



VOLUNTOWN PEACE TRUST

~ A support base for social change ~

NEWSLETTER ~ SUMMER 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dear VPT Friends,

I hope you are all enjoying a fruitful summer. We certainly are here at the Peace Farm. Our May Annual Meeting brought four new people on to the Board – Nadesha Mijoba, Caroleen Frey, Karen Colberg and Nancy MacBride – who you will meet in the pages of this newsletter. It is a very exciting group of people to work with and I am inspired by their new ideas and fresh perspectives. I want to pay a special tribute to those who stepped down off the Board – Marisol Reyes-Hernandez and James MacBride – thank you for the work you have contributed to VPT these last few years; we couldn't have done without you. I also want to acknowledge our temporary Facilities Manager, Nancy Yankiewicz, who has been with us since the beginning of the year, for being the wonderful, welcoming face of VPT. It is a vibrant time of continuity and change: the Land Stewardship Program team continues to make the organic garden lush and productive and have created a special garden to honor peace-maker Cal Robertson; the Hartford Catholic Worker are finishing up another successful summer camp for Hartford kids and teens; the Cooperative for Nonviolent Action team have gathered folks together who are interested in skills-sharing on environmentally sustainable ways of living (or Transition Towns as the broader movement is known); the Popular Education Resource Center is slowly being established: we have been building relationships with other popular educators on nonviolent social change, and focusing on strategies to counter community violence and built alliances across social justice movements. The VPT peace and nonviolence library has expanded enormously, and the next project is to rehouse and reorder this collection. As always, there is plenty of work to be done. If these projects interest you, please consider becoming a member.

Peace and solidarity,
 Cybèle Locke, VPT Board Chair

A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.

~ Mohandas Gandhi

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NEW VOLUNTOWN PEACE TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

Caroleen Frey Caroleen Frey was introduced to VPT Board President Cybele Locke through a mutual friend when VPT was looking for someone to help out with financial management, as Caroleen has a Master' Degree in accounting and over 20 years experience in not-for-profit accounting. The mission and goals of VPT resonate with her, so she took up Cybele's offer for her to join the board. Caroleen has studied yoga and meditation, and has completed a 200 hour yoga teacher training program. Caroleen is an avid gardener and bicyclist, and is concerned about issues of peace and sustainability in our society.



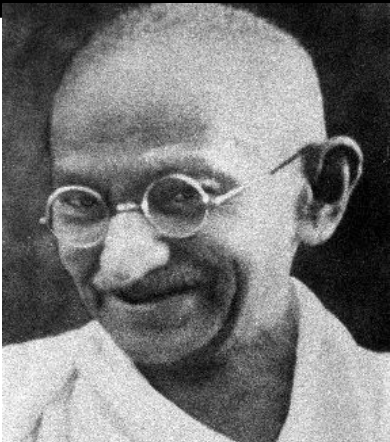
Karen Colberg lives in Exeter, RI and drove by VPT for years on her way to work as a school nurse in Plainfield. Drawn to the peaceful house on the hill and surrounding farmland, she is grateful to be part of something real and wonderful that has so much potential to be a haven for sustainable living and harmony. Karen has been a pediatric nurse for decades. She volunteers with Southern RI Volunteers, Meals on Wheels, the Exeter Historical Association, and the South County Art Association. Karen is a local activist for 350.org and believes we must do all we can to save our earth before it's too late. New 'grandmotherhood' has helped her see the urgency of preventing further climate change.



Nancy MacBride is a neighbor of VPT and a friend of "the farm" since the 1990's. She has received awards and grants as an artist and educator. Nancy has served on many professional, church and VPT committees. As the art educator at Voluntown's Public School she is a link between VPT and local residents. She enjoyed organizing three art exhibits at VPT, bringing many locals to the property for the first time. Nancy considers herself a student of peace and social justice and is thankful for the opportunities to learn through and serve VPT.



Nadesha Mijoba is the founding President of Mijoba Communications, a full-service cultural and linguistic competence-consulting firm. Ms. Mijoba has worked extensively with community-based organizations to engage culturally diverse individuals and develop communication programs, social marketing campaigns, and educational/informational programs that appeal to people based on their unique cultural orientation and preferences. Ms. Mijoba is also the founder of Provenance Center, a community-based cultural competence center and gallery located in New London, Connecticut. Provenance Center is a forum for cultural awareness, creating community involvement, appreciation and connectedness. Nadesha was drawn to VPT because its work is based on non-violent strategies as pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi, which are designed to absolutely refuse to be drawn into violent confrontation – which requires tremendous courage and self-control.



GANDHI GALA AND SILENT AUCTION ~ Saturday October 1st

On Saturday October 1st, the Voluntown Peace Trust will host our second annual Gandhi Gala fundraising dinner with a silent auction, in celebration of the birthday of Mohandas Gandhi, the father of non violent collective action.

Tickets are \$40.00 each and include an Indian dinner, dessert, and non-alcoholic beverages. Feel free to bring your own wine selection. For tickets, contact Fundraising Committee members Alice Leibowitz (860-956-9299, aliceactivist@gmail.com) or David Opperman (860-564-1977, opperman77@gmail.com). Space is limited!

CLIMATE SUMMER RIDERS ROLL INTO VPT



Members of the Connecticut-Rhode Island team of Climate Summer, a network-building effort of the Better Future Project, rolled into the driveway at the Voluntown Peace Trust on July 19. Climate Summer riders travel exclusively by bicycle in small teams across New England, spending approximately one week in a community before biking on to the next. While in each town, riders connect with community leaders who are actively addressing society's addiction to fossil fuels by crafting local solutions that strengthen communities. Riders bring with them a movement-building perspective and ethos, empowering those they meet and helping to highlight the important work of local organizations. They publicize the information they learn through the local press and in their 2011 State of the Movement Report, which will catalogue the efforts of groups in all the communities the various teams visit. See www.climatesummer.com.

The cyclists helped VPT members and other volunteers with an on-going recycling project by taking apart discarded cable TV amplifiers that would otherwise be tossed away. Instead, the disassembled components were sorted, with the parts to be sold to scrap dealers to benefit the VPT. It is estimated that the pile of "junk" on the picnic table and the adjacent crates of parts will bring about \$200 to \$300. Most importantly, though, it will not end up in the landfill.

Following this project was a delicious pot-luck supper attended by about 30 earth-conscious folks who enjoyed presentations and discussions about VPT and our commitment to joining the cause of preventing climate change. The riders are cross-pollinating the ideas and workings of communities. After a late night campfire, the riders stayed in the Swann/Rachel Corrie House - a most welcome comfort after so many sleeping-bag nights. Their visit was truly a pleasure and inspiration.

The next day, the team cycled back to Westerly, where they met with Save the Bay staff, the remarkable TGIF (Turn Grease Into Fuel) project operated by middle-school students, and a number of other individuals and groups. A program at the Westerly Land Trust and another in Stonington highlighting Community Bike-sharing in Mystic and other alternative energy projects rounded out their visit, and all came about as a direct result of our CNVA networking meeting in May! (Follow their progress on the CT-RI team blog at www.climatesummer.net).

COOPERATIVE FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION

The Cooperative for Nonviolent Action (CNVA) is a recent incarnation of an older organization – the Committee for Nonviolent Action – that began organizing in Southeastern Connecticut fifty years ago.

The CNVA member-groups promote nonviolence through education, training, conferences and retreats. In addition to opposing nuclear weapons, the Committee actively worked in opposition to war and racial injustice, and for economic justice and a healthy environment. This past year the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence joined the 3 initial groups organizing CNVA – the War Resisters League, Westerly Friends and the Southeastern Connecticut Peace and Justice Network's Friends of VPT. A highlight of the year was the 50th anniversary reunion. Events organized by Joanne Sheehan brought nearly 50 activists "home" to recognize the CNVA of the past and inspire future work. Videos and slides, books and photos, public programs and informal conversations were all reminders of the important contributions the Committee for Nonviolent Action has made to the nonviolent movement. CNVA groups also organized the Friendly Arts Fair and the Peace Walker Program in October. War Resister's League conducted their first popular education workshop, Movement Building for Allies Training.

SEPTEMBER 24-25: ABC'S OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND THIRD ANNUAL FRIENDS FALL FAIR

~ Ambulating, Bicycling & Carpooling

~ Acoustic music-making, Building a movement, Cooking without gas

LIVE LIGHTLY, SIMPLY, SUSTAINABLY FOR JUST ONE DAY. Our third annual Friends Fun(d)raising Fair for the VPT Farm once again ties in with the 350.org global event: **“Moving Planet: A worldwide rally to move away from fossil fuels.** “Come on a bike, on skates, on a board, or on foot (...or simply carpool). Come with your neighbors, your friends, your family, your co-workers. Be a part of something huge. It's time to get moving on the climate crisis.” Bring an instrument that doesn't require electricity (or learn to play one of ours), a local vegetable for Stone Soup, a poem to share by the fire, or a donation to help save the Peace Farm for another year.

SEPTEMBER 24: Bikers and walkers and others who want to “Move the Planet” with the rest of the world: Come anytime and enjoy the woods, meadows, and historic context. Call VPT to reserve a bed or a camping spot and join us around the campfire Saturday night. Bring something to share or help prepare something from the garden. There could be special people, films, or projects...stay tuned at www.voluntownpeacetrust.org.

SEPTEMBER 25:

10 AM Sunday morning try a silent meeting with Westerly Quakers and/or help with the garden or the set-up for the Fair... All outdoors, weather permitting.

12-5PM Annual Friends Fun(d)-raising Fair with more music, playing, eating, and dancing. Rain or Shine. For more information, contact Jane Johnson at jamc@comcast.net.

EARTH TRANSITION



In May the *Cooperative for Non Violent Action* (cnva) called together a meeting of about 25 people interested in planning a VPT-based initiative along the lines of NW Earth Institute and “Transition Town” programming, trainings, networking, and/or sustainability projects in response to Peak Oil, Climate Change, and the global economy – the work the Peace Farm has done for 50 years. For this first meeting, we invited Rebekah Greenwald of Northwest Earth Institute-RI to introduce the NWEI videos and reading materials available for study groups, and we devoted ample time to hearing each other share interests, visions, and work, including issues of co-housing, CSA farming, and fossil fuel alternatives to activist organizations such as 350.org and New England Climate

Summer. The participants came from communities such as Providence, Hartford, Massachusetts, and Mansfield, CT. A second “Earth Transition” gathering came together in July, when we welcomed a team of Climate Summer students biking through CT and RI. See *Climate Cyclers* article, page 3.

Next Steps: Look for a survey as CNVA considers how best to meet the needs of the various groups and ventures already underway in local communities.

LAND STEWARDSHIP: SUMMER 2011 ~ CALL TO ACTION

As we treasure these acres of earth that are home to the Voluntown Peace Trust, we Land Stewards have been busy tending the ever-growing organic gardens. Though our intent was to “downsize” for lack of more helping hands, we seem to be utilizing the same amount of space, if not more, than last year.

And so the harvest begins. We are offering our produce at an “honor system stand” beside the farmhouse on weekends. Look for the “veggies” sign out front and come on in. Besides this meager income, we are selling some of our wholesome goods to Claudia's, a restaurant in Voluntown that supports local farmers. We also appreciate the support of two of our own members who own Pacifeast Caterers. Any proceeds from these sales go toward our commitment to VPT's mortgage and to fund next year's garden start-up. We are pleased to continue to donate many pounds of food to the Norwich Soup Kitchen and local food banks.

The Cal Robertson Peace Garden is nearing completion within the old barn foundation. Here you'll find many flowers and herbs to enhance a meditative soul. The dedication of this garden will be Saturday, September 10,

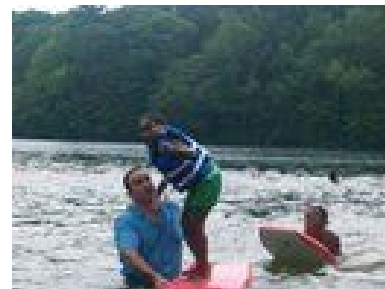
at 3:30 p.m. Cal has been invited to join us in honoring his witness for peace.

The land stewards recently received a most welcome grant from The Green Leaf Foundation to support our sustainable agriculture goals. This spring we moved and reconstructed the greenhouse and invested in needed materials and supplies. We are pursuing efficient means for rainwater harvesting and transport. Although our focus thus far has been on vegetables and herbs, we look ahead to our long-term goals of reclaiming all of the 57 acres of land entrusted us. This includes the old apple orchards and wells. We endeavor to create more walking trails and are working toward ridding the farm of known invasive plant species. We are members of NOFA and have taken the “Farmer's Pledge”. www.ctnofa.org

We need people power in the gardens to weed and harvest. We seek ideas and solutions for renewable energy at the farm. As the former garden committee evolves into the VPT core program of Land Stewardship, we welcome anyone who shares the vision of sustainable organic agriculture. We endeavor to become a community resource for environmental enlightenment and peace.



The Hartford Catholic Worker's Camp Ahimsa for urban youth is the oldest and most established program at VPT. Camp Ahimsa is in full swing! Some of the children at camp this summer have never before been out of their neighborhood in Hartford. It was an incredible joy to be with them due to the many first time experiences associated with time outside of their inner-city neighborhood: a dark sky at night bursting with stars, swimming in a lake, riding on a boat and catching a fish, and walking barefoot in the woods on a fragrant bed of pine needles. The joyful exuberance of these young people is a reservoir of hope for humanity. The kids' appreciation for the older kids who serve as counselors, and their awe for the natural world reminds us of how we all depend upon one another and mother earth for our very survival.



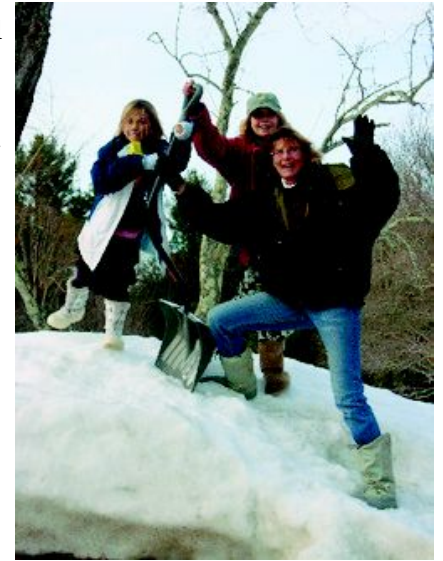
HERBIE DIAZ MEMORIAL CABIN

TEMPORARY FACILITY MANAGER



The **Herbie Diaz Memorial Cabin** was used this summer by The Hartford Catholic Worker. The cabin, designed by Voluntown resident Wayne Lachapelle, is located on the Ahimsa side of the property and is the first new building on VPT property in decades. Thank you to Wayne for supervising its construction. Thank you to the volunteers who donated money and time to build it. Herbie Diaz attended camp at VPT with the Hartford Catholic Worker for several years before he was murdered in Hartford in 2006.

Nancy Yankiewicz joined VPT in January of this year as the temporary caretaker for 2011 along with her daughters, Stella and Carissa and Sydney the dog. Their commitment to the mission of VPT is evident as they practice radical hospitality welcoming visitors and guests with open arms, lovingly caring for the facility, and sharing their passion for sustainability in the organic gardens and the rest of the property.



In realizing the VPT's use as an educational center, Nancy brings her love for and knowledge of the environment by teaching kids of all ages some of the different uses for the flora that graces the property.

If you wish to stop for a tour and a cuppa, call Nancy at (860) 376-9970

VOLUNTOWN PEACE TRUST

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