a free country, a Bill of Rights, a country of laws. But in reality this country has imprisoned hundreds of thousands of its citizens for their beliefs—trade unionists, suffragettes, communists and socialists,
conscientious objectors, anti-war demonstrators, civil rights protesters, and many more. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the US police state: the 110,000 Japanese-Americans in WWII concentration camps; some 20,000 prosecuted WWII COs imprisoned, given noncombat roles in the services, and assigned to civilian service (12,000); the FBI’s anti-democratic history—break-ins, wire-tapping, etc.; thousands in the American Indian Movement and Central American Sanctuary Movement; over 4,000 nuclear bomb protesters arrested in 1982 alone; the High Security Unit at Lexington built to contain primarily women political prisoners. My Political Prisoners and Trials pp. 267-305 cites some of the evidence, lets in a little light.

Rewrite and Whitewash, Sanitize and Mythologize a War

The year 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the landing of U.S. ground troops in Da Nang, Vietnam. Many consider this to be the beginning of the American War in Vietnam. To mark the anniversary of the war the Pentagon is undertaking a ten-year, $65-million campaign to rewrite and whitewash the history of the war in Southeast Asia. In response, Veterans for Peace has announced the Vietnam War Full Disclosure project to offer a more truthful history of the war (http://vietnamfulldisclosure.org/). The Full Disclosure campaign is a Veterans for Peace effort to speak truth to power and keep alive the antiwar perspective on the American war in Viet Nam. It represents a clear alternative to the Pentagon’s current efforts to sanitize and mythologize the Vietnam war and to thereby legitimize further unnecessary and destructive wars. See Nick Turse, Kill Anything That Moves.

And the Passive Voice

New York Times headline improved by @OneKade

“Janine Jackson: If you ever need evidence that the US elite press are willing to distort journalism in order to carry water for the government, the New York Times gave it to you on a plate with this instantly infamous headline for an early report on the US bombing of a hospital in Afghanistan: “US Is Blamed After Bombs Hit Afghan Hospital.” (Avoiding passive voice constructions that obscure the chain of action is Journalism 101.) Days later, the paper was still soft pedaling US responsibility for the October 3 attack that killed at least 22 people at a Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Kunduz (including patients who burned to death in their beds), reciting credulously the administration’s shifting explanations and justifications for what some say may constitute a war crime.” From Counterspin October 9, 2015 (and FAIR Oct. 21, 2015).

References to Memory Hole in Wikipedia

1. Murphy, Kirk, Memorial Day Memory Hole: After Israel Forgets “Exodus”, White House
ORWELL’S MEMORY HOLE IN 1984, Google Search, October 15, 2015

Memory hole - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_hole

Wikipedia

A memory hole is any mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or ... The concept was first popularized by George Orwell's dystopian novel ...

How Truth Slips Down The Memory Hole

www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1...

Information Clearing House

How Truth Slips Down The Memory Hole John Pilger, applies to current events Orwell's description in '1984' of how the Ministry of Truth consigned ...

The Orwellian Memory Hole - YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiNkR9AZFE

Sep 13, 2014 - Uploaded by Dean Noble

The Orwellian Memory Hole ... 1984 by George Orwell Book Movie on BBC TV from 1956, Peter Cushing Glenn ...

The Memory Hole (1984) - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4J5FSwfo-g

Sep 20, 2014 - Uploaded by Jonathan Lippe

Brief discussion on The Memory Hole in order to bring the concept to awareness. This is a term in the book ...

the Memory Hole. - Global Research

www.globalresearch.ca/1984-was-an...to-the-memory-hole/5360175
Orwell’s 1984: Was Orwell Right?

www.ihr.org/jhr/v06/v06p--9_Bennett.html

Many of the predictions made by George Orwell in his book 1984 in relation to ... The Ministry writes people out of history -- they go "down the memory hole" as ...

OMNI’S MEMORY WHOLE Part I

Many of OMNI’s activities are restorations of US “Memory Holes.”

OMNI’s National and International DAYS Project

Two of the several DAYS OMNI accentuates: Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas DAY

Nuclear Bomb Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Remembrance Days, August 6 and August 9

During the 1960s and ‘70s, Fayetteville, AR, supported the “Peace Organizing Committee” against the Vietnam War. With the end of the war and the beginning of the Reagan presidency, this group gradually dissolved, except for one of its activities—the annual Remembrance of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which continues today under OMNI’s sponsorship. The dangers of nuclear war continue and in the opinion of many are today increased with the proliferation of the bombs from one to nine countries. Now OMNI reminds people of these dangers and advocates for the Nuclear Abolition Movement, including the Marshall Islands suits against the nuclear nations (Nuclear Zero).

Genocidal Destruction of Natives of the Americas from Columbus through the Nineteenth Century

Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Day (IPAD), 2nd Monday of October
In 2008, the Native American Symposium at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, in coalition with OMNI, began a campaign to replace Columbus Day with a Day to commemorate the victims of the European invasion. Our format has become mainly two activities: 1) Readings about or by native Americans, and 2) a Walk from the campus to the Trail of Tears marker and park nearby.

The importance of this event is immense for many reasons. For example, the false and arrogant doctrine of US exceptionalism, by which all and future US depredations abroad were and are considered benign, partly motivated the near-extirmination of the North American Indians from some twelve million people to less than one million in 1900. The event in 2015 was enhanced significantly by the presence of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, who walked with us and spoke at the memorial to a group of some 100 people. Following the Walk, we enjoyed a lunch at the University, where Ms. Menchu spoke again.

RE-VISIONED, REVISED, RENAMED DAYS,

Feb. 14 Standing on the Side of Love Day (formerly Valentine’s Day) (from UUSC, turning VD into a Day for social justice)

May, 2nd Sunday: Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day for Peace (formerly Mother’s Day)

May 21, 2011: Peace Movement Day (Armed Forces Day) (3rd Sat. in May)

May, last Monday: Day of Mourning for Victims of Wars (Memorial Day)

June 14: Liberty and Justice for All Day (Flag Day)

June, 3rd Sunday: Father’s Day for Peace (Father’s Day)

September 11 (9-11): Peaceful Tomorrows Day (Patriot Day)

Oct. 2nd Monday: Indigenous Peoples Day (Columbus Day):

Nov. 11: Unity Day (Veterans Day)

November: Fourth Thursday: National Day of Gratitude and Atonement (Thanksgiving)

December 7: Colonial Pacific World War II Day (Pearl Harbor Day)
December 25: Love and Peacemaking Day (Christmas)

EXPLANATION OF OMNI’S NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS PROJECT
“BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE: REINFORCING AND TRANSFORMING NATIONAL DAYS” by Dick Bennett,
September 21, 2010, Montgomery College.

Introduction

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II. Birthdays
III. National Days
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Conclusion

I. National Security State Indoctrination

If President Eisenhower were saying Farewell today, he would have to say: Corporate-Pentagon-White House-Congress-Secrecy-Surveillance-Exceptionalism-Mainstream Media-National Security Complex.

Senator J. William Fulbright is a traitor to my hometown. Everything was settled and clear in my Arkansas home-town puddle, until even our own people like Fulbright (Halfbright to President Johnson) came along to muddy the water with books deploring US militarism and imperialism: The Arrogance of Power and The Pentagon Propaganda Machine.

The clarity of my hometown certitudes was further disturbed when I undertook a few years of study in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas (now named after Fulbright), and then additional years of reading about Control of Information and Control of the Media in the U.S., the titles of two of my book-length bibliographies.

And now the recent barrage of books on US imperial dysfunctions and derangements blurs completely my smiling recollection of faithful birddog, shotgun, covey of quail, and mother’s
quail gravy.

I don’t smile so much now, but who would like to be forced by some big fellows, who don’t seem very bright and sometimes seem deranged, to participate in digging our own graves?

One of the big bullies is called exceptionalism. Since the graves are not finished, and despite the difficulties in talking with such a fellow, let me pose two questions.

Does the US stand within the order of international law or outside it? Does the US still play by the rules it helped create?

But he is busy digging. I must go elsewhere for a reply.

The essays in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff (2005) reply to these questions as they apply to human rights. And their answer is NO more than Yes. The U.S. approach to human rights differs negatively from that of most other Western nations. Three types of exceptionalism separate the US from the others: 1) exemptionalism (supporting treaties as long as Americans are exempt from them); 2) double standards (criticizing others for not heeding the finding of international human rights bodies, but ignoring what these bodies say about the US); and 3) legal isolationism (the tendency of US judges to ignore international jurisdictions and rulings).

Andrew Bacevich in *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (2008) expresses an aversion to claims of US exceptionalism and calls for a realism that respects the limits of power, that expects informed leaders who can avoid unintended consequences, and is skeptical of easy solutions, especially those involving the use of armed force. Only a return to such principles can deal with our many crises: our economy in disarray, our presidency recklessly imperial; our nation infatuated with military power and engaged in endless wars.

A part of the doctrine of US exceptionalism is the belief in the US as WORLD TRANSFORMER. Another book by Bacevich hammers on this myth in *Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War*. He identifies (quoting *Time Magazine* founder Henry Luce) “the American Credo”: as summoning the United States —“and the United States alone—to lead, save, liberate, and ultimately transform the world….for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit.” Alas, and the origin of Bacevich’s repugnance to it, from this Credo arises mass killing, torture, assassination, preemptive and other illegal interventions and invasions, massive surveillance, arrest without warrant, and on and on.

One author, Chalmers Johnson, has taken four volumes to report the arrogance of US power; some the titles you will recognize: *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire; The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic; Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic;* and just published, *Dismantling the Empire: America’s Last Best Hope.*
These books provide an alternative narrative to the seventy-year-old official, National Security State fiction of a benign nation compelled for the good of the world to invade and conquer and spread its power through some hundred military bases around the world. But how could this have happened?

Noam Chomsky has been trying to explain it for thirty years. It goes like this. The power of the security obsessed over most of the populace these seventy years was not accidental, but was induced by an elaborate, well-financed propaganda system. Chomsky and Edward Herman explained it in their 1988 book, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. They describe filters or control mechanisms through which propaganda messages are created by the mainstream media in support of the Corporate Security State, including: 1. concentrated business ownership; 2. advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; 3. heavy reliance by the media on information provided by the government, business, and “experts” approved and often funded by these agents of power; 4. use of “flak” as a means of disciplining media; and 5. anti-communism, as a national religion. While anti-communist and anti-socialist rhetoric continue to enforce the status quo, it has been largely displaced by the rhetoric of anti-terrorism.

*Manufacturing Consent* has provided a model for analysis of a diversity of subjects. For example, Anthony DiMaggio in *When Media Go to War: Hegemonic Discourse, Public Opinion, and the Limits of Power* (2009) demonstrates indoctrination in US and UK media coverage of the Iraq withdrawal debate, especially how media frame the antiwar movement to limit their effect; the ways human rights violations are highlighted in US media coverage of enemy states and played down in allied coverage; in journalistic values and practices; in US and UK coverage of Iran; in public response to the wars; and in the issue of controlling information to create consent.

These books are only a few of the critiques of National Security (that is, USA today) myths, dogmas, and indoctrination. One might think that enough had been shown to scuttle them. But the doctrines have been successfully infused into our society. They circulate through body politic so seemingly naturally that most people can’t see them. That explains the silence of most people; why the public is so passive. And why some peace proponents of alternative practices—nonviolence, compassion, diplomacy, material assistance—losing their sense of humor, feel hopeless at times.

II. Alternatives to Militarism and Empire: Birthdays

But personally I learned eventually to separate myself from the bullies. I have dropped my shovel, though the thing still seems attached to my ankle.

I learned a lot from the British socialist and literary critic, Raymond Williams. He urged all
to step outside power systems and inspect them; they're always contradictory. He taught also aggressive insertion of alternatives to official folly and violence into every available niche possible. Facts: The Pentagon has placed contractors in almost every county in the country. The Pentagon has millions of dollars annually to propagandize the US populace to believe our wars are permanent because always in defense of our threatened liberty. Consequently, high ranking officers and military heroes are always high in popularity. They're consistently more successful than civilian candidates for the presidency. More facts: Dozens of official days for national glory, empire, wars and war heroes, and victory, countless monuments, and yes cemeteries. (But cemeteries are not about the dead; certainly not about the horribly wounded; since all live in national glory.) So, Williams would think, let us find ways to promote peace and justice by countering that popularity.

BirthDAYS and National DAYS? Surely they are too obvious for Williams to overlook. Little attention to peace and justice heroes, compassion, diplomacy? Yes, of course. The forces of persuasion and conditioning are vastly unequal financially. But the people have numbers. A counter-conditioning campaign is called for, I imagine him thinking. In every way find niches for persuasion.

Birthdays. When I looked at birthday celebrations local, state, and nation, active or passive supporters of the Security State.Complex seemed to dominate. I scanned the Nobel Peace Prize winners, and only King was honored by a national Day. So I began to gather birthdays of peacemakers, write brief biographies, and send to OMNI's mailing list.

The idea actually was not new. Several years ago a close friend wrote a biographical series on peacemakers, called “Dove Tales,” in our alternative newspaper, until the newspaper folded. But the idea was not forgotten.

The new venture turned out to be heuristic. I wanted to reinforce knowledge of well-known peacemakers, as in the “Dove Tales,” but also to introduce stellar but little known peacemakers. I knew some nonviolence history, of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King, but I had never heard of Anderson Sa, the Brazilian musician who teaches young people alternatives to violence. Of the many peacemakers who teach diversity and toleration—Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama—, how many had heard of Bruno Hussar, promoter of interfaith harmony in his “Oasis of Peace” village, or Riane Eisler, who taught the partnership over the dominator model in human affairs, as explained in her book *The Chalice and the Blade*? The list grew (and is growing), as we affirm not military heroes but Thich Nhat Hanh, Colman McCarthy, Oscar Arias, Henry Salt, Albert Schweitzer, Astrid Lindgren, Jane Goodall, and on and on.

Of course, my subject is US peace and justice heroes. US military men and women are lauded for their “service.” Let us concentrate on service to humanity without violence in preventing violence and wars (and now warming). A fine source is Michael True’s two volumes, *Justice Seekers, Justice Makers* (1985) and *To Construct Peace: 30 More Justice Seekers, Peace Makers* (1992), both international in scope but mainly about stellar US peacemakers—Dorothy Day, Joan Baez, Jim Corbett, Penny Lernoux, Maura Clarke, Noam
Chomsky, Dolores Huerta, Denise Levertov, and more. But his total is only about sixty, when US peace heroes number in the thousands. So here’s our niche. We can replace the self-aggrandizing National Security State magnifying glass with one that can see another kind of SERVICE. At our events, our work, our homes. I even have a sculpture in my back yard with the names of thirty of Michael’s portraits, 15 women and 15 men.

III. National Days

But the project to enlarge awareness of these heroes in the consciousness of the peace movement and the public at large is simple compared to the project to reinforce some DAYS and to change or even erase others

A. Reinforcing

For whereas the birthdays at least right now require merely the writing and dissemination of a brief bio (though potentially much more could be performed), the national days involve necessarily the preparation of a more elaborate writing or event and commensurate publicity. Here is a partial list of DAYS TO CELEBRATE or COMMEMORATE, in bold indicating OMNI’s active participation, with notes regarding OMNI observance.

February, Black History MONTH

March, Women’s History MONTH

March 1, Nuclear Victims DAY

March 8, International Women’s DAY: In simple ceremonies by women and men, we have focused on celebrating peace, justice, ecology women heroes, locally, nationally, internationally.

March 15-21 Sunshine WEEK

March 22, World Water DAY

Earth DAY, April 22: for three years we had out of town distinguished speakers. Then we merged with Fayetteville’s SpringFest: Donna and Kelly, Jamie and others organized displays and music at Fayetteville’s Walton Art Center’s Rose Garden.

Earth DAY at World Peace Wetland Prairie: OMNI is part-owner with the city of 2 acres of wetland prairie and a half-acre peace-sign rock garden celebrating world peace. At WPWP on the Saturday preceding SpringFest we celebrate world peace with music, gardening, and children’s events.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Assassinated, April 4, 1968.

May 1, May DAY, the international workers holiday. (Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, among many others, were Wobblies, members of the International Workers of the World, IWW. An opportunity for great music.)

May 3, World Press Freedom Day. We have organized several events and newsletters to examine freedom of information in the US, and to read the names of news people killed in the line of duty.
May 15, International Conscientious Objectors’ DAY. This DAY should be observed; maybe next year.

Last Friday in April, Arbor DAY (different dates by states)

June 4, UN International DAY of Innocent Children, Victims of Aggression

June 5, UN World Environment DAY

June 15, International Peace Prayer DAY.

June 15-23, Human Costs of Military Toxics WEEK.

June 19, Juneteenth. A day to celebrate not only freedom from slavery for U.S. African-Americans, but for all people. In Fayetteville the Day has the attention of several groups on and off campus.

June, Gay Pride WEEK. A strong lgbtq org. exists in Fayetteville.

September 1, Labor DAY, for jobs, fair wages, health benefits, right to organize. Newsletter. Unions are very week in Arkansas.

September 12, Interdependence DAY (www.civworld.org)

September 17, Constitution DAY. For the past 3 years OMNI has celebrated this DAY with a special newsletter.

September 21, International DAY of Peace, Celebration of Peacemakers. We have paid special attention to this DAY, marking it in diverse ways over the years: a press conference at City Center next to the city’s Peace Prayer Fountain with church leaders speaking; international flags around the Fayetteville Square; sidewalk silent vigil with placards; and more.

September 25-October 2, Banned Books/Freedom to Read WEEK: OMNI has initiated activities and participated in others for a decade; e.g. roundtables on banned books at public library.

Sept. 25-Oct. 2, Keep Space for Peace WEEK: For almost a decade OMNI has sponsored a variety of programs during this week, including bringing Bruce Gagnon to Fayetteville.

October, Domestic Violence Awareness MONTH. Several organizations in NW Ark. Focus on this subject.

October 1, International/World Vegetarian DAY

October 1-7, International Vegetarian WEEK: Many in peace movement consider Vegetarianism fundamental to peace, justice and ecology, for its positive effects in ethics, nutrition, and checking global warming. Vegetarianism is at the heart of resistance to both wars and warming.

October 2, International DAY of Nonviolence (Gandhi’s BirthDAY). We have shown Attenborough’s film “Gandhi.” This is one of the DAYS we need to accentuate more.

Universal Children’s DAY, Oct. 4


World Food DAY, Oct. 16 These two DAYs we have affirmed once by a newsletter and generally by supporting local food and community gardens. OMNI also has a Home Peace Places Network many of which are vegetable gardens.

United Nations DAY, October 24 (UN Charter became binding treaty): OMNI has celebrated this day for seven years by sponsoring notable speakers, including the president of the Central Ark. Chapter of UN/USA.
October 28, National Immigrants’ DAY

November, American Indian Heritage MONTH

International DAY for Tolerance, Nov. 16

International DAY to End Violence Against Women, Nov. 25

Buy Nothing DAY, Nov. 26

International DAY of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Nov. 29

**Human Rights DAY, Dec. 10:** Ever since OMNI’s beginning we have celebrated this DAY, with events of various kinds, including music/readings at the local bookstore.

**Bill of Rights DAY, Dec. 15:** OMNI has cooperated with the local chapter of the ACLU to celebrate this DAY, sometimes at the home of a member for a talk and dinner. Occasionally we have combined the two DAYS.

If we listed all the possibilities for reinforcing peace, justice, and environmental values, we would be commemorating, that is reinforcing, at least one DAY in every month.

### B. Transforming

A more complex initiative directly challenges the conditioning of the public to accept violence and wars through the many patriotic days. The UN initiative called the International Culture of Peace Decade (2000-2010) attempted to define the Culture of War and the Culture of Peace and move away from a war culture to a peace culture.

But we cannot make this change so long as we celebrate the myths represented by the US official ceremonial Days, many of which directly support wars and preparations for wars.

George Orwell wrote in *1984*: "Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became the truth"—for example, that wars are inevitable, that our species is inherently violent, that the US makes mistakes but is mainly benign. Much of the peace movement’s work in building a Culture of Peace involves the struggle to reinforce peaceful values despite the pervasive repetition of numerous nationalistic myths. In behavioral psychology, we are what we do. Most of the public accepts the messages of special Days (Daze?) and holidays that promote the US Security State, because they don’t see it (we’re not Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union), and anyway overwhelming military force is necessary for our security, never mind it was we who have attacked other nations, and since the War of 1812 have been attacked by another nation only one more time at Pearl Harbor 1941.

Here are some of the Days we must transform, if we are to counter the myths that enable such military expenditure and worldwide intervention.
Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14

President’s Day, Feb. 15. The rise of presidential and decline of congressional power reached its apex under President George W. Bush, who is guilty of war crimes and is impeachable by a dozen articles, and President Obama has not repudiated most of those powers.

May 1, Law DAY. The purchase of Congress by corporations to make laws favorable to corporations has become another great catastrophe endangering our democracy.

First Thursday of May, National DAY of Prayer. Our alternative should be DAY of Prayer by People of All Faiths.

2\textsuperscript{nd} Sunday of May, Mother’s DAY for Peace: The present Mother’s Day is another national day commodified for business profit. For six years we have celebrated the anniversary of Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day for Peace, by a luncheon or newsletter.

Memorial DAY, last Monday in May, formerly Decoration Day, a US holiday in remembrance of members of US armed forces killed in wars. It is time we offered an alternative—the most obvious possibility being all people killed in war. .

June 14, Flag DAY. Traditionally a day of patriotic emotion. We can offer alternatives for world peace.

June 15, Father’s DAY. Nothing yet. Like we are doing with Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day regarding the role of women in the world, we could help redefine masculinity on this day for peace and justice.

July 4, Independence DAY. We have published an occasional newsletter suggesting alternative ways to celebrate Independence DAY: What should we celebrate? Declaration of Independence and empire? Or declaration of Interdependence? Earth Charter? Resistance and Liberation today? Patriotism.? Nationalism.? Democracy? Wars? Pacifism? Etc. The DAY is especially an opportunity each year to promote the value of freedom from oppression, for the people of the US, and for all people.

August 6 and 9, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Remembrance of Victims/Celebration of Peace Heroes: OMNI’s oldest activity, begun in the 1970s by our predecessor Peace Organizing Committee. Each year we encourage people to think about the bombs and about air war: Were the bombs justified? What were the consequences globally up to today and projected into the future? For many years the event (walk, speakers, music) occurred at the Greek Amphitheater on campus of U of Arkansas; now it is held at the Fulbright Peace Fountain at the center of the campus.

2\textsuperscript{nd} Monday in October, Indigenous People of the Americas DAY (Columbus Day): As of 2010 OMNI will have sponsored this event for six years in conjunction with UofA’s Native American Symposium Committee. Our
annual event has grown significantly into a half-day remembrance: a film at UA, readings from accounts of the Trail of Tears and talk also at UA, Walk to Trail of Tears Monument, Ceremony. Read the opening chapter on Columbus in Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*.

9-11/Patriot Day/Peaceful Tomorrows DAY. Following 9-11, another kind of immense explosion instantly occurred, characterized by xenophobia, patriotism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, chauvinism, and exceptionalism. Because 9-11 was employed by the Bush Administration to so horrendously escalate the so-called “War on Terrorism” as part of the 70-year-old US permanent war, asserting an alternative is particularly important. President Bush named 9-11 “Patriot Day.” In search of the criminals behind 9-11 he invaded the entire country of Afghanistan, and then invaded Iraq, began bombing Pakistan, and the cowed Congress passed the “Patriot Act” ostensibly to apprehend terrorists but in effect to restrict dissent. But we have living alternatives. Following 9-11, the September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows asked our leaders not to order our troops to engage in retaliatory war, but to consider the consequences both to our troops and to the civilian “enemies.” They cried out for international law, negotiation, and reconciliation. (See OMNI’s 2009 Newsletter on 9-11/Patriot Day/Peaceful Tomorrows for an extended statement.) In 2009 OMNI commenced its alternative to Patriot Day with *Peaceful Tomorrows DAY*. November 11, Veterans’ Day/Peaceful Tomorrows DAY. Our 2008 Newsletter is a large compilation of articles and bibliographies about illegal and ruinous US wars. Since then we have published less, but our intention to counter Veterans’ Day as a traditional day to reinforce patriotism remains the same. And other mythical days into Memory DAYS:

November 25 (Thanksgiving), International DAY to End Violence.

December 7, Pearl Harbor Day/Colonial War in the Pacific Confronts Japan and US. Increasingly, historians have questioned the simple explanation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as a dastardly attack by Japanese imperialists; for example, Roland Worth, Jr.,’s *No Choice But War*. December 7 offers the peace movement a time to discuss the causes of the war in the Pacific and the causes of other wars, toward understanding better how to prevent them. OMNI issued a newsletter in 2008 elaborating these arguments. During the past two decades, the official, patriotic, illusory enthusiasm for US wars that has led to permanent war has received significant deflation.

**Conclusion**

When people ask, Aren’t they still digging our grave? We can reply: Nobody promised a quick fix after 70 years of threat, fear, and hatred. When people ask, What can I do, what can one person do, to change the world from war to peace? We have one answer at least: We can reinforce a peaceful DAY or Change a warfare Day! Instead of digging graves, build a DAY.

When scoffers ask, what difference can we make? We can answer: we are engaged in a struggle with bullies over the meanings of our ceremonies and myths, and there is something we can accomplish. If it is true that the US warfare state—Corporation-Pentagon-Secrecy-Surveillance-Violence-White House-Congress-Mass Media-Permanent War—is a dominant system that filters through a thousand political and social capillaries of repetitive transmission, yet is not finished, not complete, we can counter it, point by point, place by place, day by day, niche by niche by concrete actions building a Culture of Peace inside the Culture of War.
We will be offering a model to the world, and sometimes models grab the world’s imagination.

And remember the subtitle of Gandhi’s autobiography:  *My Life of Experiments.*

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OMNI’S MEMORY WHOLE Part II

CONTROL OF INFORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Publications by Dick (James R.) Bennett (not including book reviews), in Chronological Order.

Books


Only by deliberate effort can we separate ourselves from our culture in order to examine it.


Domination filters through thousands of capillaries of transmission.


475 entries on the USA.

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THREE CHRISTIANS
THREE CHRISTIAN FIGURES OF HOPE: DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, POPE JOHN XXIII, MURIEL MOORE

Thomas Cahill ends Heretics and Heroes with three Christians—a German Lutheran Protestant, an Italian Catholic, and a U.S. Episcopalian—who represent some of the best in Christianity.

“Christians must not only ‘bandage the victims under the wheel, but jam the spoke in the wheel itself.’” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, qtd. By Thomas Cahill, Heretics and Heroes (307, referring to Hitler’s Nazis).

Pope John XXIII believed that “Jesus cam to break down barriers [between people]; he died to proclaim universal brotherhood; the central point of his teaching is charity—that is, the love that binds all human beings to him. . . .” (308).

Muriel Moore organized free meals for the poor and treated all the same. “‘We are all the same.’ That was Muriel’s credo.” (310). -- Dick

5 Reasons Why 2013 Was the Best Year in Human History
Zack Beauchamp, News Investigation, NationofChange, Dec. 12, 2013: Between the brutal civil war in Syria, t
government shutdown and all of the deadly dysfunction it represents, the NSA spying revelations and massive inequality, it’d be easy to for you to enter next year thinking the last year has been an awful one. But you’d be wrong. We have every reason to believe that it was, in fact, the best year on the planet for humankind. Contrary to what you might have heard, virtually all of the most important forces that determine what make people’s lives good—the things that determine how long they live and whether they live happily—are trending in an extremely happy direction.

Gandhi’s Hope: Learning from Other Religions as a Path to Peace (review) by Christopher Chapple


This book by prominent Protestant theologian Jay McDaniel suggests that Mahatma Gandhi challenged the modern world by publicly revealing that which he learned from other faith traditions and advocating this path as a way for intercultural understanding. The wisdom of Gandhi holds special poignancy today, when the processes of globalization and migration have placed followers of different faiths in closer proximity than can be remembered in the past five hundred years.

Jay McDaniel writes with crisp clarity and organizes his insights into bite-sized pieces. He lays out five challenges that face all the world's faiths: compassion, self-criticism, simple living, ecological awareness, and welcoming religious diversity. In approaching this decidedly postmodern list of issues, McDaniel draws from two primary resources: the experiences shared by his students at Hendrix College and the writings of Alfred North Whitehead. Along the way, he invokes the Buddhist teacher and leader Thich Nhat Hanh and several progressive Catholics, including Sister Joan Chittester and theologians Hans Küng and Paul
Continuing with a style developed in his earlier books, McDaniel latches onto a metaphor and extends it to illustrate his central point—in this case, the value of diversity. In past books, he has used the image of the hunter and the hunted to underscore the need to respect animals. In *Gandhi's Hope*, the metaphor he employs is that of a jazz concert, with all different manner of instruments pooling their resources to create a tapestry of diverse yet harmonious music.

Although the title of the book may seem to indicate that Gandhi will serve as the focus, in fact, Whitehead anchors McDaniel's approach. Through an updated approach to Whitehead, McDaniel seeks to answer the questions regarding diversity and compassion that he has posed. He suggests that an experience of concrescence will result in the sort of heightened awareness needed to increase one's conscience and to make the ethical changes needed to respond to the current state of the world. McDaniel identifies twelve "planks" that will usher Whitehead's vision into the contemporary world. These twelve aspects seem also to be heavily influenced by McDaniel's own encounter with Buddhism: interdependence, impermanence, indeterminism, mind/matter, deep listening, value, God, creativity, persuasive power, divine empathy, many forms of salvation, and life after death. These broad categories embrace key notions found in all religious traditions.

**Amy Goodman | Mandela: The Man and the Movement**

*Amy Goodman, Op-Ed, NationofChange, Dec. 12, 2013*: Nelson Mandela’s passing last week at the age of ninety-five has been met with a global outpouring of remembrance and reflection. A giant of modern human history has died. Mandela is rightly remembered for his remarkable ability to reconcile with his oppressors and the political prescription his forgiveness entailed for the new South Africa. Mandela has passed, but what he has passed on to succeeding generations is his deep belief in the power of movements to make change. "When I walked out of prison, that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both."

**YES! MAGAZINE SUPPORTS BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD.** Each issue focuses on a different theme. The Fall 2010 theme was:
A Resilient Community

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Ten ideas for building resilience from communities across the country: a house made of cob, low-impact urban living, bike as you are, the general store, process food locally, bees on city roofs, scrappy rebuilding, making fruit public.

How Resilient Are You?

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by James Trimarco

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Our Favorite Books of 2013 (some about hope)

Jim Hightower spotlights a Texas woman taking on TransCanada.


Lessons of dedication, solidarity, love, and recovery, five years after Katrina.

The taxi driver called me “girlfriend” and “sweetheart” with the familiar sweetness of New Orleanians, so I figured I could ask a few personal questions. He was from the Lower Ninth Ward, one of the neighborhoods inundated by Katrina—a mostly poor, mostly black edge of the city isolated and imperiled by two manmade canals—and it had taken him three and a half years to return to New Orleans. He still wasn’t in his neighborhood, but he was back in the city, and his family was back, and they were determined to come back all the way.

What happened in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is more remarkable than almost anyone has told. More than a million volunteers came to New Orleans to gut houses, rebuild, and stand in solidarity with the people who endured not just a hurricane but a deluge of Bush Administration incompetence and institutionalized racism at all levels of government, which temporarily turned the drowned city into a prison. Supplies were not allowed in by a panicky government; people were not allowed out, and a wholly unnatural crisis ensued.
Even so, an astounding wave of solidarity and empathy arose. At Hurricanehousing.org more than 200,000 people volunteered to shelter evacuees, often in their own homes. And then there were those legions of volunteers, many of them white, working in a city that had been two-thirds black.

**A disaster is actually threatening to elites, not because the response is selfish but because it often unfolds like a revolution, in which the status quo has evaporated.**

I have again and again met passionate young activists who intended to come for a week or a month and never left. In the Lower Ninth, my taxi driver’s neighborhood, things looked better than even six months before. Brad Pitt’s Make It Right Foundation now has dozens of solar-powered homes, built on stilts for the next inundation, scattered across the lowlands of the neighborhood. New businesses have opened on St. Claude Avenue, the main thoroughfare, and children play in the once-abandoned streets.

It’s hard to say that there is a recipe for solidarity across race and class lines. During crises, the official reaction from government and media is often widespread fear—based on a belief that in the absence of institutional authority people revert to Hobbesian selfishness and violence, or just feckless conduct. Scholars Lee Clarke and Karon Chess call this fear of the public, particularly the poor and nonwhite public, “elite panic.” Because these “elites” shape reaction as well as opinion, their beliefs can be deadly.

**But the truth is that most people are altruistic, resourceful, and constructive during crisis. A disaster is actually threatening to elites, not because the response is selfish but because it often unfolds like a revolution, in which the status quo has evaporated.**

Civil society improvises its own systems of survival—community kitchens, clinics, neighborhood councils, and networks of volunteers and survivors—often decentralized and deeply empowering for the individuals involved. What gets called recovery can constitute the counter-revolution—the taking back of power.

Perhaps the biggest question for a disaster like Katrina is to what extent this transformed sense of self and society lasts and matters: Can it be a foundation for a stronger civil society, more solidarity, and grassroots power? It has been so in many ways in New Orleans, with groups like the Common Ground Clinic—a free health clinic that was started days after the hurricane and is still going strong five years later.

One important tool for future disasters, and social change in the absence of disaster, is simply knowledge of what really happened: how many people in the hours, days, weeks and months after Katrina behaved with courage, love, and creativity, and how much they constituted the majority response. Such human capacities can be an extraordinary resource not just in crisis
but in realizing our dearest hopes for a stronger society and more meaningful lives. What gets called recovery can constitute the counter-revolution—the taking back of power.

Katrina is hardly a happy story. More than 1,600 people died. The racism on the part of the media, the authorities ready to believe any rumor, and the vigilantes who took it upon themselves to regard any black man as a looter and to administer the death penalty for these imagined minor property crimes were a reminder of how ugly this country can be and how much remains to be done. The city used the disaster as an excuse to shut down most of the public housing even though much of it was undamaged and intact housing was desperately needed.

Poverty continues, and so does racism; the South did not stop being the South or America America. And the BP spill menaces the region in a way that is even more ominous than Katrina. The hurricane was after all a kind of event that has come ashore for tens of thousands of years, and when it was over people could rebuild. What can be done to ameliorate the spill is still a mystery, and the coastal edge of Louisiana, with its diverse fishing and foraging cultures and its abundance of wildlife, is poisoned.

Read an excerpt from Rebecca Solnit’s latest book: A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster.

New Orleans will never be quite the city it was. People there lost what many of us have not had for generations: deep roots in place, a strong sense of culture, and an intricate web of social ties to family and community, whether it’s a church, Mardi Gras krewe, musical group, black social aid and pleasure club, or neighborhood group. Much was reclaimed; many returned, but some did not or cannot.

The taxi driver took us to the New Orleans Convention Center, where so many people, mostly African American, had been stranded in the days after Hurricane Katrina. But that day in July, it was hosting the Essence Festival, a black music festival at which tens of thousands of people in summer splendor circulated. Among the mix of booths were several from organizations founded during the weeks and months after the storm but still going strong.

Traveling through a vibrant New Orleans not quite five years after the city was pronounced dead means understanding what dedication, will, solidarity, and love can achieve. This year of disasters—the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, the volcano in Iceland, the spill in the Gulf, the floods and heat waves and droughts and rising waters—remind all of us that we are entering
an era where disaster will be common and intense. Survival will be grounded in understanding our own capacity for power and resilience, creativity, and solidarity.

{The book *Shock Doctrine* offers a contrasting picture of corporate exploitation of catastrophes. –Dick)

Rebecca Solnit wrote this article for *A Resilient Community*, the Fall 2010 issue of YES! Magazine. Rebecca is the author of twelve books, including *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster* and *Hope in the Dark*.

Header photo by N. Krebill

Welcome to *Peace News*, the newspaper for the UK grassroots peace and justice movement. We seek to oppose all forms of violence, and to create positive change based on cooperation and responsibility. See more

"Peace News has compiled an exemplary record... its tasks have never been more critically important than they are today." Noam Chomsky

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“It’s always too soon to go home. And it’s always too soon to calculate effect.” Activists who feel despondent and or just plain tired will read this book and take heart in our work and find purpose in the creative search for a better world. Solnit believes we’ve had many successes; we can and should rejoice - and then carry on. [See Solnit’s A Paradise Built in Hell in Hope Newsletter #3. –Dick]

“I once read an anecdote by someone in Women Strike for Peace, the first great antinuclear movement in the United States, the one that did contribute to a major victory: the 1963 end of aboveground nuclear testing with its radioactive fallout that was showing up in mother’s milk and baby teeth. She told of how foolish and futile she felt standing in the rain one morning protesting at the Kennedy White House. Years later she heard Dr Benjamin Spock - one of the most high-profile activists on the issue then - say that the turning point for him was seeing a small group of women standing in the rain, protesting at the White House. If they were so passionately committed, he thought, he should give the issue more consideration himself.”

This is one of Solnit's many stories of the unforeseen effect of activism - the work for peace and justice - and it sets the tone for her passionate commitment to a life of social action.

Her social history of the successes of social movements and their unpredictability give great hope to us all. She uses many well-known and some obscure examples to make her point: the possibilities of sustained social action, the results we dream of are what make it possible for us to find joy, purpose and creativity in our lives, and that by recognising our successes we don’t quit, but find strength to continue.

I looked a bit askance at the chapter heading “A Dream Three Times the Size of Texas”, and then found it was about indigenous peoples, including the formation of Nunavut, the Inuit homeland, formerly part of the North-West Territories of Canada. It covers one-fifth of Canada and represents a major accomplishment for the Arctic indigenous people who were decimated by first contact with the Europeans and then had to resist assimilation into the dominant culture. Like the Mayan leader, Rigoberta Menchu, Solnit sees the resurgence of indigenous populations in Canada and around the world as a source of great hope to us all when we consider that historians predicted the obliteration of indigenous culture by the end of the 20th
century. She asks, “How do your measure the space between a shift in cultural conversation and a landmass three times the size of Texas?” We can't measure but we can certainly recognise and learn from this wild possibility that became a reality.

She details the progress of the resistance to the World Trade Organisation since 1999, as social movements give information and encouragement to many governments to stand up against the bullies of the world. The resistance to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1996-1998 and the failure of that agreement formed the basis of wild possibility in Seattle, Cancun and now Hong Kong - the latest WTO fiasco.

In Solnit's hometown of San Francisco, USA, there are murals of social leaders, a statue of Bolivar, and a starting place for rallies and demonstrations at Market Square where the UN Charter was born. She says, “...for now this is a place where history is still unfolding. Today is also the day of creation.”

Read this book, take heart, take comfort and stand together in all social action. We make history and change history as we stand; the results are for future historians to record. We will have to make sure they are not untold; we need more activist historians everywhere like Solnit to illuminate our activism.


The experiences of our ancestors offer us wisdom for surviving today's crises.

Beginning in 2004, the Norwegian government and a group of international agricultural research organizations decided to invest in an idea they hoped would help humanity endure big future unknowns. It's called the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Nicknamed the Doomsday
Vault, it sits inside a mountain on an Arctic archipelago and contains the seeds of more than half a million of the world's crop varieties—in case civil strife, natural disasters, climate change, or other calamities destroy local and regional seed stocks.

The vault's contents represent a fraction of the results of one of humanity's greatest endeavors, thousands of years of agriculture, but key ingredients are missing—the values, knowledge, creativity, tenacity, and endurance that motivated people to maintain and propagate millions of plant varieties. It's that kind of wisdom that has, as importantly as the actual seeds, allowed cultures to endure and innovate over the course of millennia.

Much of that knowledge is disappearing, either because of the spread of consumer culture or because of the increasing loss of cultural and linguistic diversity. But a wealth of life-affirming knowledge and wisdom can still be found in stories—that is, in the cultural and family stories we may have learned as children or that were shared across generations. These stories can provide lessons to help us weather the unknown with our kindness and benevolence intact.

Stories, I'd argue, can help us to become resilient people.

"Our stories tell us that we didn’t become real human beings until we became communities, until the welfare of the whole became more important than the welfare of the individual."

When I realized, through my work as a futurist, that the global economy and climate were on an unpredictable path, I began searching for stories, personal and cultural, that can encourage all of us to band together and work in service of the common good as the civilized world runs up against ecological limits.

Through this process, I had the good fortune to meet some remarkable people whose oral histories go back thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of years.

Adapting to the Changing Climate

Today, we're already witnessing major shifts in our climate, and greenhouse gases that industrial nations have pumped into the atmosphere guarantee that we'll see more change in our lifetimes, even if the world makes a transition away from fossil fuels. It's hard to imagine what such a massive upheaval of our weather patterns will look like.

But some cultures have stories about change that occurred long ago. According to George Edwardson, 63, president and elder of the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope in Alaska,
elders in his community retain an oral history across a period of “seven ice ages” (up to 350,000 years), when the regional landscape underwent dramatic climate changes that, in turn, affected the human experience.

Iñupiat stories explain how communities got through this hardship and change. Victoria Hykes Steere, an Iñupiaq human rights advocate, recounts:

“Our world was green and then it snowed. It was warm and then it got cold. The few who didn’t die worked together. Snow and ice taught us to be human and think beyond our individual selves. In our legends and our history, snow and ice made us better people and led us to use our minds.

Our stories tell us that we didn’t become real human beings until we became communities, until the welfare of the whole became more important than the welfare of the individual.

We learned from the animals, such as the wolves, to see how they took care of each other.

Hykes Steere’s people are already suffering as warming temperatures break up the permafrost and literally melt the ground beneath their homes. The cost of relocating Alaska Native communities, according to Hykes Steere, has been estimated at between $100 million and $300 million per village.

Furthermore, spikes in the cost of electricity are forcing many Alaskan Natives to go without light or heat during winter evenings, so they can use the little money they have to procure enough food.

“We’re being hit hard now with climate impacts,” says Hykes Steere. “Now with the Bering Strait opening up because of melting Arctic ice, industrial shipping and fishing are additional threats to our food sources.”

Though the situation is grave, Hykes Steere’s family stories remind her how to find strength:

We do not control the environment, but we do control how we respond. … My grandmother said that when you lose hope, you lose everything.

My grandfather used to tell me I could keep certain sunrise moments alive in my memory. My grandfather trained me to look for moments when I was seeing something that would some day help me to remember the goodness.

He taught me to keep them vivid—smell them, taste them, and see them—so that when things got really bad, I could go back there. I remember the first time I did that, there were a
bunch of moments that meant nothing to anyone else where the world was filled with beauty.

When things get really bad, I go into those moments … and I’m okay.

To help us carry on as economic and ecological conditions continue to deteriorate, more of us may need to draw on vivid memories of unspeakable beauty.

Writing Visions of Hope: Teaching Twentieth-Century American Literature and Research


This nine-chapter book narrates a writing-centered approach to the teaching of literature and literary research. As the title suggests, the book also embraces a thematic approach to reading and writing about twentieth-century American literature, focusing on the grounds for hope in an age of despair.

The first five chapters explore in detail the teaching of the twentieth-century American literature course at the University of Pristina in Kosovo, where the author served as Fulbright Professor of American Literature in the spring semester of 2012. Throughout, these chapters narrate students’ in-class interactions to illustrate writing-to-learn strategies for teaching the literature. Chapter six then follows the same cohort of 22 students as they learned to ground their literary research in their own questions about American and Balkans narratives of oppression and liberty, of despair and hope.

The last three chapters document the responses of students and their professors to this American theme of liberty and hope as seen through the Balkans lenses of ethnic violence and emerging republican government. Specifically, chapter seven focuses on students’ participation in a blog featuring Balkans literature
that explores the same issues of liberty and justice examined in the American literature they have read. Chapter eight then celebrates student writing, the fruit of the writing-to-learn strategies narrated in earlier chapters. Finally, chapter nine narrates professors’ and students’ responses, gathered through surveys and interviewing, to questions about their country’s violent past and the value of literary study in preparing citizens to shape a new republic.

Contents #1
Heroes
Violence Not Inevitable
Power of Hope
Peace Symbol
William Faulkner

Contents #2
December and January PEOPLE for peace, justice, and ecology.
Mice (yes)
Planetary
UN
Organization
Body
Children
New President
Equality
Truth-telling
Forgiveness
Compassion
Kindness
Service

Contents of #3

Dick, the United Nations: Hope for Peace in the World
O’Brien, Our Friend the Owl (see Newsletter on Cross-Species Friendships)
Chomsky on Power vs. Grassroots
Solnit, Disaster Altruism, A Paradise Built in Hell
Wolff, Workers’ Enterprises
Goldstein, Declining Armed Conflict
Rifkin, Humanist Hope
Macy and Johnstone, Active Hope Via Reality
Lehrer, Creativity
Jacob George, A Ride Till the End (ARTTE)
Poem by Marge Piercy

Publication Data


Blog: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

For research purposes, specific subjects can be located in the following alphabetized index, and searched on the blog using the search box. The search box is located in the upper left corner of the webpage.


See Index to OMNI Newsletters: activism, compassion, cooperation, ecology heroes, Gandhi, justice, King, liberalism, Nobel Peace Prize, nonviolence, peace heroes, progressivism, resistance….

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END HOPE NEWSLETTER #4

OMNI

NEWSLETTER OF H O P E ESPERANZA #4, November 22, 2014.


BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE, JUSTICE, and ECOLOGY.
Compiled by Dick Bennett
(#1 March 26, 2008; #2 2009; #3 Jan. 7, 2013).

http://omnicenter.org/donate/

Contents:  Hope Newsletters 1-3 at end

Contents Transformational Hope Newsletter #4
Abel Tomlinson, Viral Love
Dick, Peace and Justice Movement, National and International DAYS, Memory Whole
Cahill, Heretics and Heroes: BONHOEFFER, POPE JOHN XXIII, MURIEL MOORE
Beauchamp, 2013 Best Year in Human History
Rev. by Chapple of McDaniel’s Gandhi’s Hope, Respect for All Faiths
Amy Goodman, Nelson Mandela
Yes! Magazine
A human being is a part of the whole, called by us, "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest -- a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

~ Albert Einstein

"Illusion works impenetrable
Weaving webs innumerable,
Her gay pictures never fail,
Crowds each other, veil on veil,
Charmer who will be believed,
By man who thirsts to be deceived."
~ Maya by Ralph Waldo Emerson

While gardening recently, a recurrent theme kept tugging at my mind. If it is wise for us to love everything, even our "enemies", how do we love destructive invasive species like the Amur honeysuckle that is sucking the light and life from Fayetteville’s understory? To take this further, how do we love pathogenic viruses? Or even further, how do we love the wealthiest rulers of the corporate-military-political complex that incessantly cause massive human and planetary suffering?
A new report from the humanitarian relief organization Oxfam titled "Working For The Few" analyzed data from Credit Suisse and Forbes, and concluded that half of the world's wealth is controlled by 1 percent. Additionally, it was found that the 85 richest people owned as much as the poorer half of the entire human species.

The report states that the consequences of this inequality are troubling:

"This massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems...people are increasingly separated by economic and political power, inevitably heightening social tensions and increasing the risk of societal breakdown."

Due to this immensely detrimental wealth imbalance, the richest few seemingly control the world. Not only do we have perpetual war for corporate profit and exploitation of people, but we are also facing a wholesale destruction of Nature. We are causing the first self inflicted mass extinction event, and apparently committing collective suicide by destroying the real sustainable economy in pursuit of unsustainable cancerous "growth."

Under relentless assault, over half the world's rainforests are razed and impoverished of biodiversity largely for the mere taste of cow flesh. Vast regions of our oceans are filled with collections of plastic particles from our cheap, disposable culture of mindless consumption. Our ability to feed ourselves is being diminished by ignorant, unsustainable factory farming of plants and animals. Millions of tons of soils are eroded and salinized while waters are polluted and made hypoxic with immense volumes of unwelcome chemical fertilizer and animal feces. Thanks to Fukushima, the Pacific Ocean is increasingly antibiotic with large volumes of radioactive waste. This list goes on ad infinitum without even mentioning global warming.

In addition to Fukushima, another glaring issue that has arrested my attention is oil spills. A recent report from McClatchy News found that in 2013 more crude oil was spilled from train wrecks than in the previous forty years. Oil is constantly being spilled in rainforests, oceans, soils and waters everywhere, not to mention the recent chemical spill that polluted water for 300,000 people in West Virginia.

It is safe to say something is very wrong with our current economic and social order when we have near biweekly oil spills and shootings at schools and other public places. Our society is
very sick and needs medicine. What is the cause of our viral pandemic of violence and destruction? What is the cure?

Individual humans are not the disease. The sickness is caused by specific infectious ideas and institutions. We can point to the most fundamental political pathogens of democracy corruption by wealth and corporations, and solutions exist to remove the corrupting influence of money from our elections.

We can also isolate the economic vectors of suffering in neoliberal corporate capitalism, free trade, the International Monetary Fund, and a corrupt banking system. Additionally, measuring wealth and societal well being by looking at GDP, growth and stocks instead of happiness, health, education and environmental beauty is simply dumb.

Many alternative models exist for curing our economic disease, including democratizing corporations into worker cooperatives operated in the public interest, and not for profit to a minuscule minority of millionaire capital investors. These investors from foreign countries turn their eyes and hearts from the slave-like conditions and pollution in poorer countries where manufacturing was outsourced to dictatorships with no labor or environmental laws. Effective unions help.

These types of evolutionary measures must be contemplated, but on a deeper level what is the virus within all of us? The primary root cause is our egocentric feeling of separation from others and nature. In Eastern Wisdom, this is known as Maya. We have a culture of violence, fear, hate and greed because we so intensely identify with our apparently separate physical bodies only, and not the deeper unified Self (or Consciousness or G-d) that exists within all. We fail to see our Self in other people and creatures, and consequently fail to have empathy.

Ultimately, the deepest cure for our deadly disease is to realize humans, plants and animals are interconnected not only as one family, but even more fundamentally as one organism. We must start focusing on the positive and similarities in others, while also learning from dark behaviors and events.

We need not imprison the corporate rulers and waterboard them with toxic slime from Fukushima, West Virginia, the Mississippi Dead Zone, or the BP Horizon. Most Americans also take part in reaping the “benefits” of corporate imperialism, so in that sense we are all
liable. However, it is specific institutions that oppress us all, and keep us chained to self-destructive behavior.

We must all learn that we are all connected and true wealth is happiness, and the current system causes incredible unhappiness, even for the ultra-wealthy. We must all work to purify fear, greed and violence from all economic and political laws and institutions with increasingly universal Love. Internally, Love has always been the one eternal law that truly matters. It is time to fully externalize it.

I have hope for drastic political and economic progress for peace and environmental sanity, but there is something more powerful than hope. It is faith, and I do not mean a dogmatic religious faith in ancient words, but in the most powerful force in the universe. It is Love here and now, nonjudgmental and unconditional. This is the cure, and when Love goes viral all the prison bars, bombs, bullets and bulldozers will rapidly melt into gardening tools.

Informed Citizens

All of OMNI's newsletters build hope, because the search for knowledge, for reality, and the truth discovered and achieved is positive, while absolutes, arrogance, concealment, denial, evasion, covering up, ignorance, illusion, and wishful thinking leave us where we were or worse. In our HOPE and ACTIVISM and other newsletters we focus on some people, organizations, actions, and plans directly reconstituting the present for or imagining a better world.

Informed Citizens in Action

The Bottom-Up Approach: "Were citizens around the world armed with shared and reliable information, their pressure, country-by-country, could be as effective as a top-down inter-government agreement." (PAUL COLLIER, The Plundered Planet, 239).

Breaking the Frozen Darkness

"Dark and cold we may be, but this
Is no winter now. The frozen misery
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move;
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul we ever took.
Affairs are now soul size."
-Christopher Fry, A Sleep of Prisoners

--Dick

Memory for the Future

**OMNi’s MEMORY WHOLE**

October 18, 2015


Written and Compiled by Dick Bennett for Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology

[http://omnicenter.org/donate/](http://omnicenter.org/donate/)

**What’s at stake:** Defending the Importance of Memory in the Struggle for Peace, Justice, and the Environment: OMNI’s activities to resist Orwell’s “memory hole” in the US (information control by the corporate/military state), to question the doctrine of US “Exceptionalism,” and to restore reality to US history and policy.

Contents

**Orwell’s Memory Hole**

US Examples

Memory Hole Google Search

**OMNI’S MEMORY WHOLE Part I**

OMNI’s National and International DAYS Project: Examples
Hiroshima and Nagasaki Remembrance
Indigenous Peoples of the Americas DAY

National/International DAYS Re-Visioned, Revised, Renamed
“Building a Culture of Peace: Reinforcing and Transforming National Days.”
Address September 21, 2010, Montgomery College.

OMNI’s Memory Whole Part II
Dick’s Books and Articles

**Orwell’s Memory Hole**

A memory hole is any mechanism for INFORMATION CONTROL by censorship, particularly the alteration or disappearance of documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, such as from a website or other archive, that contradict official doctrines, statements, or news, particularly as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened. The concept was first popularized by George Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the Party’s Ministry of Truth systematically re-created historical documents; in effect, re-writing history to match the often-changing state propaganda. Physically, the censorship begins in the Ministry in offices where documents are rewritten and with chutes leading to enormous furnaces hidden somewhere in the bowels of the building to destroy subversive materials.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s protagonist Winston Smith, who works in the Ministry of Truth, is routinely assigned the task of revising old newspaper articles in order to serve the propaganda interests of the government. For example, Smith may be called to retroactively change a statement about the endless wars to reflect new policies and new cover-ups by the Party. The Party is represented by O’Brien, whose job is not only to destroy the evidence of the past but to erase even the memory of it.

However, INFORMATION CONTROL is more complicated and operates through the countless instances of censorship and of propaganda and their relationships. Here are a few examples of the countless capillaries of transmission regarding population growth, Israelis and US media blaming Palestinians, political prisoners, the Vietnam War, and bombing a hospital in Afghanistan. A memory hole is any and all mechanisms of censorship.

**Repeated Omission to Obscure Two Realities**
John Kerry, Secretary of State, in his “Press Statement: World Population Day July 11, 2015” omitted the agency of the DAY—the United Nations. It was not accidental; deletion of reference to the UN by US officials is systematic, because positive reporting of the UN calls into question US history of anti-UN obstruction via underfunding, Security Council vetoes, and other actions. Also in the Statement, no mention is made of the most important device for the “more sustainable and just future” he advocates—contraception. We must urgently “educate girls and empower women,” “we must strengthen our partnerships... shield the innocent, care for refugees, and confront... common threats,” but “we” must also suppress the chief global institution and technology to accomplish these goals. Kerry so euphemizes and generalizes the catastrophe that a reader could easily forget both the subject and the remedy of population growth in an unsustainable world, while vaguely identifying the US with the accomplishments of the UN.

Omitting Context, Bully Blames Victim

Look at these articles from two days of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: “Israeli Attacked after Restrictions in Jerusalem Eased” (10-8-15). “Cycle of Violence”: “An 18-year old Palestinian woman stabbed an Israeli man who then shot and wounded her....” (10-8-15). "Kerry to Meet on Mideast Attacks: Arab Kills Israeli at Bus Station; 10 Others Hurt” (10-9-15). I haven’t found an authoritative tabulation, but my informal observation finds overwhelming blame of Palestinians for starting each episode of violence. But why the attack? What motivated the attacks? Imagine the articles written from a Palestinian point of view: “Palestinian Woman Seriously Shot after Slightly Stabbing an Israeli Man Amid Hundreds of Palestinians Hurt in Clashes over the Apartheid Occupation.” The Israelis and their US allies have reason to be defensive after the 1967 Arab invasion with tanks and planes, but now the situation is reversed, the Palestinians have screwdrivers and homemade rockets against one of the world’s best armed countries, and they are the victims not the Israelis, but you would never know that from the memory hole reporting in US mainstream newspapers. See the close analysis of an article from The Washington Post by Jim Naureckas for FAIR entitled “Washington Post Reduces Palestinian Victims to a Word Problem.” Naureckas points out that while 8 Israelis have been slain in the past few weeks, 28 Palestinians were killed, some of those and many more wounded or injured in “clashes” with the police. That word is the WP’s “word problem,” for the conflict is no mere “clash.” “The Israeli military—thanks in large part to US military aid—is one of the best-armed in the world; Palestinians whom they ‘clash’ with are typically unarmed or equipped with homemade weapons.” Here is Naureckas’ conclusion: “The violence in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is horrific, and overwhelmingly the victims of it have been Palestinian. To focus on the violence done to Israelis by Palestinians to the near exclusion of Israeli violence against Palestinians is a grotesque distortion of journalism,” and we can add: by the US mainstream media memory hole. To read Naureckas’ essay go to: http://fair.org/home/washington-post-reduces-
Omission and Cover-up to Preserve National Myth

If you ask the average U.S. citizen if the country has or had political prisoners, the reply is likely to be no, or yes but few: Most would be astonished to discover the US record is exceeded only by the Soviet Union.

This is an exceptional country, our hyper-patriots declare--a free country, a Bill of Rights, a country of laws. But in reality this country has imprisoned hundreds of thousands of its citizens for their beliefs—trade unionists, suffragettes, communists and socialists, conscientious objectors, anti-war demonstrators, civil rights protesters, and many more. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the US police state: the 110,000 Japanese-Americans in WWII concentration camps; some 20,000 prosecuted WWII COs imprisoned, given noncombat roles in the services, and assigned to civilian service (12,000); the FBI’s anti-democratic history—break-ins, wire-tapping, etc.; thousands in the American Indian Movement and Central American Sanctuary Movement; over 4,000 nuclear bomb protesters arrested in 1982 alone; the High Security Unit at Lexington built to contain primarily women political prisoners. My Political Prisoners and Trials pp. 267-305 cites some of the evidence, lets in a little light.

Rewrite and Whitewash, Sanitize and Mythologize a War

The year 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the landing of U.S. ground troops in Da Nang, Vietnam. Many consider this to be the beginning of the American War in Vietnam. To mark the anniversary of the war the Pentagon is undertaking a ten-year, $65-million campaign to rewrite and whitewash the history of the war in Southeast Asia. In response, Veterans for Peace has announced the Vietnam War Full Disclosure project to offer a more truthful history of the war (http://vietnamfulldisclosure.org/). The Full Disclosure campaign is a Veterans for Peace effort to speak truth to power and keep alive the antiwar perspective on the American war in Viet Nam. It represents a clear alternative to the Pentagon's current efforts to sanitize and mythologize the Vietnam war and to thereby legitimize further unnecessary and destructive wars. See Nick Turse, Kill Anything That Moves.

And the Passive Voice

New York Times headline improved by @OneKade

“Janine Jackson: If you ever need evidence that the US elite press are willing to distort journalism in order to carry water for the government, the New York Times gave it to you on a plate with this instantly infamous headline for an early report on the US bombing of a hospital in Afghanistan: “US Is Blamed After
Bombs Hit Afghan Hospital.” (Avoiding passive voice constructions that obscure the chain of action is Journalism 101.) Days later, the paper was still soft pedaling US responsibility for the October 3 attack that killed at least 22 people at a Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Kunduz (including patients who burned to death in their beds), reciting credulously the administration’s shifting explanations and justifications for what some say may constitute a war crime.” From *Counterspin* October 9, 2015 (and FAIR Oct. 21, 2015).

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_hole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_hole)

Wikipedia

A memory hole is any mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or ... The concept was first popularized by George Orwell's dystopian novel ... How Truth Slips Down The Memory Hole

[www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1...](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1...)

Information Clearing House

How Truth Slips Down The Memory Hole John Pilger, applies to current events Orwell's description in '1984' of how the Ministry of Truth consigned ...

**The Orwellian Memory Hole - YouTube**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiNkR9AZFE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiNkR9AZFE)

Sep 13, 2014 - Uploaded by Dean Noble

The Orwellian Memory Hole ... 1984 by George Orwell Book Movie on BBC TV from 1956,
OMNI’S MEMORY WHOLE Part I

Many of OMNI’s activities are restorations of US “Memory Holes.”

OMNI’s National and International DAYS Project

Two of the several DAYS OMNI accentuates: Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas DAY

Nuclear Bomb Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Remembrance Days, August 6 and August 9

During the 1960s and ‘70s, Fayetteville, AR, supported the “Peace Organizing Committee” against the Vietnam War. With the end of the war and the beginning of the Reagan presidency, this group gradually dissolved, except for one of its activities—the annual Remembrance of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which continues today under OMNI’s sponsorship. The dangers of nuclear war continue and in the opinion of many are today
increased with the proliferation of the bombs from one to nine countries. Now OMNI reminds people of these dangers and advocates for the Nuclear Abolition Movement, including the Marshall Islands suits against the nuclear nations (Nuclear Zero).

**Genocidal Destruction of Natives of the Americas from Columbus through the Nineteenth Century**

**Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Day (IPAD), 2nd Monday of October**

In 2008, the Native American Symposium at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, in coalition with OMNI, began a campaign to replace Columbus Day with a Day to commemorate the victims of the European invasion. Our format has become mainly two activities: 1) Readings about or by native Americans, and 2) a Walk from the campus to the Trail of Tears marker and park nearby. The importance of this event is immense for many reasons. For example, the false and arrogant doctrine of US exceptionalism, by which all and future US depredations abroad were and are considered benign, partly motivated the near-extinction of the North American Indians from some twelve million people to less than one million in 1900. The event in 2015 was enhanced significantly by the presence of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, who walked with us and spoke at the memorial to a group of some 100 people. Following the Walk, we enjoyed a lunch at the University, where Ms. Menchu spoke again.

**RE-VISIONED, REVISED, RENAMED DAYS,**

Feb. 14 Standing on the Side of Love Day (formerly Valentine’s Day) (from UUSC, turning VD into a Day for social justice)

May, 2nd Sunday: Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day for Peace (formerly Mother’s Day)

May 21, 2011: Peace Movement Day (Armed Forces Day) (3rd Sat. in May)

May, last Monday: Day of Mourning for Victims of Wars (Memorial Day)

June 14: Liberty and Justice for All Day (Flag Day)
June, 3rd Sunday: Father’s Day for Peace (Father’s Day)

September 11 (9-11): Peaceful Tomorrows Day (Patriot Day)

Oct. 2nd Monday: Indigenous Peoples Day (Columbus Day):

Nov. 11: Unity Day: (Veterans Day)

November: Fourth Thursday: National Day of Gratitude and Atonement (Thanksgiving)

December 7: Colonial Pacific World War II Day (Pearl Harbor Day)

December 25: Love and Peacemaking Day (Christmas)

EXPLANATION OF OMNI’S NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS PROJECT

“BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE: REINFORCING AND TRANSFORMING NATIONAL DAYS” by Dick Bennett,

September 21, 2010, Montgomery College.

Introduction

I. National Security State Indoctrination

II. Birthdays

III. National Days

A. Reinforcing

B. Transforming

Conclusion

I. National Security State Indoctrination

If President Eisenhower were saying Farewell today, he would have to say: Corporate-Pentagon-White House-Congress-Secrecy-Surveillance-Exceptionalism-Mainstream Media-National Security Complex.
Senator J. William Fulbright is a traitor to my hometown. Everything was settled and clear in my Arkansas home-town puddle, until even our own people like Fulbright (Halfbright to President Johnson) came along to muddy the water with books deploring US militarism and imperialism: *The Arrogance of Power* and *The Pentagon Propaganda Machine*.

The clarity of my hometown certitudes was further disturbed when I undertook a few years of study in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas (now named after Fulbright), and then additional years of reading about Control of Information and Control of the Media in the U.S., the titles of two of my book-length bibliographies.

And now the recent barrage of books on US imperial dysfunctions and derangements blurs completely my smiling recollection of faithful birddog, shotgun, covey of quail, and mother’s quail gravy.

I don’t smile so much now, but who would like to be forced by some big fellows, who don’t seem very bright and sometimes seem deranged, to participate in digging our own graves?

One of the big bullies is called *exceptionalism*. Since the graves are not finished, and despite the difficulties in talking with such a fellow, let me pose two questions.

Does the US stand within the order of international law or outside it? Does the US still play by the rules it helped create?

But he is busy digging. I must go elsewhere for a reply.

The essays in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff (2005) reply to these questions as they apply to human rights. And their answer is NO more than Yes. The U.S. approach to human rights differs negatively from that of most other Western nations. Three types of exceptionalism separate the US from the others: 1) exemptionalism (supporting treaties as long as Americans are exempt from them); 2) double standards (criticizing others for not heeding the finding of international human rights bodies, but ignoring what these bodies say about the US); and 3) legal isolationism (the tendency of US judges to ignore international jurisdictions and rulings).

Andrew Bacevich in *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (2008) expresses an aversion to claims of US exceptionalism and calls for a realism that respects the limits of power, that expects informed leaders who can avoid unintended consequences, and is skeptical of easy solutions, especially those involving the use of armed force. Only a return to such principles can deal with our many crises: our economy in disarray, our presidency recklessly imperial; our nation infatuated with military power and engaged in endless wars.

A part of the doctrine of US exceptionalism is the belief in the US as WORLD TRANSFORMER. Another book by Bacevich hammers on this myth in *Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War*. He identifies (quoting *Time*
Magazine founder Henry Luce) “the American Credo”: as summoning the United States—and the United States alone—to lead, save, liberate, and ultimately transform the world….for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit.” Alas, and the origin of Bacevich’s repugnance to it, from this Credo arises mass killing, torture, assassination, preemptive and other illegal interventions and invasions, massive surveillance, arrest without warrant, and on and on.

One author, Chalmers Johnson, has taken four volumes to report the arrogance of US power; some the titles you will recognize: Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire; The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic; Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic; and just published, Dismantling the Empire: America’s Last Best Hope.

These books provide an alternative narrative to the seventy-year-old official, National Security State fiction of a benign nation compelled for the good of the world to invade and conquer and spread its power through some hundred military bases around the world. But how could this have happened?

Noam Chomsky has been trying to explain it for thirty years. It goes like this. The power of the security obsessed over most of the populace these seventy years was not accidental, but was induced by an elaborate, well-financed propaganda system. Chomsky and Edward Herman explained it in their 1988 book, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. They describe filters or control mechanisms through which propaganda messages are created by the mainstream media in support of the Corporate Security State, including: 1. concentrated business ownership; 2. advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; 3. heavy reliance by the media on information provided by the government, business, and “experts” approved and often funded by these agents of power; 4. use of “flak” as a means of disciplining media; and 5. anti-communism, as a national religion. While anti-communist and anti-socialist rhetoric continue to enforce the status quo, it has been largely displaced by the rhetoric of anti-terrorism.

Manufacturing Consent has provided a model for analysis of a diversity of subjects. For example, Anthony DiMaggio in When Media Go to War: Hegemonic Discourse, Public Opinion, and the Limits of Power (2009) demonstrates indoctrination in US and UK media coverage of the Iraq withdrawal debate, especially how media frame the antiwar movement to limit their effect; the ways human rights violations are highlighted in US media coverage of enemy states and played down in allied coverage; in journalistic values and practices; in US and UK coverage of Iran; in public response to the wars; and in the issue of controlling information to create consent.

These books are only a few of the critiques of National Security (that is, USA today) myths, dogmas, and indoctrination. One might think that enough had been shown to scuttle them. But the doctrines have been successfully infused into our society. They circulate through body politic so seemingly naturally that most people can’t see them. That explains
the silence of most people; why the public is so passive. And why some peace proponents of alternative practices—nonviolence, compassion, diplomacy, material assistance—losing their sense of humor, feel hopeless at times.

II. Alternatives to Militarism and Empire: Birthdays

But personally I learned eventually to separate myself from the bullies. I have dropped my shovel, though the thing still seems attached to my ankle.

I learned a lot from the British socialist and literary critic, Raymond Williams. He urged all to step outside power systems and inspect them; they’re always contradictory. He taught also aggressive insertion of alternatives to official folly and violence into every available niche possible. Facts: The Pentagon has placed contractors in almost every county in the country. The Pentagon has millions of dollars annually to propagandize the US populace to believe our wars are permanent because always in defense of our threatened liberty. Consequently, high ranking officers and military heroes are always high in popularity. They’re consistently more successful than civilian candidates for the presidency. More facts: Dozens of official days for national glory, empire, wars and war heroes, and victory, countless monuments, and yes cemeteries. (But cemeteries are not about the dead; certainly not about the horribly wounded; since all live in national glory.) So, Williams would think, let us find ways to promote peace and justice by countering that popularity.

BirthDAYS and National DAYS? Surely they are too obvious for Williams to overlook. Little attention to peace and justice heroes, compassion, diplomacy? Yes, of course. The forces of persuasion and conditioning are vastly unequal financially. But the people have numbers. A counter-conditioning campaign is called for, I imagine him thinking. In every way find niches for persuasion.

Birthdays. When I looked at birthday celebrations local, state, and nation, active or passive supporters of the Security State.Complex seemed to dominate. I scanned the Nobel Peace Prize winners, and only King was honored by a national Day. So I began to gather birthdays of peacemakers, write brief biographies, and send to OMNI’s mailing list.

The idea actually was not new. Several years ago a close friend wrote a biographical series on peacemakers, called “Dove Tales,” in our alternative newspaper, until the newspaper folded. But the idea was not forgotten.

The new venture turned out to be heuristic. I wanted to reinforce knowledge of well-known peacemakers, as in the “Dove Tales,” but also to introduce stellar but little known peacemakers. I knew some nonviolence history, of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King, but I had never heard of Anderson Sa, the Brazilian musician who teaches young people alternatives to violence. Of the many peacemakers who teach diversity and toleration—Desmond Tutu, the
Dalai Lama—, how many had heard of Bruno Hussar, promoter of interfaith harmony in his “Oasis of Peace” village, or Riane Eisler, who taught the partnership over the dominator model in human affairs, as explained in her book *The Chalice and the Blade*? The list grew (and is growing), as we affirm not military heroes but Thich Nhat Hanh, Colman McCarthy, Oscar Arias, Henry Salt, Albert Schweitzer, Astrid Lindgren, Jane Goodall, and on and on.

Of course, my subject is US peace and justice heroes. US military men and women are lauded for their “service.” Let us concentrate on service to humanity without violence in preventing violence and wars (and now warming). A fine source is Michael True’s two volumes, *Justice Seekers, Justice Makers*(1985) and *To Construct Peace: 30 More Justice Seekers, Peace Makers*(1992), both international in scope but mainly about stellar US peacemakers—Dorothy Day, Joan Baez, Jim Corbett, Penny Lernoux, Maura Clarke, Noam Chomsky, Dolores Huerta, Denise Levertov, and more. But his total is only about sixty, when US peace heroes number in the thousands. So here’s our niche. We can replace the self-aggrandizing National Security State magnifying glass with one that can see another kind of SERVICE. At our events, our work, our homes. I even have a sculpture in my back yard with the names of thirty of Michael’s portraits, 15 women and 15 men.

III. National Days

But the project to enlarge awareness of these heroes in the consciousness of the peace movement and the public at large is simple compared to the project to reinforce some DAYS and to change or even erase others

A. Reinforcing

For whereas the birthdays at least right now require merely the writing and dissemination of a brief bio (though potentially much more could be performed), the national days involve necessarily the preparation of a more elaborate writing or event and commensurate publicity. Here is a partial list of DAYS TO CELEBRATE or COMMEMORATE, in bold indicating OMNI’s active participation, with notes regarding OMNI observance.

February, Black History MONTH

March, Women’s History MONTH

March 1, Nuclear Victims DAY

**March 8, International Women’s DAY**: In simple ceremonies by women and men, we have focused on celebrating peace, justice, ecology women heroes, locally, nationally, internationally.

March 15-21 Sunshine WEEK

March 22, World Water DAY
Earth Day, April 22: for three years we had out of town distinguished speakers. Then we merged with Fayetteville’s SpringFest: Donna and Kelly, Jamie and others organized displays and music at Fayetteville’s Walton Art Center’s Rose Garden.

Earth Day at World Peace Wetland Prairie: OMNI is part-owner with the city of 2 acres of wetland prairie and a half-acre peace-sign rock garden celebrating world peace. At WPWP on the Saturday preceding SpringFest we celebrate world peace with music, gardening, and children’s events.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Assassinated, April 4, 1968.

May 1, May Day, the international workers holiday. (Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, among many others, were Wobblies, members of the International Workers of the World, IWW. An opportunity for great music.)

May 3, World Press Freedom Day. We have organized several events and newsletters to examine freedom of information in the US, and to read the names of news people killed in the line of duty.

May 15, International Conscientious Objectors’ Day. This Day should be observed; maybe next year.

Last Friday in April, Arbor Day (different dates by states)

June 4, UN International Day of Innocent Children, Victims of Aggression

June 5, UN World Environment Day


June 15-23, Human Costs of Military Toxics Week.

June 19, Juneteenth. A day to celebrate not only freedom from slavery for U.S. African-Americans, but for all people. In Fayetteville the Day has the attention of several groups on and off campus.

June, Gay Pride Week. A strong LGBTQ org. exists in Fayetteville.

September 1, Labor Day, for jobs, fair wages, health benefits, right to organize. Newsletter. Unions are very week in Arkansas.

September 12, Interdependence Day (www.civworld.org)

September 17, Constitution Day. For the past 3 years OMNI has celebrated this Day with a special newsletter.

September 21, International Day of Peace, Celebration of Peacemakers. We have paid special attention to this Day, marking it in diverse ways over the years: a press conference at City Center next to the city’s Peace Prayer Fountain with church leaders speaking; international flags around the Fayetteville Square; sidewalk silent vigil with placards; and more.

September 25-October 2, Banned Books/Freedom to Read Week: OMNI has initiated activities and participated in others for a decade; e.g. roundtables on banned books at public library.

Sept. 25-Oct. 2, Keep Space for Peace Week: For almost a decade OMNI has sponsored a variety of programs during this week, including bringing Bruce Gagnon to Fayetteville.

October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Several organizations in NW Ark. Focus on this subject.

October 1, International/World Vegetarian Day

October 1-7, International Vegetarian Week: Many in peace movement consider Vegetarianism fundamental
to peace, justice and ecology, for its positive effects in ethics, nutrition, and checking global warming. Vegetarianism is at the heart of resistance to both wars and warming.

October 2, International DAY of Nonviolence (Gandhi’s BirthDAY). We have shown Attenborough’s film “Gandhi.” This is one of the DAYS we need to accentuate more.

Universal Children’s DAY, Oct. 4


World Food DAY, Oct. 16. These two DAYs we have affirmed once by a newsletter and generally by supporting local food and community gardens. OMNI also has a Home Peace Places Network many of which are vegetable gardens.

United Nations DAY, October 24 (UN Charter became binding treaty): OMNI has celebrated this day for seven years by sponsoring notable speakers, including the president of the Central Ark. Chapter of UN/USA.

October 28, National Immigrants’ DAY

November, American Indian Heritage MONTH

International DAY for Tolerance, Nov. 16

International DAY to End Violence Against Women, Nov. 25

Buy Nothing DAY, Nov. 26

International DAY of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Nov. 29

Human Rights DAY, Dec. 10: Ever since OMNI’s beginning we have celebrated this DAY, with events of various kinds, including music/readings at the local bookstore.

Bill of Rights DAY, Dec. 15: OMNI has cooperated with the local chapter of the ACLU to celebrate this DAY, sometimes at the home of a member for a talk and dinner. Occasionally we have combined the two DAYS.

If we listed all the possibilities for reinforcing peace, justice, and environmental values, we would be commemorating, that is reinforcing, at least one DAY in every month.

B. Transforming

A more complex initiative directly challenges the conditioning of the public to accept violence and wars through the many patriotic days. The UN initiative called the International Culture of Peace Decade (2000-2010) attempted to define the Culture of War and the Culture of Peace and move away from a war culture to a peace culture.

But we cannot make this change so long as we celebrate the myths represented by the US official ceremonial Days, many of which directly support wars and preparations for wars.

George Orwell wrote in 1984: "Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became the truth”—for example, that wars are inevitable, that our species is inherently violent, that the US makes mistakes but is mainly benign. Much of
the peace movement’s work in building a Culture of Peace involves the struggle to reinforce peaceful values despite the pervasive repetition of numerous nationalistic myths. In behavioral psychology, we are what we do. Most of the public accepts the messages of special Days (Daze?) and holidays that promote the US Security State, because they don’t see it (we’re not Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union), and anyway overwhelming military force is necessary for our security, never mind it was we who have attacked other nations, and since the War of 1812 have been attacked by another nation only one more time at Pearl Harbor 1941.

Here are some of the Days we must transform, if we are to counter the myths that enable such military expenditure and worldwide intervention.

Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14

President’s Day, Feb. 15. The rise of presidential and decline of congressional power reached it apex under President George W. Bush, who is guilty of war crimes and is impeachable by a dozen articles, and President Obama has not repudiated most of those powers.

May 1, Law DAY. The purchase of Congress by corporations to make laws favorable to corporations has become another great catastrophe endangering our democracy.

First Thursday of May, National DAY of Prayer. Our alternative should be DAY of Prayer by People of All Faiths.

2nd Sunday of May, Mother’s DAY for Peace: The present Mother’s Day is another national day commodified for business profit. For six years we have celebrated the anniversary of Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day for Peace, by a luncheon or newsletter.

Memorial DAY, last Monday in May, formerly Decoration Day, a US holiday in remembrance of members of US armed forces killed in wars. It is time we offered an alternative—the most obvious possibility being all people killed in war.

June 14, Flag DAY. Traditionally a day of patriotic emotion. We can offer alternatives for world peace.

June 15, Father’s DAY. Nothing yet. Like we are doing with Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day regarding the role of women in the world, we could help redefine masculinity on this day for peace and justice.

July 4, Independence DAY. We have published an occasional newsletter suggesting alternative ways to celebrate Independence DAY: What should we celebrate? Declaration of Independence and empire? Or
declaration of *Inter*dependence?  Earth Charter?  Resistance and Liberation today?  Patriotism.? Nationalism.?  Democracy?  Wars?  Pacifism?  Etc. The DAY is especially an opportunity each year to promote the value of freedom from oppression, for the people of the US, and for all people.

August 6 and 9, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Remembrance of Victims/Celebration of Peace Heroes: OMNI's oldest activity, begun in the 1970s by our predecessor Peace Organizing Committee. Each year we encourage people to think about the bombs and about air war: Were the bombs justified? What were the consequences globally up to today and projected into the future? For many years the event (walk, speakers, music) occurred at the Greek Amphitheater on campus of U of Arkansas; now it is held at the Fulbright Peace Fountain at the center of the campus.

2nd Monday in October, Indigenous People of the Americas DAY (Columbus Day): As of 2010 OMNI will have sponsored this event for six years in conjunction with UofA's Native American Symposium Committee. Our annual event has grown significantly into a half-day remembrance: a film at UA, readings from accounts of the Trail of Tears and talk also at UA, Walk to Trail of Tears Monument, Ceremony. Read the opening chapter on Columbus in Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

9-11/Patriot Day/Peaceful Tomorrows DAY. Following 9-11, another kind of immense explosion instantly occurred, characterized by xenophobia, patriotism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, chauvinism, and exceptionalism. Because 9-11 was employed by the Bush Administration to so horrendously escalate the so-called “War on Terrorism” as part of the 70-year-old US permanent war, asserting an alternative is particularly important. President Bush named 9-11 “Patriot Day.” In search of the criminals behind 9-11 he invaded the entire country of Afghanistan, and then invaded Iraq, began bombing Pakistan, and the cowed Congress passed the “Patriot Act” ostensibly to apprehend terrorists but in effect to restrict dissent. But we have living alternatives. Following 9-11, the September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows asked our leaders not to order our troops to engage in retaliatory war, but to consider the consequences both to our troops and to the civilian “enemies.” They cried out for international law, negotiation, and reconciliation. (See OMNI's 2009 Newsletter on 9-11/Patriot Day/Peaceful Tomorrows for an extended statement.) In 2009 OMNI commenced its alternative to Patriot Day with *Peaceful Tomorrows DAY*. November 11, Veterans’ Day/Peaceful Tomorrows DAY. Our 2008 Newsletter is a large compilation of articles and bibliographies about illegal and ruinous US wars. Since then we have published less, but our intention to counter Veterans’ Day as a traditional day to reinforce patriotism remains the same. And other mythical days into Memory DAYS:

**November 25 (Thanksgiving), International DAY to End Violence.**

**December 7, Pearl Harbor Day/Colonial War in the Pacific Confronts Japan and US.** Increasingly, historians have questioned the simple explanation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as a dastardly attack by Japanese imperialists; for example, Roland Worth, Jr.,’s *No Choice But War*. December 7 offers the peace movement a time to discuss the causes of the war in the Pacific and the causes of other wars, toward understanding better how to prevent them. OMNI issued a newsletter in 2008 elaborating these arguments. During the past two decades, the official, patriotic, illusory enthusiasm for US wars that has led to permanent war has received significant deflation.

**Conclusion**

When people ask, Aren’t they still digging our grave? We can reply: Nobody promised a
quick fix after 70 years of threat, fear, and hatred. When people ask, What can I do, what can one person do, to change the world from war to peace? We have one answer at least: We can reinforce a peaceful DAY or Change a warfare Day! Instead of digging graves, build a DAY.

When scoffers ask, what difference can we make? We can answer: we are engaged in a struggle with bullies over the meanings of our ceremonies and myths, and there is something we can accomplish. If it is true that the US warfare state—Corporation-Pentagon-Secrecy-Surveillance-Violence-White House-Congress-Mass Media-Permanent War—is a dominant system that filters through a thousand political and social capillaries of repetitive transmission, yet is not finished, not complete, we can counter it, point by point, place by place, day by day, niche by niche by concrete actions building a Culture of Peace inside the Culture of War.

We will be offering a model to the world, and sometimes models grab the world’s imagination.

And remember the subtitle of Gandhi’s autobiography: My Life of Experiments.

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OMNI’S MEMORY WHOLE Part II

CONTROL OF INFORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Publications by Dick (James R.) Bennett (not including book reviews), in Chronological Order.

Books

Only by deliberate effort can we separate ourselves from our culture in order to examine it.
Domination filters through thousands of capillaries of transmission.
475 entries on the USA.

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Journal, 4 (Fall 1982) 34-38.
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“The Future of Media Hegemony in the United States.” Human Energy Shaping
THREE CHRISTIANS

THREE CHRISTIAN FIGURES OF HOPE: DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, POPE JOHN XXIII, MURIEL MOORE

Thomas Cahill ends *Heretics and Heroes* with three Christians—a German Lutheran Protestant, an Italian Catholic, and a U.S. Episcopalian—who represent some of the best in Christianity.

“Christians must not only ‘bandage the victims under the wheel, but jam the spoke in the wheel itself.’” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, qtd. By Thomas Cahill, *Heretics and Heroes* (307, referring to Hitler’s Nazis).

Pope John XXIII believed that “Jesus cam to break down barriers [between people]; he died to proclaim universal brotherhood; the central point of his teaching is charity—that is, the love that binds all human beings to him. . . .” (308).

Muriel Moore organized free meals for the poor and treated all the same. “We
are all the same.’ That was Muriel’s credo.” (310). -- Dick

5 Reasons Why 2013 Was the Best Year in Human History
Zack Beauchamp, News Investigation, NationofChange, Dec. 12, 2013: Between the brutal civil war in Syria, the government shutdown and all of the deadly dysfunction it represents, the NSA spying revelations and massive inequality, it’d be easy to for you to enter next year thinking the last year has been an awful one. But you’d be wrong. We have every reason to believe that it was, in fact, the best year on the planet for humankind. Contrary to what you might have heard, virtually all of the most important forces that determine what make people’s lives good—the things that determine how long they live and whether they live happily—are trending in an extremely happy direction.

READ | DISCUSS | SHARE

Gandhi’s Hope: Learning from Other Religions as a Path to Peace (review) by Christopher Chapple

From: Buddhist-Christian Studies Volume 26, 2006

This book by prominent Protestant theologian Jay McDaniel suggests that Mahatma
Gandhi challenged the modern world by publicly revealing that which he learned from other faith traditions and advocating this path as a way for intercultural understanding. The wisdom of Gandhi holds special poignancy today, when the processes of globalization and migration have placed followers of different faiths in closer proximity than can be remembered in the past five hundred years.

Jay McDaniel writes with crisp clarity and organizes his insights into bite-sized pieces. He lays out five challenges that face all the world's faiths: compassion, self-criticism, simple living, ecological awareness, and welcoming religious diversity. In approaching this decidedly postmodern list of issues, McDaniel draws from two primary resources: the experiences shared by his students at Hendrix College and the writings of Alfred North Whitehead. Along the way, he invokes the Buddhist teacher and leader Thich Nhat Hanh and several progressive Catholics, including Sister Joan Chittester and theologians Hans Küng and Paul Knitter.

Continuing with a style developed in his earlier books, McDaniel latches onto a metaphor and extends it to illustrate his central point—in this case, the value of diversity. In past books, he has used the image of the hunter and the hunted to underscore the need to respect animals. In *Gandhi's Hope*, the metaphor he employs is that of a jazz concert, with all different manner of instruments pooling their resources to create a tapestry of diverse yet harmonious music.

Although the title of the book may seem to indicate that Gandhi will serve as the focus, in fact, Whitehead anchors McDaniel's approach. Through an updated approach to Whitehead, McDaniel seeks to answer the questions regarding diversity and compassion that he has posed. He suggests that an experience of concrescence will result in the sort of heightened awareness needed to increase one's conscience and to make the ethical changes needed to respond to the current state of the world. McDaniel identifies twelve "planks" that will usher Whitehead's vision into the contemporary world. These twelve aspects seem also to be heavily influenced by McDaniel's own encounter with Buddhism: interdependence, impermanence, indeterminism, mind/matter, deep listening, value, God, creativity, persuasive power, divine empathy, many forms of salvation, and life after death. These broad categories embrace key notions found in all religious traditions.

*Amy Goodman | Mandela: The Man and the Movement*

Amy Goodman, Op-Ed, NationofChange, Dec. 12, 2013: Nelson Mandela's passing last week at the age of ninety-five has been met with a global outpouring of remembrance and reflection. A giant of modern human history has died. Mandela is rightly remembered for his remarkable ability to reconcile with his oppressors and the political prescription his forgiveness entailed for the new South Africa. Mandela has passed, but what he has passed on to succeeding generations is his deep belief in the power of movements to make change. "When I walked out of prison,
that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both.

YES! MAGAZINE SUPPORTS BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD. Each issue focuses on a different theme. The Fall 2010 theme was:

A Resilient Community

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“The United States should know that the only people who can defeat the terrorists are the people themselves,” says the first Arab woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

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In New Orleans, Kindness Trumped Chaos by **Rebecca Solnit**. *Yes! Magazine (Fall 2010).*


**Lessons of dedication, solidarity, love, and recovery, five years after Katrina.**

The taxi driver called me “girlfriend” and “sweetheart” with the familiar sweetness of New Orleanians, so I figured I could ask a few personal questions. He was from the Lower Ninth Ward, one of the neighborhoods inundated by Katrina—a mostly poor, mostly black edge of the city isolated and imperiled by two manmade canals—and it had taken him three and a half years to return to New Orleans. He still wasn’t in his neighborhood, but he was back in the city, and his family was back, and they were determined to come back all the way.
What happened in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is more remarkable than almost anyone has told. More than a million volunteers came to New Orleans to gut houses, rebuild, and stand in solidarity with the people who endured not just a hurricane but a deluge of Bush Administration incompetence and institutionalized racism at all levels of government, which temporarily turned the drowned city into a prison. Supplies were not allowed in by a panicky government; people were not allowed out, and a wholly unnatural crisis ensued.

Even so, an astounding wave of solidarity and empathy arose. At Hurricanehousing.org more than 200,000 people volunteered to shelter evacuees, often in their own homes. And then there were those legions of volunteers, many of them white, working in a city that had been two-thirds black.

**A disaster is actually threatening to elites, not because the response is selfish but because it often unfolds like a revolution, in which the status quo has evaporated.**

I have again and again met passionate young activists who intended to come for a week or a month and never left. In the Lower Ninth, my taxi driver’s neighborhood, things looked better than even six months before. Brad Pitt’s Make It Right Foundation now has dozens of solar-powered homes, built on stilts for the next inundation, scattered across the lowlands of the neighborhood. New businesses have opened on St. Claude Avenue, the main thoroughfare, and children play in the once-abandoned streets.

It’s hard to say that there is a recipe for solidarity across race and class lines. During crises, the official reaction from government and media is often widespread fear—based on a belief that in the absence of institutional authority people revert to Hobbesian selfishness and violence, or just feckless conduct. Scholars Lee Clarke and Karon Chess call this fear of the public, particularly the poor and nonwhite public, “elite panic.” Because these “elites” shape reaction as well as opinion, their beliefs can be deadly.

**But the truth is that most people are altruistic, resourceful, and constructive during crisis. A disaster is actually threatening to elites, not because the response is selfish but because it often unfolds like a revolution, in which the status quo has evaporated.**

Civil society improvises its own systems of survival—community kitchens, clinics, neighborhood councils, and networks of volunteers and survivors—often decentralized and deeply empowering for the individuals involved. What gets called recovery can constitute the counter-revolution—the taking back of power.

Perhaps the biggest question for a disaster like Katrina is to what extent this transformed sense of self and society lasts and matters: Can it be a foundation for a stronger civil society, more solidarity, and grassroots power? It has been so in many ways in New Orleans, with
groups like the Common Ground Clinic—a free health clinic that was started days after the hurricane and is still going strong five years later.

One important tool for future disasters, and social change in the absence of disaster, is simply knowledge of what really happened: how many people in the hours, days, weeks and months after Katrina behaved with courage, love, and creativity, and how much they constituted the majority response. Such human capacities can be an extraordinary resource not just in crisis but in realizing our dearest hopes for a stronger society and more meaningful lives.

What gets called recovery can constitute the counter-revolution—the taking back of power.

Katrina is hardly a happy story. More than 1,600 people died. The racism on the part of the media, the authorities ready to believe any rumor, and the vigilantes who took it upon themselves to regard any black man as a looter and to administer the death penalty for these imagined minor property crimes were a reminder of how ugly this country can be and how much remains to be done. The city used the disaster as an excuse to shut down most of the public housing even though much of it was undamaged and intact housing was desperately needed.

Poverty continues, and so does racism; the South did not stop being the South or America America. And the BP spill menaces the region in a way that is even more ominous than Katrina. The hurricane was after all a kind of event that has come ashore for tens of thousands of years, and when it was over people could rebuild. What can be done to ameliorate the spill is still a mystery, and the coastal edge of Louisiana, with its diverse fishing and foraging cultures and its abundance of wildlife, is poisoned.

Read an excerpt from Rebecca Solnit's latest book: *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster*.

New Orleans will never be quite the city it was. People there lost what many of us have not had for generations: deep roots in place, a strong sense of culture, and an intricate web of social ties to family and community, whether it’s a church, Mardi Gras krewe, musical group, black social aid and pleasure club, or neighborhood group. Much was reclaimed; many returned, but some did not or cannot.

The taxi driver took us to the New Orleans Convention Center, where so many people, mostly African American, had been stranded in the days after Hurricane Katrina. But that day in July, it was hosting the Essence Festival, a black music festival at which tens of thousands of
people in summer splendor circulated. Among the mix of booths were several from organizations founded during the weeks and months after the storm but still going strong.

Traveling through a vibrant New Orleans not quite five years after the city was pronounced dead means understanding what dedication, will, solidarity, and love can achieve. This year of disasters—the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, the volcano in Iceland, the spill in the Gulf, the floods and heat waves and droughts and rising waters—remind all of us that we are entering an era where disaster will be common and intense. Survival will be grounded in understanding our own capacity for power and resilience, creativity, and solidarity.

{The book Shock Doctrine offers a contrasting picture of corporate exploitation of catastrophes. –Dick)

Rebecca Solnit wrote this article for A Resilient Community, the Fall 2010 issue of YES! Magazine. Rebecca is the author of twelve books, including A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster and Hope in the Dark.

Header photo by N. Krebill

Welcome to Peace News, the newspaper for the UK grassroots peace and justice movement. We seek to oppose all forms of violence, and to create positive change based on cooperation and responsibility. See more

“Peace News has compiled an exemplary record... its tasks have never been more critically important than they are today.” Noam Chomsky

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Rebecca Solnit, 'Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities'

Review by Theresa Wolfwood

Nation Books, 2004; ISBN 1 5602 5828 4; £8; 182pp

“It’s always too soon to go home. And it’s always too soon to calculate effect.” Activists who feel despondent and or just plain tired will read this book and take heart in our work and find purpose in the creative search for a better world. Solnit believes we’ve had many successes; we can and should rejoice - and then carry on. [See Solnit’s A Paradise Built in Hell in Hope Newsletter #3. –Dick]

“I once read an anecdote by someone in Women Strike for Peace, the first great antinuclear movement in the United States, the one that did contribute to a major victory: the 1963 end of aboveground nuclear testing with its radioactive fallout that was showing up in mother’s milk and baby teeth. She told of how foolish and futile she felt standing in the rain one morning protesting at the Kennedy White House. Years later she heard Dr Benjamin Spock - one of the most high-profile activists on the issue then - say that the turning point for him was seeing a small group of women standing in the rain, protesting at the White House. If they were so passionately committed, he thought, he should give the issue more consideration himself.”

This is one of Solnit's many stories of the unforeseen effect of activism - the work for peace and justice - and it sets the tone for her passionate commitment to a life of social action.

Her social history of the successes of social movements and their unpredictability give great hope to us all. She uses many well-known and some obscure examples to make her point: the possibilities of sustained social action, the results we dream of are what make it possible for us to find joy, purpose and creativity in our lives, and that by recognising our successes we don't quit, but find strength to continue.

I looked a bit askance at the chapter heading “A Dream Three Times the Size of Texas”, and then found it was about indigenous peoples, including the formation of Nunavut, the Inuit
homeland, formerly part of the North-West Territories of Canada. It covers one-fifth of Canada and represents a major accomplishment for the Arctic indigenous people who were decimated by first contact with the Europeans and then had to resist assimilation into the dominant culture. Like the Mayan leader, Rigoberta Menchu, Solnit sees the resurgence of indigenous populations in Canada and around the world as a source of great hope to us all when we consider that historians predicted the obliteration of indigenous culture by the end of the 20th century. She asks, “How do you measure the space between a shift in cultural conversation and a landmass three times the size of Texas?” We can't measure but we can certainly recognise and learn from this wild possibility that became a reality.

She details the progress of the resistance to the World Trade Organisation since 1999, as social movements give information and encouragement to many governments to stand up against the bullies of the world. The resistance to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1996-1998 and the failure of that agreement formed the basis of wild possibility in Seattle, Cancun and now Hong Kong - the latest WTO fiasco.

In Solnit's hometown of San Francisco, USA, there are murals of social leaders, a statue of Bolivar, and a starting place for rallies and demonstrations at Market Square where the UN Charter was born. She says, “...for now this is a place where history is still unfolding. Today is also the day of creation.”

Read this book, take heart, take comfort and stand together in all social action. We make history and change history as we stand; the results are for future historians to record. We will have to make sure they are not untold; we need more activist historians everywhere like Solnit to illuminate our activism.


The experiences of our ancestors offer us wisdom for surviving today's crises.
Beginning in 2004, the Norwegian government and a group of international agricultural research organizations decided to invest in an idea they hoped would help humanity endure big future unknowns. It’s called the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Nicknamed the Doomsday Vault, it sits inside a mountain on an Arctic archipelago and contains the seeds of more than half a million of the world’s crop varieties—in case civil strife, natural disasters, climate change, or other calamities destroy local and regional seed stocks.

The vault’s contents represent a fraction of the results of one of humanity’s greatest endeavors, thousands of years of agriculture, but key ingredients are missing—the values, knowledge, creativity, tenacity, and endurance that motivated people to maintain and propagate millions of plant varieties. It’s that kind of wisdom that has, as importantly as the actual seeds, allowed cultures to endure and innovate over the course of millennia.

Much of that knowledge is disappearing, either because of the spread of consumer culture or because of the increasing loss of cultural and linguistic diversity. But a wealth of life-affirming knowledge and wisdom can still be found in stories—that is, in the cultural and family stories we may have learned as children or that were shared across generations. These stories can provide lessons to help us weather the unknown with our kindness and benevolence intact.

Stories, I’d argue, can help us to become resilient people.

"Our stories tell us that we didn’t become real human beings until we became communities, until the welfare of the whole became more important than the welfare of the individual."

When I realized, through my work as a futurist, that the global economy and climate were on an unpredictable path, I began searching for stories, personal and cultural, that can encourage all of us to band together and work in service of the common good as the civilized world runs up against ecological limits.

Through this process, I had the good fortune to meet some remarkable people whose oral histories go back thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of years.

**Adapting to the Changing Climate**

Today, we’re already witnessing major shifts in our climate, and greenhouse gases that
industrial nations have pumped into the atmosphere guarantee that we’ll see more change in our lifetimes, even if the world makes a transition away from fossil fuels. It’s hard to imagine what such a massive upheaval of our weather patterns will look like.

But some cultures have stories about change that occurred long ago. According to George Edwardson, 63, president and elder of the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope in Alaska, elders in his community retain an oral history across a period of “seven ice ages” (up to 350,000 years), when the regional landscape underwent dramatic climate changes that, in turn, affected the human experience.

Iñupiat stories explain how communities got through this hardship and change. Victoria Hykes Steere, an Iñupiaq human rights advocate, recounts:

“Our world was green and then it snowed. It was warm and then it got cold. The few who didn’t die worked together. Snow and ice taught us to be human and think beyond our individual selves. In our legends and our history, snow and ice made us better people and led us to use our minds.

Our stories tell us that we didn’t become real human beings until we became communities, until the welfare of the whole became more important than the welfare of the individual.

We learned from the animals, such as the wolves, to see how they took care of each other.

Hykes Steere’s people are already suffering as warming temperatures break up the permafrost and literally melt the ground beneath their homes. The cost of relocating Alaska Native communities, according to Hykes Steere, has been estimated at between $100 million and $300 million per village.

Furthermore, spikes in the cost of electricity are forcing many Alaskan Natives to go without light or heat during winter evenings, so they can use the little money they have to procure enough food.

“We’re being hit hard now with climate impacts,” says Hykes Steere. “Now with the Bering Strait opening up because of melting Arctic ice, industrial shipping and fishing are additional threats to our food sources.”

Though the situation is grave, Hykes Steere’s family stories remind her how to find strength:

“We do not control the environment, but we do control how we respond. … My grandmother said that when you lose hope, you lose everything.”
My grandfather used to tell me I could keep certain sunrise moments alive in my memory. My grandfather trained me to look for moments when I was seeing something that would some day help me to remember the goodness.

He taught me to keep them vivid—smell them, taste them, and see them—so that when things got really bad, I could go back there. I remember the first time I did that, there were a bunch of moments that meant nothing to anyone else where the world was filled with beauty.

When things get really bad, I go into those moments … and I’m okay.

To help us carry on as economic and ecological conditions continue to deteriorate, more of us may need to draw on vivid memories of unspeakable beauty.

Writing Visions of Hope: Teaching Twentieth-Century American Literature and Research


This nine-chapter book narrates a writing-centered approach to the teaching of literature and literary research. As the title suggests, the book also embraces a thematic approach to reading and writing about twentieth-century American literature, focusing on the grounds for hope in an age of despair.

The first five chapters explore in detail the teaching of the twentieth-century American literature course at the University of Pristina in Kosovo, where the author served as Fulbright Professor of American Literature in the spring semester of 2012. Throughout, these chapters narrate students’ in-class interactions to illustrate writing-to-learn strategies for teaching the literature. Chapter six then follows the same cohort of 22 students as they learned to ground their literary research in their own questions about American and Balkans narratives of oppression and liberty, of despair and hope.
The last three chapters document the responses of students and their professors to this American theme of liberty and hope as seen through the Balkans lenses of ethnic violence and emerging republican government. Specifically, chapter seven focuses on students’ participation in a blog featuring Balkans literature that explores the same issues of liberty and justice examined in the American literature they have read. Chapter eight then celebrates student writing, the fruit of the writing-to-learn strategies narrated in earlier chapters. Finally, chapter nine narrates professors’ and students’ responses, gathered through surveys and interviewing, to questions about their country’s violent past and the value of literary study in preparing citizens to shape a new republic.

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Heroes

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Power of Hope

Peace Symbol

William Faulkner

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Blog:  http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

For research purposes, specific subjects can be located in the following alphabetized index, and searched on the blog using the search box. The search box is located in the upper left corner of the webpage.


See Index to OMNI Newsletters: activism, compassion, cooperation, ecology heroes, Gandhi, justice, King, liberalism, Nobel Peace Prize, nonviolence, peace heroes, progressivism, resistance….
END HOPE NEWSLETTER #4

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Dick Bennett

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