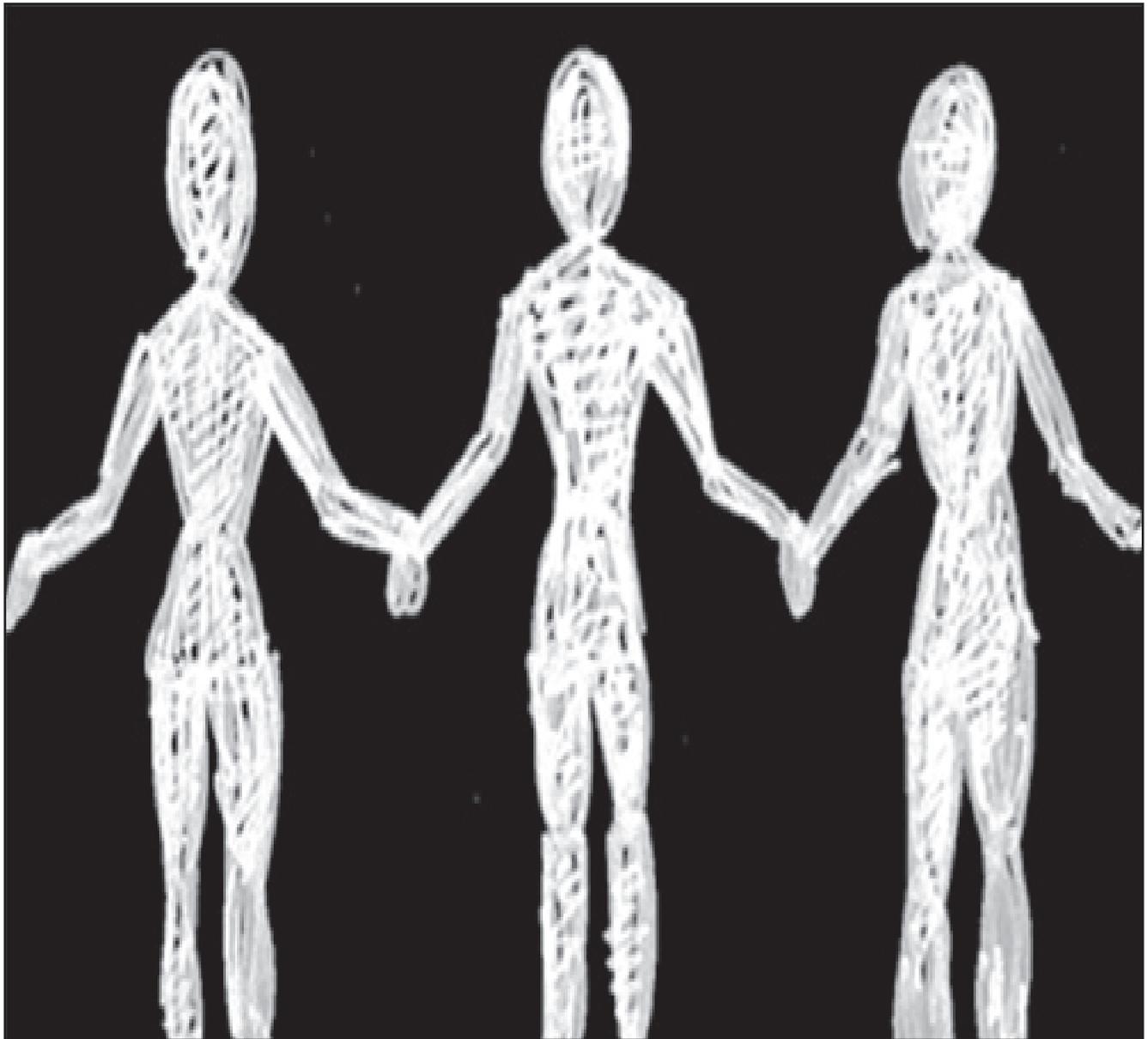


The Matrix

Pacific Lutheran University

May 2005



HOPE

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The Matrix is dedicated to the creation of a culture of ACTIVE conscience and consciousness in our communities to replace the current culture of fear and silence. To this end, *The Matrix* provides an outlet that engenders dialogue and fights dehumanization.

Prohibit sharply the
rehearsed response.
-W.H. Auden

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We must accept finite disappointment,
but we must never lose
infinite hope.
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

cover illustration by
Clare Charles

Paying Attention

by Alicia Batten

Illustration by Clare Charles

Dear Readers,

Everything is wrong. Just kidding. But sometimes we feel this way. As a publication that seeks honest conversation and positive change, we find ourselves wading through the ugliest, most discouraging topics. Ignorance. Corruption. Inequality. Injustice. Violence. Illness. Ambivalence. *Look at this! Something is wrong! Why can't we fix it?*

Many of our pages are filled with bad news. Our topics can feel depressing and unmanageable. So we decided to end the year with an issue on hope—a word *The Matrix* often leaves out. No matter who we are and what we're doing to improve our world, we won't get far without hope: a vision of what we want, along with the energy to realize it.

We asked PLU what gives us hope. Here are the results: a handful of stories about ideas, people and organizations that condense hope from an amorphous concept into a real, physical presence. *This is where social justice is happening.* Thank you for reading, and thank you for working to make things better.

Love, *The Matrix*

“Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

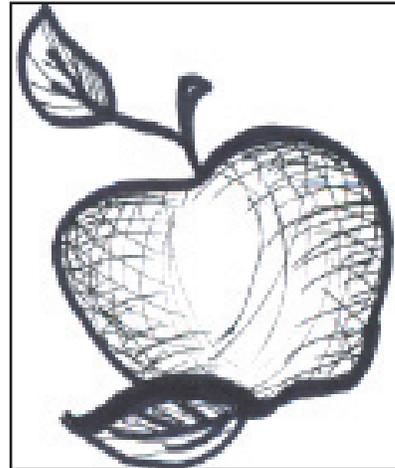
-Margaret Mead

As an undergraduate I had the good fortune to take classes from a political philosopher who, despite the fact that not many students could keep up with his lectures, would always attract a little coterie of young and eager disciples. Sometimes I joined this crew, and we would follow the professor back to his office after class, asking question after question (one time he even left class through the window in order to escape this band of groupies). I often think of this particular professor, and how, even though he doesn't know it, he had a profound impact upon my thinking and the direction I decided to take with my life. Why? I certainly did not clearly “get” everything he discussed throughout his lecture, and I still struggle with some of the concepts in his books. In fact, my best friend and I found ourselves discussing our fascination with this prof's seemingly endless straggly eyebrows which would move up and down, and incredibly *sideways*, as he wound his way through Aristotle, Nietzsche and Weber when we probably should have been focusing upon our reading and term papers.

What has this to do with peace, hope or social justice, the foci of this issue of *The Matrix*? For me, it highlights that if one wants to work for peace, or desires to bring social change of any kind, one requires some role models. At that point in my life, the professor in question was a crucial figure; like many of my friends, I was confused, somewhat angry and deeply anxious about my future and where I might find a place in the world. I didn't know much about this teacher's life, but it was very clear to me that he thought thinking about what it means to have a democratic society, or what it means to seek truth, or how one might seek to live a good life (not necessarily a comfortable life, but a *good* life), was absolutely imperative. For many of us, such passion and

commitment to thinking were infectious, and it validated the questions we were asking: questions often deemed idealistic or even irrelevant by the wider culture. Moreover, we knew that this great intellect had even entered the trench warfare of federal politics by running for office in a national election (he lost, but that is beside the point). Again, his example taught us that all the theory and books were not immaterial to the practical issues of creating a more just society; in fact, they were crucial for such work.

Thus, I echo many others who have expressed the need for examples of good people. Pierre Sauvage, the filmmaker who created the beautiful documentary detailing the story of the brave villagers of Le Chambon Sur Lignon, France, has said that such “heroes” (even though the *Chambo-*



nnais do not want to be known as heroes) are like banisters on a stairwell that many of us need to clamber through the perils and challenges of life. Of course we must read and study great figures of the past, but it is also important to notice that we have persons in our very midst, who with all of their imperfections, inspire us and push us to persevere.

Sometimes we may not even be fully aware that such people are close by. Unlike my former professor (who had our rapt attention,) I have had several people in my life that--sadly--I did not fully appreciate until they were no longer there. Upon reflection, such people have been as essential to my thinking about and working for peace as all my years of study. Thus, I want to send a small reminder that whether they are friends, teachers, relatives or strangers known only through the news, pay close attention to these lives. They are shaping and sustaining us so that we might do so for others.

It's All In How You Look At It

By Angee Foster

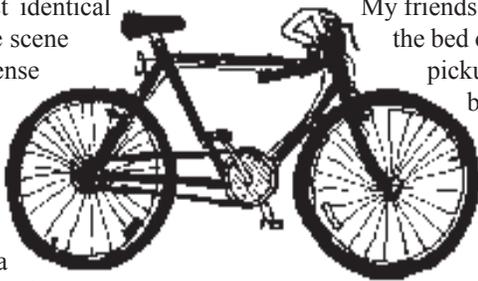
Looking down at Parkland from a single engine Cessna Skyhawk, 500 feet up in the air, the place really lives up to its name. Together, the gray roads in their uniform grid pattern, and the leafy trees in their neat squares create the bubbled texture of a soft quilt in varying greens. The peaks of rooftops, when they are visible, reach up to the sun, adding contrast to the pattern. It's seven square miles of quilted perfection with the finely detailed pattern of a well-kept university grounds at its center. In miniature and from above, each house looks almost identical to its neighbor. The scene gives a peaceful sense of orderliness.

Careening off the freeway into Parkland and onto Pacific Avenue, via an exit ramp that is curved too sharply, the scene is anything but orderly. There are no trees, or even bushes, to add color or uniformity to this trashy, loose, sidewalkless arterial that strays its bounds. It overruns the space where a curb and sidewalk should be, its pavement bleeding into parking lots, a ghastly sea of concrete, navigated by blowing bits of trash and larger vehicles spewing exhaust. The chaotic disarray of neon signs, metallic diner siding, and shabby billboards is overwhelming.

I have seen both views of Parkland because it is my hometown. Now, riding my bike through the neighborhood where I grew up, I pass by the corners where my bus stopped in elementary school. I can picture the faces of the kids who got on and off. Cecilia got off here, her black glossy braids swinging. Antonia got off

here. We played together in her yard once.

Children's voices, cracking in the higher octaves, unintelligible because of the lisp of childhood, bring me back to the present. "Touchdown!" rings clearly through the air and I realize before I see them that these kids must be playing football. I'm surprised, however, to see a young boy sprinting across a grassy yard cradling a soccer ball in his arms. I smile at the ingenuity of children, the limitless creativity that will allow any ball to fill in for a football. I think how I used to be that way.



My friends and I played "house" in the bed of my dad's orange Ford pickup, the big white toolbox that stretched across the bed serving as the stove.

Suddenly the smell of burning charcoal causes the back of my tongue to well up and my mouth to fill with saliva. A family—mother, father, and three little boys—on the front porch hovers like swarm of yellow jackets over the grill. A spatula winks as the meat is placed over the coals. Back yards are an unnecessary formality around here. I yell hello and they wave back.

As I pedal faster, the air pokes through the holes in my helmet, two cold stars on the top of my head. Picking up speed, breathing harder, the houses and cars begin to blur. The trashy front lawns strewn with bedraggled toys like weary grave markers, the broken-down cars that litter yards, the Halloween decorations that are up to soon and the Christmas decorations that have been up since last year become invisible as I speed along. I never really noticed them when I was little either. I'm looking at the quilt, one square at a time.

HF, BS & MWD

By Greta Jaeger

Four years ago my brother, now eighteen, gave my parents some words of advice as they headed off for a weekend of jollies with their old college friends. "Mom, Dad," my brother said half sarcastically, "have fun, be safe and make wise decisions." As for my parents, I'm sure they had a great weekend. As for our family as a whole, well, that advice has lived on.

Despite the simplicity of my brother's words, which have now been reduced to the abbreviation, HF, BS & MWD, they march on in a way that exemplifies their very meaning. Each time someone chants it, it is said with care, understood in seriousness and heard in humor. Having fun, being safe and making wise decisions has become a kind of glue that reminds my family that we're sticking together.

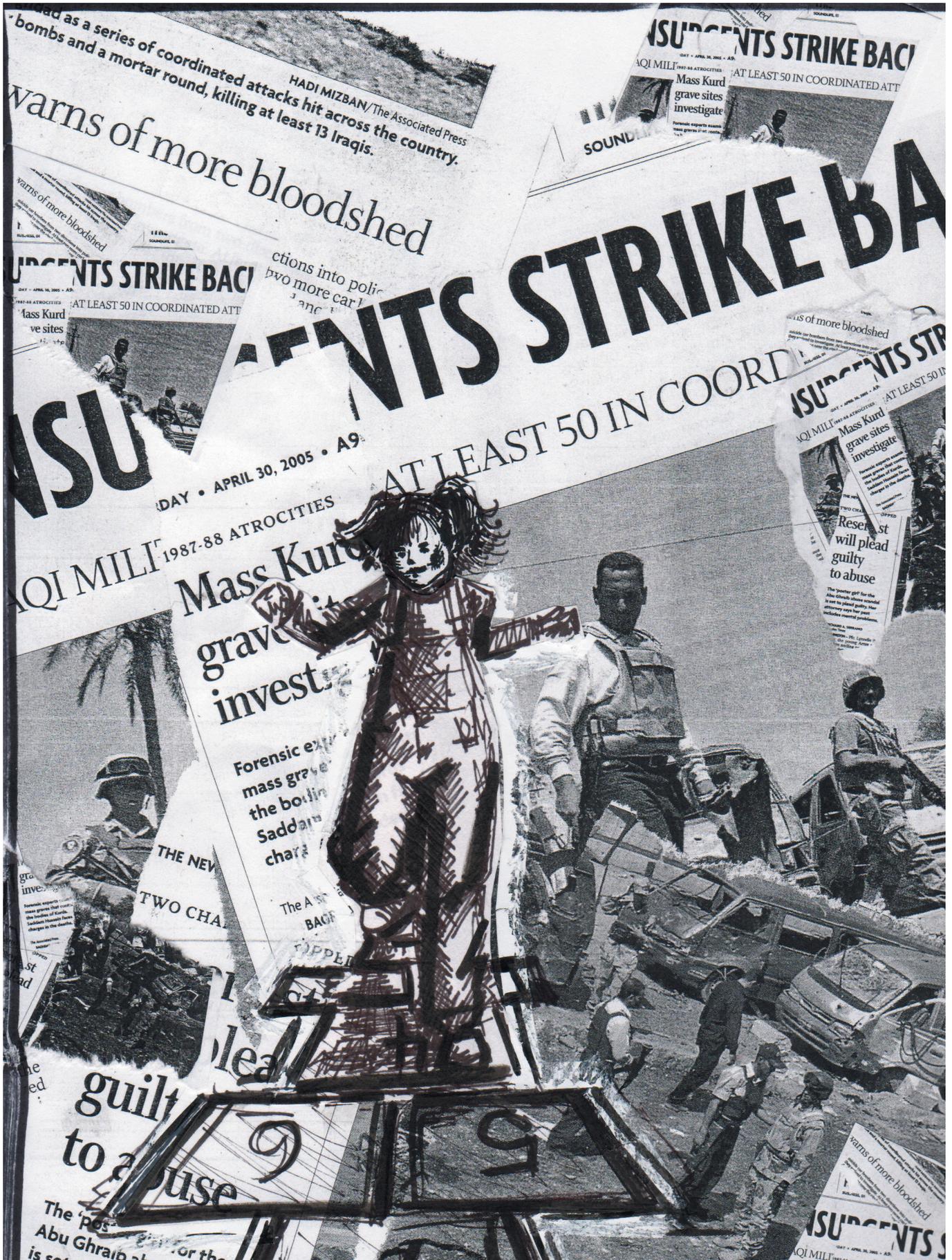
As each member of our four-person collage continues to bound off into new chapters of our lives, a simple phrase, reiterated, has grown into a message, a story, a motion, and a motto. (Maybe I'll make it into a T-Shirt.) But whether or not "have fun, be safe and make wise decisions" is going to become a campaign slogan or a nursery rhyme doesn't matter. What matters is that something so simple can become something bigger, create solidarity, unity, hope, happiness, laughter, communication and yes, peace.

**There's no such thing
as ordinary in the
world. Everybody is
extraordinary. And
everybody can do
something.**

Betty Williams, "ordinary housewife," founder of Northern Ireland Peace Movement, Nobel Laureate

We were quite different in education, lifestyle, and political convictions, but we were good neighbors.

-Gerda Lerner



art by Amanda Patton

Barefooting is not a crime

By Nathan Bendickson



Healthy feet can hear the very heart of Mother Earth ~Sitting Bull

“Barefoot? You must really have spring fever.”

“Hey, nice shoes. Oh wait.”

“Aren’t your feet cold?”

“Careful, there’s glass.”

“What kind of shoes are those?”

“Are you crazy?”

“Hey, you step on anything bad yet?”

“Dude, you lost your shoes.”

“Where are your shoes, hon?”

“You’re not wearing any shoes!”

“Do you go in bathrooms? Really?”

“Oh, it hurts to even look at your feet.”

“You could step on something!”

I never know what to say. Most people are surprised or mildly concerned. Some are dumbfounded or appalled. I want to explain that everything is okay. Bare feet pose no danger to either of us. But these encounters are always in passing, and before I can speak, we’ve gone our separate ways.

People notice feet. And often they disapprove. Whether it’s in the words themselves, or in their undertones, I hear, “You’re supposed to be wearing shoes.”

Am I? Why? Who says? I walk barefoot because it makes me happy. What’s wrong with that?

In *A Case for Bare Feet*,¹ Paul J. Lucas et al write, “Despite the fact that there are no laws or health department regulations against bare feet, barefooters are increasingly and unnecessarily being discriminated against, often in a hostile manner.” For a while I tried going barefoot in restaurants and other businesses, but I got weary of being asked to leave until I found proper footwear. When I stick to classrooms and residence halls I suffer only mild verbal abuse.

I also walk through our PLU library barefoot, but I worry somebody might stop me. Four years ago in Ohio, one Robert Neinast got evicted from the Columbus Metropolitan Library for going barefoot. On several previous occasions he had been asked to leave for not complying with library rules: PATRONS MUST WEAR SHOES. Neinast wrote a series of letters to the Board of Trustees, including one after the eviction. When the Board refused to reconsider the shoe policy, he sued the library, citing rights granted under the First, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments.

The court ruled in favor of the Board. The written opinion for *Neinast v. Board of Trustees of the Columbus Metropolitan Library* cites “the legitimate government interests of protecting public health and safety and protecting the Library’s economic well-being by seeking to prevent tort claims brought by library patrons who were injured because they were barefoot.”

Public health and safety? Tort claims? In this case, the library and the judge saw more than a pair of bare feet; they saw unreasonable risks to the well being of everybody; they saw a crime.

Who knew feet could be so dangerous? If we could, we would run and hide—but even that won’t save us from our feet and the things they carry around.

A Case for Bare Feet, written in part as a reaction to this court case, is thorough and hard to argue with. It illuminates the benefits of barefooting, and also exposes the flaws in pro-shoe arguments. For example, the public health and safety argument has no rational basis. Foot bacteria grow in hot, humid, poorly ventilated areas: shoes. The glands in our hands and feet are remarkably similar, which means feet stink or become

infected only when cooped up. Feet are in fact cleaner than shoes, as they get washed much more frequently.

The liability argument is also overstated, and is often enforced by ignorant business owners. According to Lucas, “In order to successfully sue a business owner for any injury, four elements must be proven: a duty of care to the customer, a breach of that duty (negligence), a causal link between the breach and harm, and actual harm or damage.” Not only is risk of actual harm very small, due to the resilient nature of feet, but business owners are not obliged to protect the feet of their customers; it’s our responsibility. Barefooters understand and accept any pain that accompanies our pleasure. There are cases of people stepping on sharp objects in libraries, yes, but there are also cases of large books crushing toes in sandals or even full shoes. What are we going to do? Ban books from libraries? What about people who get fingers caught in doors or burned on hot plates? Are we going to make them wear gloves?

I was recently confronted in a PLU building when standing (not even walking) barefoot. I was told, “You really need to have shoes on.” I asked why. “It’s more for your sake than for ours,” she said. “There’s always stuff on the floor here.” I’m offended that some people judge me unable to take care of myself. Part of me wanted to say, “I’m not eight years old, I know more about the risks than you do, and I continue to walk barefoot.”

Even though the Neinast case only cited safety and liability reasons, foot prejudice runs in other, more deeply ingrained trenches. For me, the argument is about pleasure.

It's about sensation. When I searched for the word "pleasure" on the internet, I nearly drowned in the list of ways to spend my money. Pleasure beaches. Pleasure resorts. Pleasure clubs. Sexy Pleasure singles. Buy Pleasure online. Great deals on Pleasure. Many merchants would have you believe pleasure has a price tag—and some people do.

Maybe barefooting is subversive because it provides free pleasure. Others would have you pay for it. They would sell you shoes that actually damage your feet, detailing the risks and the messiness that come with barefooting. (As far as I can tell, problems with arch support and walking injuries entered society only when shoes did.) Or maybe your parents bought those shoes and they want their money's worth. They instill in you an aversion to the most natural of pleasures the same way their parents did.

The words "Eww, gross" don't appear in the court decision, but they also seem to pop up everywhere bare feet go. I find this especially harmful. Most everyone is born with two delicate, wonderful feet that ought to be respected and loved. They only turn gross and sweaty when you cram them inside shoes. And the occasional mess, mud, and slime we walk through? Well, let's just say if cleanliness and safety always superseded pleasure, humans would've stopped

having sex and died out many years ago.

The arguments in favor of bare feet are simpler and more generous. Paul J. Lucas maintains the FAQ section of barefooters.org, and answers the question "Why go barefoot?" quite nicely. "Having your feet free of confining, hot, sweaty shoes, open

If we could, we would run and hide—but even that won't save us from our feet and the things they carry around.

to the air and sunshine, able to wiggle your toes, able to *feel* the various textures and temperatures of surfaces as you walk, is *wonderful!* It is one of life's most simple pleasures and is part of what it means to be human." Walking barefoot feels good. When it's cold outside my feet simply adjust, then feel extra-good when they carry me inside to rub against fuzzy carpet. When they return from rainy streets they tingle and sing. Any pain or discomfort becomes negligible.

Your feet are wonderfully designed to traverse any surface. The skin is very thick, and even resists sharp rocks and

glass. It thickens after a short time walking barefoot, becoming more tolerant, although the change is subtle; the skin never grows numb or rigid. Yes, you should watch your step, but it's not a wearisome task. The reflexes of feet are marvelous, and handle much of the work. When you place the weight on one foot, the nerves are sensitive enough to automatically adjust to the surface. If there's a sharp object, it may feel uncomfortable, but your weight will shift to other parts of the foot to avoid the risk of puncturing the already durable skin. And all of this happens without thought!

Just think: most people are born with two incredible examples of concurrent strength and sensitivity. Walking barefoot promotes tolerance and understanding of the world we live in. With every step you actually feel something, and you're less likely to trample through the day in a mindless rush.

So next time you see someone walking barefoot, don't think it strange. Try smiling and understanding the pleasure, the generous philosophy of bare feet. You could say, "Hey, it's a nice day for bare feet." Because after all, it is.

¹ Barefoot resources and information available at www.barefooters.org

Honoring the Life of Troy Hockett

by Jake Lipscomb

[Note from Beth Kraig, Matrix faculty advisor: Matrix readers met Troy through a story in our issue on Poverty last fall. The author of that story, Jake Lipscomb, offers a tribute to Troy and reminds us all about the possibilities we have to touch the lives of others—as Troy did—through sharing our hopes and care.]

Our community recently lost one of its most courageous spirits. Troy Hockett lost his fight against AIDS but sustained an overwhelming victory in his battle to not let his disease control who he was. Troy touched the lives of everyone he knew and many of those he didn't. His disease tried to keep him down with fatigue and extreme pain that would have crippled any ordinary person, but he always had a smiling face and kind words for those that he knew and loved. His unconditional love will impact his family for generations, but it will also stay with those of us who were lucky enough to know

him before he passed away.

The staff of Three Cedars AIDS hospice in Tacoma was close with Troy after he arrived to be cared for in what he knew were his final months. You never would have guessed that Troy had been given six months to live by talking to him. He was quick with a joke, and his trademark laugh will stay with me forever. There was not a day I saw him that he was not happy to be alive and in the company of friends, no matter how excruciating the pain was. Troy Hockett will be remembered as a great human

being of strength and compassion and certainly not a victim; he won his battle.

If you are interested in sending a donation to Three Cedars to honor the life of Troy Hockett, mail your gift to Three Cedars, 301 North L Street, Tacoma, WA 98403.



Jake Lipscomb (R) with Troy Hockett (L) earlier this year.

The Power of Veganism

hope for us all, now and in the future

By Linnea Fritz

“As long as people will shed the blood of innocent creatures there can be no peace, no liberty, no harmony between people. Slaughter and justice cannot dwell together.”

-Isaac Bashevis Singer: writer, Nobel laureate (1904-1991)

Animal rights is my one favorite things to talk about, advocate and actively promote. The concept of “animal liberation/human liberation” means justice for the animals and justice for humans. We must all be liberated from the chains that have tied us down, mentally and physically, for thousands of years, by those in power and by ourselves. In order to do this, we must change our way of thinking and living. It has been three and a half years since I ate, wore, or bought anything with any kind of animal product in it. Yes, I am one of those annoying vegans that are a nuisance to have as a dinner guest. “Thanks, but no thanks, I think I’ll stick to my tofu.”

Sometimes I feel that I am not doing enough for the imprisoned non-human animals of the world, that maybe what I do doesn’t make a difference—not even a tiny dent in the world-wide suffering.

But here are some things that give me hope...

—Even though I alone will not be able to stop the world-wide suffering of animals, at least I am not contributing to it. And together with all the other vegetarians in the world, we do make a difference.

—There are several manufacturers that make environmentally friendly and

cruelty-free footwear!¹ So, veggies nowadays don’t have to walk around in Converse high-tops all year round. (maybe that’s why they all moved to California in the 70s—at least it doesn’t snow there.) This also means there is a market for shoes not made out of leather.

—Each year new vegan literature and cookbooks are published.

—There are many companies (both online and in real life) that are exclusively vegan.

—In 2001, it was estimated that 0.9% of the U.S. population was vegan. In other words, out of about 290 million US citizens, 2.61 million are vegan. If this is multiplied by the number of animals saved each year by every vegan—93 to be precise—we get the number of animals spared the horrors of the animal product industries: 242,730,000, just in the US. That is not a small number—and that’s not even counting the vegetarians.

—A new, strictly vegan, store called Sidecar has opened in Seattle (5270B University Way NE)

But why, might you think, does this make me happy? Why do I care? I care because I’m in this for the animals; I know

how they are treated in the meat, dairy and egg industries; there is no denying the abuse and torture a living creature has to endure to be killed and made into a meal. There is no excuse for it; we have other options. Veganism is also a good choice from other ethical standpoints such as environmentalism and humanitarianism. But for me, the animals come first. I love them. I really, really do. But even if I didn’t, nobody deserves to suffer, whether you have fur, claws, sharp teeth, down, feathers, scales or wool.

When I see a picture of a cow, and she is looking into the camera with dead eyes, I know she has been killed inside, and that they are planning to kill her physically, too, and then eat her. I know that she was born and raised in a factory, just like her mother, grandmother, great-grandmother. I imagine what that would be like, and I think of the horrors it would entail. I wouldn’t even subject my worst enemy to this. There are many of us who think this way, and together we will change how people look at animals. They are not machines, tools, food or clothing, but their own beings with their own value. I will stay vegan and fight for the animals’ rights for the rest of my life, because liberation and peace must come. It must. It will.

veg·an (ˈvE-g&n) *n* : a strict vegetarian who consumes no animal food or dairy products; also, one who abstains from using animal products (as leather); Etymology: by contraction from vegetarian

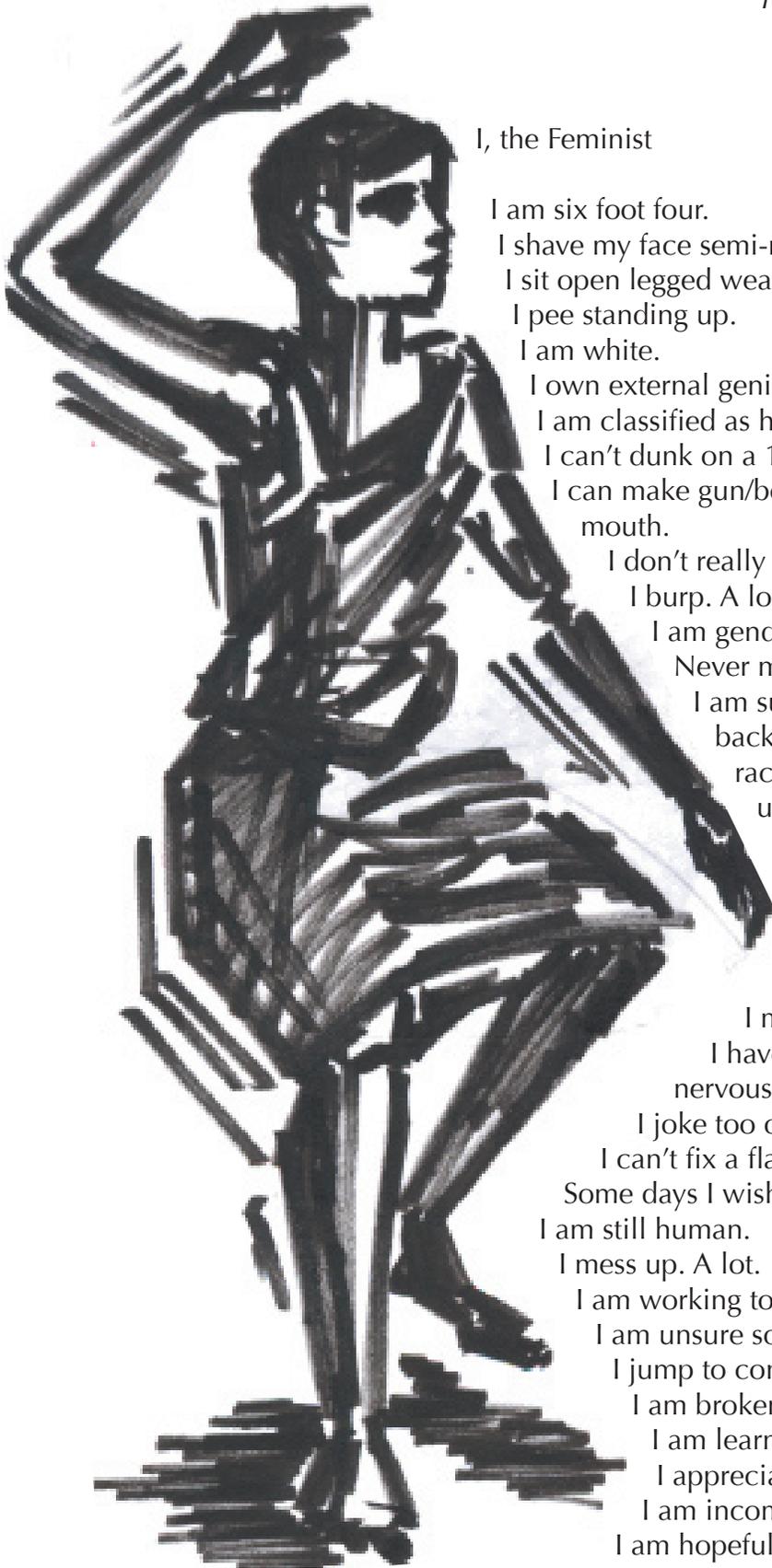
¹ www.mooshoes.com
www.animalrightstuff.com
www.afa-online.com
www.vegseattle.com
www.veganessentials.com
www.alternativeoutfitters.com

Hope Flash!!!

The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker is not extinct!!! This bird, the largest North American Woodpecker, has not been seen for over 60 years, and was widely believed to be extinct. Sightings have been confirmed in an Arkansas wildlife refuge, setting off waves of excitement in the scientific community and beyond. The details surrounding this wonderful news can be found all over the Internet, including Science Magazine (www.sciencemag.org.)

"Though it altered their future, [it] did nothing whatsoever to alter their identity."

~Orlando, Virginia Woolf



I, the Feminist

I am six foot four.

I shave my face semi-regularly.

I sit open legged wearing any style of pants.

I pee standing up.

I am white.

I own external genitalia.

I am classified as human.

I can't dunk on a 10' rim, but I'm close. Not really.

I can make gun/bomb/airplane/video game noises with my mouth.

I don't really like football.

I burp. A lot.

I am gendered like a mother. Well, like a father.

Never mind.

I am surprisingly full of stereotypes, criticisms, backwardness,

racisms, sexism and generally unhealthy/unavoidable preconceptions.

I am sensitive.

I think I'm overweight.

I was a vegetarian for a while.

I write poetry.

I'm a fan of skirts.

I mess up. A lot.

I have a tendency to chew my nails when I'm nervous.

I joke too often.

I can't fix a flat tire.

Some days I wish I was a monkey.

I am still human.

I mess up. A lot.

I am working towards a time when 'betterness' is a word.

I am unsure sometimes.

I jump to conclusions.

I am broken.

I am learning.

I appreciate and depreciate.

I am incomplete.

I am hopeful.

Feeding the Soil

by Angee Foster

Illustrations by Clare Charles

The weeds come right out and the dirt is smooth and cool under my hands. The wind blows strongly into this valley and it tugs at my fleece and whips my hair into my eyes, but I am absorbed in the ground, in my task of weeding among the tiny sprouting fava bean plants. All I have to do is run my hand over the ground, like giving a light massage or scratching earth's back, and the weeds come out and the soil stirs and breathes the fresh air. I have a trowel, but it's so much more fun to do this by hand. I work for a few hours, back bowed over the earth, with only the gathering rain clouds overhead to mark the passing time. I stretch occasionally, taking in the beauty of the Puyallup-Orting Valley and the eight acres of Mother Earth Farm that stretch out on all sides of me.

I am working among a group of inmates from the Purdy Women's Correctional Facility. Actually, they started at one end of the row and I at the other. As the clouds grow heavier we converge in the middle. The women are congenial, lively and funny. As we talk, they hint at the hardships of prison. Overhead the clouds spit the first few warnings of rain—small cold droplets that signal the end of our weeding. Carrie, the director of Mother Earth Farm, comes out to the fava bean patch and leads us all into the newly constructed barn.

Inside we sit in a circle, shucking beans. We peel open the pods of dried beans and spill their dark red seeds into ten gallon buckets. The crate in front of us holds several cubic feet of dried beans. We pick them out in handfuls and shuck for hours. It's monotonous work, but it gives me a chance to talk to the women more. They are kind, but a little more reserved now that we are inside. They leave at about 3 p.m. after a long work day.

Carrie and I sit and talk over beans. We talk about Mother Earth Farm, which is part of the Emergency Food Network that supplies food banks and shelters throughout Pierce County. We talk about organic gardening and my questions strike a spark

in Carrie that indicates her passion for caring for the earth while caring for people in need. We chat about activism—I first met Carrie a year earlier at a rally to close down the School of the Americas. She is younger than my parents, but still of that generation, and it's encouraging to meet a woman who is strong in her convictions and a model of life-long activism.

Time flies and Carrie looks down at her watch. It's five o'clock! I leave as the sky is taking on the first tinge of dusk. I am exhausted, but I feel sustained by the work I did.

Because working at Mother Earth Farm and talking with Carrie were so refreshing, I decided to interview her in a more formal setting. Here are my questions and her responses. If you're interested in meeting Carrie, Mother Earth Farm can always use volunteers.



Angee: What is your favorite book?

Carrie: *Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd

A: Tell me about personal experiences or influences that led you to be an activist.

C: For me, the biggest influence towards being an 'activist' is motherhood—can't really bring up two kids in this world without the pressure of giving them something that makes sense. The other piece to my 'drive' is being someone addicted to gardening. When you have an ear to earth, she tends to bend your ear a bit and forces you to look at what you are doing to her, even on a miniscule level.

A: What is the hardest thing about running Mother Earth Farm?

C: The hardest thing about running the farm is managing throngs of volunteers and guiding them to do the work that would otherwise take me a million centuries to complete by myself...I sometimes struggle with handing over the daily tasks to folks who want to help. But in the long run, I know it's what's best for her (the farm) and for me to get on to the next thing on the list. The farm glows when she's blessed with many helping hands touching her—and perhaps I do, too, when I don't have to "do it all." But really, there's nothing that hard about running MEF.

A: If you took over the world, first, how would you do it, and what's the first thing you'd do?

C: I'd say Girl, Boy, this earth is our home, get off your ass and grab a trowel, and start planting—one seed at a time. I'd ban a few things: guns, WTO, GMO's, banks, NAFTA, FTAA, corporate welfare, militaries, hunger, and greed.

A: How do your peers react to what you do for a living?

C: I think for the most part, my peers think I'm doing good work. I'm often asked if I really get paid for doing what I do—and

asked how I get away with it...

A: What does dirt smell like?

C: Loved dirt, dirt that has not been tainted but truly loved, smells so intoxicating....its the essence of life itself...

A: Tell me about organic gardening...

C: This is the very short version...Organic gardening or farming is all about feeding soil. If you think of soil as being a living and breathing entity, which is what it is, you will have soil feed you. Why organic? How can you not? That's the only way I know. I don't know chemicals—never will. Soil needs nourishment, rest, water, air, sunshine, warm days and cold ones too. You put chemicals into the equation, and it forces reactions that are not in line

with soils' basic needs. Creating a habitat that mimics nature by growing organically encourages many life forms to have room to live and grow. Some may say you can eliminate many pests that would interfere with the plan—but the reality is if you don't encourage bio-diversity to thrive, balance doesn't exist. You need to look at the big picture too, the big web and how we are all weaved into it. Take something out of that web and it will have rippling effects for everything else.

A: What inspires you? What gives you hope?

C: I'm inspired by sunrises and sunsets, wisdom of old men and women and children, birds, bees and all living creatures. And mostly my husband—a crazy, never-losing-hope-for-the-hopeless-union-move-

ment, unemployed carpenter rabble-rouser. Rejuvenation gives me hope. Rejuvenation can happen with anything on earth—even the land—especially the land—but it works with people too—especially with people that society has given up on. People that come to mind are prisoners and young people who have been treated like they have no value and have nothing to share with the world. Will is a powerful thing and if we can use that as our guide to make the changes needed to survive as a species, I think humans have hope.

For more information about the farm or how to volunteer, visit www.efoodnet.org/mother_earth.htm



Roots and Shoots

by Lindsey Webb

Roots and Shoots, founded by Jane Goodall and sixteen students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is a community-service oriented organization that encourages children and young adults to effect change in the treatment of animals, the environment and human-kind through education and experience. Roots and Shoots now has over 6,000 chapters in 87 countries. The Roots and Shoots mission statement reads: "To foster respect and compassion for all liv-



illustrations by Clare Charles

ing things, to promote understanding of all cultures and beliefs, and to inspire each individual to take action to make the world a better place for people, animals, and the environment."

Through education on subjects such as human rights, animal rights and the welfare of ecosystems around the world, Roots and Shoots promotes action within and without the communities in which chapters are based. Here are a few current Roots and Shoots projects, from www.janegoodall.net:

- "R&S-Ostrich, the Roots & Shoots group in Lagos, Nigeria, noticed that a nearby highway flooded every time it rained, as debris blocked drainage routes. The debris that washed onto the road was harmful to the environment, and the resulting floods caused hazardous conditions for highway traffic. In addition, the standing water posed a serious health threat to the 2,000 people living in this area as it became a breeding ground for mosquitoes, which carry malaria and other diseases. Members cleared debris blocking the road and hauled it away in dump trucks they rented from the Nigerian government."

- "The Neelankaria KAP R&S group in

India started a hands-on campaign to protect the endangered Olive Ridley Sea Turtles. They built structures out of bamboo poles and chicken wire to protect the turtle eggs on the beach. They also patrol the area at night in groups of three to assist the hatched baby turtles in their journey to the sea."

- "Throughout the year, Roots & Shoots members at Applied Learning Academy in Fort Worth, Texas, grew vegetables in the city garden and donated them to a food kitchen. They also worked at an animal shelter, assisted at a retirement center and local hospitals and helped at the local museums and historical sites."

Opportunities to serve are all around us, even here at PLU. Roots and Shoots projects, however small, make a big and noticeable difference in the community. Groups like Grassroots Environmental Action Now, Feminist Student Union and Vegetarian Alliance are excellent avenues one might take toward implementing change, or even toward learning about various different issues. Don't hesitate to get involved—change can start with just one person.

ANGEE FOSTER

TAKES BACK THE NIGHT



Silence. Peace and quiet. Close your eyes. Imagine it. Wear it. Put it on. Live in it for a moment. Revel in the blankness of your own mind—your personal space.

Now imagine that moments like this are impossible. They are impossible not because you're a stressed-out college student who's over-committed your time. Not because you're so tired you almost immediately fall asleep. Not because you're excited about the super-cool party you're going to tonight with your friends and your mind fills with their boisterous, happy voices.

No, these moments of serene silence are impossible because of something someone did to you in the past. *You* are the one in four women or one in five men who has been sexually assaulted. Every time you close your eyes you feel the invasion of sexual violence crowding out peace. Maybe after a year or two, you only think about the horrible thing that was done to you once a day, but it still takes over the silences that should be your own.

I have never been sexually assaulted, but the attitudes that allow sexual assault to continue in our society do affect me. I have felt the objectification of my body over and over again through roving eyes and harassing comments. As a woman, there is a 25% chance I will be sexually assaulted in my lifetime.

On April 20, 2005 I marched through campus waving a handmade sign and chanting at the top of my lungs to raise awareness about sexual assault. The event was Take Back the Night, and I was joined by 20 or 30 of my PLU peers. This is my third year marching and yelling on campus. My sign declared, "Women's issues are everybody's."

My first year Taking Back the Night, I was a timid chanter. I giggled between chants and hoped no one I knew would notice me. I was embarrassed to be a part of the event. I wanted to be part of the solu-

tion, but I was still a participant in sustaining the culture of silence surrounding sexual violence. My own discomfort reinforced the idea that sexual assault is not something to be addressed in public.

My second year, I participated in Take Back the Night at PLU again. Despite my discomfort the year before, I was drawn back because of the importance of the issue. A semester in Women and Philosophy and a Sexual Assault Peer Education Team (SAPET) presentation enlightened me about the prevalence of rape and sexual assault. I couldn't let the opportunity to raise awareness and support survivors of sexual assault pass. Despite my ideological convictions, I was still uncomfortable marching, waving signs and yelling about sexual assault.

This year it was different. I finally felt completely comfortable Taking Back the Night because I knew that, like my body, it is mine to claim. The most amazing element of the event is its culmination in a "safe circle" where victims and survivors of rape and sexual assault, male and female alike, are free to talk about their experiences. They talk about the slow road to recovery and the reclamation of the peaceful silences that are rightfully their own. Sometimes you have to yell to reclaim the silence. Be a voice against the pervasive culture of dehumanization. Support the women and men in your community whose peaceful silence has been shattered.

**The future belongs to those
who believe in the beauty of
their dreams.**

Eleanor Roosevelt

Inspiring people find new, righteous ways to support sexual assault survivors & end violence.

**On April 30 about 2,000 people took a two-mile-high stand against sexual assault in an annual event called Operation Freefall. Members of the organization parachuted around the country to raise money and awareness. The program was started by Kellie Greene who parachuted on the anniversary of her rape, to "reclaim the day that had been taken from her, reviving her own courageous spirit and turning that dreaded memorial into an anticipated celebration." ¹*

**Male students at the University of Alabama created a rally "Give Back the Night" to recognize male responsibility in sexual assault, to support male victims of assault and to call for women's and men's right to safety.*

**A men's group at the University of Illinois handed out cookies with messages that challenged sexist stereotypes.*

**PLU's Sexual Assault Peer Education Team made t-shirts starting in 2004 with messages encouraging people to talk about sexuality and sexual violence. Shirts are now available in the Women's Center for \$5.*

**Nobuko Oyabu created the online gallery and resource "Faces of Rape and Sexual Abuse Survivors" to reveal "the inner strength of women and men who have been put to the ultimate trial of their lives." With this project Oyabu hopes "that a victim will know there is hope in her or his future, a survivor will no longer feel guilty or ashamed, someone vulnerable will become a little cautious around herself or himself not to be the next victim, and a potential assailant will notice that a victim can be someone he loves, such as his daughter, wife, sister, or mother." ²*

1. http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_OperationFreefall1119
2. <http://nobukoonline.com/>

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

~Dale Carnegie

Healing

This story was emailed anonymously to The Matrix Thursday, March 17, 2005
Thank you for your voice.

Hello,

I am a PLU student, who prefers to remain anonymous... if that is ok. I read The Matrix today, because my friend was talking about it and because it sounded extremely interesting, and I had to write a story. It is a story about my experience. I did not know how to deal with it and was struggling, but after reading The Matrix, I suddenly wanted to put it into words, and I did it.

It is rather a self-satisfactory piece. But it would be wonderful to see it published in The Matrix for the next issue or something. So I am sending it to you. Please do whatever you want to do with it. Let me know if there's something else that I can do.

Thank you, for even reading this e-mail, it means a lot to me...

This is a secret story that has never been out of a single mouth, and will continue to be unvocalized.

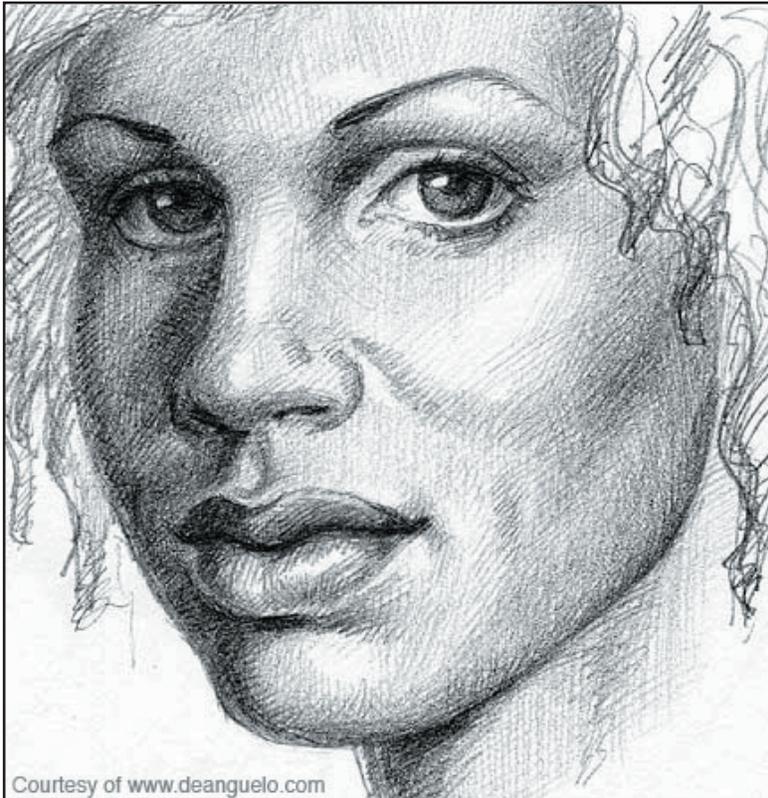
She liked it when he touched her. They were watching a movie together. It was something she had never experienced before. He would wrap his arms around her tummy and rub it softly. She thought him very gentle from the way he touched her.

“So I think the hook-ups that happen when people are studying abroad are among the most interesting, stimulating relationships you can have. ‘Cuz you both know that it’s a short-term commitment, and so you don’t have to worry about anything big, but just enjoy each other for the time you’re there, you know,” he typed to her over a messenger from across the hallway, after about half an hour of conversation online.

He was very intelligent. It was something he inherited from his parents, who fell in love on a rainy day, got married on a rainy day and had their first child on a

rainy day, thus naming him “Rain.” She found the story very sweet and cute, not only because of the content, but because of the way he told it. He was almost proud of his parents’ story.

He described himself as “a typical Chinese-American nerd.” He learned how



to play the piano when he was very young. He was the president of the math club and a valedictorian in high school. He was studying at a university where he was already promised a spot in medical school.

She fell in love with him the first time he played the piano for her. He loved playing the piano and classical music. He would send songs on his computer over the messenger, and she would listen to them while talking online and studying late at night. She thought she could see the “boy side” of his character when he played the piano, even though he had the reputation of being “horny” and the “loves sex-talk guy.” The music was very rich in tones and art. Very delicate. Very passionate.

She realized the reason why he ap-

preciated watching movies was a little different from why she did. He did like movies, especially the classic ones. But that reason became secondary when his hands started reaching for her breasts and between her legs. She didn’t know what to do. She didn’t like him doing these things to her, but she also couldn’t totally deny that she liked it. He carried on. Escalated. But for her, it was like her shirt was caught by something, and she couldn’t go to the place he was trying to take her. She felt something was wrong. “Is he taking advantage of me?” She tried to deny it. “No, he likes me. There’s nothing wrong.”

It had to be mutual. “I did it for you. Now it’s your turn, right?” She could see him saying so in his eyes. It carried on.

She felt like a rag—used, and then trashed.

He started hanging out with another girl, who seemed to be spending quality time with him, talking, not “watching movies.”

All she had left was an ugly oozing substance leaking from her soul. She tried to seal the wound by herself and hide the ugly substance that was contaminating her. But she couldn’t do it. She did not know how to seal the wound or hide the stuff. It was too painful to just seal it and too hard to do it by herself.

People say and articles advise, “Don’t try to deal with it yourself. Instead, let it out and let it heal slowly. Talk to somebody. Get help.” She knows. It’s everywhere. But she can’t. She just can’t—other than telling the story in words, anonymously.

“Help! I’m hurt! Help!” her soul cries out. “Why are you whining so much? It was your fault; you let it happen and you actually liked it too. Don’t you remember?”

Don’t listen to that voice. Don’t listen to that voice. Just hang tight. Wounds will heal. She still waits. She is waiting for that day, when she can see that the scar has healed and she can talk about it with her lover, who will love her, with or without scars.

Service Learning

Bringing the World and Ideas Together

by Erin McKenna

Many people see philosophy as abstract ideas that have no bearing on their everyday lives. One of my goals in teaching is to show people how philosophical schools of thought have influenced human history and to help them see how their current lives are constructed out of these influences. I also want them to see the importance of thinking clearly about the choices they make for their lives today. Our practices are influenced by the ideas we hold to, and our ideas are influenced by the practices in which we partake. If one hopes to live well it is important to become conscious of our ideas and practices so that we can subject them to critical examination and possible revision. One way to do this is to be overt about making connections between thought and action. Service learning is one way to bring about a different level of consciousness about these connections in an academic setting.

I am not alone in seeing the value of this connection. The American Philosophical Association's Committee on Teaching has assembled a website focused on examples of service-learning curriculum developed for a variety of philosophy classes. They have also put on workshops about philosophy and service-learning in conjunction with the American Association of Philosophy Teachers annual conference. I find this focus on teaching and service well timed. The American Philosophical Association, just beyond its centennial year, has been trying to raise public awareness about philosophy and its importance in our lives. They have produced amusing radio spots with John Cleese raising questions about how one should live and how one might begin thinking about complex issues. They have also encouraged philosophers to give public (not just academic) presentations of their work or the work of well-known historical philosophers. They have encouraged the formation of coffee groups where people can raise and discuss these larger questions of life and really get

at basic assumptions about how we should live, what we can know and the meaning of life. I think service learning is another way in which people 1) come to realize the importance of philosophy in their lives and 2) come to see how consciously bringing philosophy out into the world can be quite helpful.

I have, for many years, taught my J-term section of PHIL125: Ethics and the Good Life as a service-learning course. I call this course Ethics in Action. In the past, any kind of service was an option for the course and students were placed in soup kitchens, community gardens, hospices, AIDS outreach/education, senior centers and with special-needs children.

In this course students also studied several approaches to moral theory, including utilitarian, deontological, existential, feminist and virtue ethics. Students were then asked to examine some aspect of their service experience in light of the theories being studied. My hope was that they would begin to see the strengths and weaknesses of the theories when they are put into action, as well as the ways in which the organizations they are working with are or are not informed by such ways of thinking.

Sometimes an organization said they were being governed by certain principles (deontological approach), but the students found they were much more focused on consequences (utilitarian approach). This is greatly oversimplified, but you can get the idea. I was asking them to see how our practices are informed by theory, but often in unconscious ways. Getting clear on both what one is doing and what one wants to do can be very helpful. I also wanted them to see that moral theories that look good on paper might get messy when we try to put them into practice. The neat and tidy examples philosophers often come up with about deciding whether or not to return an overdue library book are not necessarily the kinds of problems with which we are most concerned.

The course in its last form was generally the same except that it had a specific focus on issues of the environment and animals. (That course also spawned Philosophy, Animals and the Environment which is taught in the spring semester—with a service-learning component.) Student's placements involved removing non-native and/or invasive species from prairies, forests and nature centers, working at an organic garden that grows food for the homeless, working with landscaping and recycling here on campus and helping with a therapeutic horse-riding program. Students are still asked to apply a critical eye to both the theories and the groups with which they are working.

I have found that students, in general, who take the service-learning version of Ethics and the Good Life retain more about the complexities of the various moral theories than students who take a "regular" version. More than that, though, I find them raising ethical issues in an informed and energetic way years later. This kind of inquiry becomes a part of how they approach their lives and the decisions they make. This is a great power of incorporating service learning into my classes. It is by no means the only way to achieve such a critical and reflective attitude, but it is one that works for many students.

Further, the presence of the students often has a transformative effect on the people and agencies with which they work. For instance, J-term students were not convinced that the mere fact of being a "non-native" plant was a good argument for removing the plant. This was the reason being given by the agency. There was a good exchange about this issue and at least one person from the agency came to realize that they really were more interested in removing "invasive" species and began to see a point in making this kind of distinction. So, in the end, service learning not only brings philosophy to life, it puts philosophy into action in life.

ON STARFISH, SIN AND IMAGINATION

BY KATHLYN A. BREAZEALE

A man walked the beach at dawn. In the early morning light, he saw a young woman in the distance picking up starfish and throwing them into the sea. He approached her and questioned her actions. She explained that the starfish had been stranded by the receding tide and would die if left in the morning sun. "But," he challenged her, "there are millions of starfish here on the beach. How can your actions make any difference?" The young woman looked at the starfish in her hand and threw it to safety in the waves. Then she looked at the man and replied, "It makes a difference to this one."

I first heard this story many years ago when I was working for the United Methodist Church as an adult leader with youth. This story sparked my imagination, and I shared it often with groups of youth and adults as we engaged in service projects in our own

community. We were just one group of youth and adults, and we could not change every injustice in the world. However, we could choose to use our time and resources to make justice with our neighbors. We could choose to make a difference with our own lives, and we could encourage others to do the same. Working with groups like Habitat for Humanity, we formed a network of multi-racial church youth groups in our community to discover and

respond to the needs of our neighbors. We learned much from our neighbors and from each other as together we imagined how we could make

a better community for all of us.

I have come to believe that imagination is of central importance in working to develop communities of justice and peace.

John B. Cobb, Jr., a well-known process theologian, once defined sin as "a lack of imagination." This definition of sin, like the starfish story, continues to inspire me not to give in to despair as I hear news reports of the latest events. I believe we must use our imaginations at this crucial point in our history to create alternative responses to war and the many other forms of violence that threaten human and non-human existence on our planet. If we fail to engage our imagi-

Imagination is of central importance in working to develop communities of justice and peace.



nations, we risk simply repeating the past and perpetuating destruction, suffering and death. Thus, I hold that using our imaginations is not fanciful or wishful thinking. Rather, our imaginations are a rich resource for determining how we will respond to the extremely difficult problems challenging us today.

Here at PLU we have choices to make individually and collectively. Like the young woman saving the starfish, each of us has the power to make a difference in our part of the world. What issue is your "starfish"? How will you use your time, material resources and imagination to work with others toward creating justice and peace? Now is the time to decide.

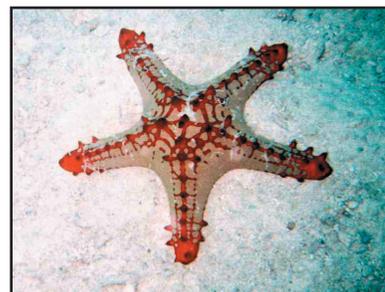
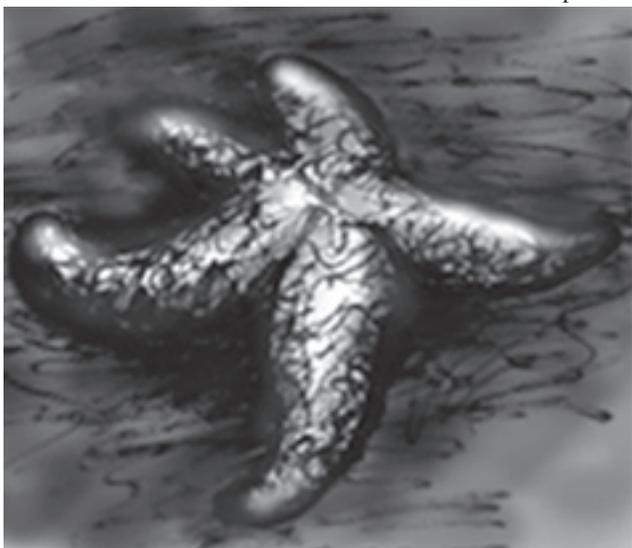


illustration by Jamie Forslund

FearHope

by Laine Walters

Fear

**that This isn't
 bad enough
 or good Enough
 that Salvation doesn't
 Exist
 that the way
 we were made
 IS corrupt
 that no amount of
 digging
 Will work
 that we have been
 fucked over from the
 beginning
 and there is
 no End
 that we have been
 abandoned
 and Cannot
 be made anew**

*Hope
 that fundamental and
 Yet oh so foolish
 conviction
 the only reason to Live
 that currency
 of belief and
 Will that
 We are not broken
 In our belief
 that we are made
 capable of love
 resisting in prison camps
 breaking in agony
 reviving in soul-crushing
 monotony in our Distance
 from each other and You
 we believe that we are Loved*



Illustration by Christy Roebler

Overcoming Human Nature

by Josh Smith

Baroja wrote in *El Arbol de la Ciencia* that justice is a human illusion. This is the result of his vision of life as a constant struggle, a cruel hunt in which we devour one another. He is not alone in this observation; Nietzsche said life is essentially the overpowering of what is alien and weaker (*Beyond Good and Evil*). Nietzsche goes on to apply this to human society: "Every enhancement of the type 'man' has so far been the work of an aristocratic society—and it will be so again and again."

The opposing viewpoint would argue that human beings are civilized, that nature as described by Nietzsche and Baroja is not human nature. But the idea that humanity is above nature is flawed; rather, our civilization is its logical end, an institutionalized system of exploitation where Nietzsche's statement remains the hard truth. Modern human society is the product of past human societies ruled by the highest class in a vicious tradition of survival of the fittest.

The status-quo is the result of thousands of years of conquest, genocide and every other dirty word we can think of. Invariably, the greediest, most resource-

consuming, most violent, most oppressive cultures are those that dominate. Those that live by a different rule are eradicated, subjugated, or assimilated. The colonization of the Americas provides a fitting example; the Native American tribes of North America were pushed from their land by a more resource-consuming, violent society. Another example would be the Guaraní of

the natural human state is imperfect

the Brazil-Paraguay border area. They lived peacefully and sustainably, even adapting when the Spanish arrived, but their culture is being destroyed as alien forces slowly take away the forest that is their home.

Therefore, if justice is to be administered by the ruling class, it will continue to be an impossibility. Notice there are no utopian societies. Utopia, as described by various transcendentalists, visionaries or what have you will never be realized. The only possible utopias are those of Orwell, Huxley, Bradbury, and Butler.

Inherent human greed is the driving force of our society, and suffering appears to be our fate. When only the strongest,

cleverest, and most ambitious succeed at the expense of the weak, justice cannot be achieved. The point of view shared by the aforementioned philosophers is also acknowledged by various religions, which, in addition to this fundamental belief, offer paths by which one can overcome greed.

According to religious thought, overcoming human nature and achieving justice requires changes in lifestyle and thinking, that is to say, changes in self. Whether we come from a Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Muslim perspective, the natural human state is imperfect and must be overcome in order to achieve justice (in this case justice for the self, or salvation). Christianity calls this state "fallen," Buddhism calls it "dukkha" (suffering) and both offer systems to escape it.

Although the methods to achieve justice are somewhat varied, they have a common trait in that they emphasize pursuit of an altruistic lifestyle and denial of greed and selfishness. This is the fundamental question of existence. Choosing the right, denying the self and achieving justice is one response, and the alternative is yielding to human nature. Hope lies in this one simple choice.

Hope Flash!!!

Mark Jensen is usually a source of despair for me. He sends it to me daily in the form of myriad e-mails covering the invasion of Iraq, the oil peak, global geopolitics, the erosion of civil liberties and the military/industrial complex.

BUT...

I recently received an e-mail from Prof. Jensen that surprisingly filled my day with joy instead of drowning it in a sticky miasma of doom.

MIT (some say a good university) has opened up its curriculum to the public. Lecture notes, power-point presentations, practice tests and illustrations from MIT's curriculum are now on the Internet. Free. No membership or registration required. You won't get a degree, but you will be able to access the knowledge of one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

It only requires a visit to <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/index.htm>. Once there, choose a field of study (from Astrophysics to Women's Studies), a course (introductory to graduate level) and start learning! Hopeful, eh?

-A.O.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Here's what their website says:

"The International Fund for Animal Welfare works to improve animal welfare, prevent animal cruelty and abuse, protect wildlife and provide animal rescue around the world. From stopping the elephant ivory trade, to ending the Canadian seal hunt and saving the whales from extinction, IFAW works to create solutions that benefit both animals and people."

web address:

www.ifaw.org/ifaw/general/default.aspx

Common Hope

by Adam Oswald

photos submitted anonymously

You should have seen his eyes shining as he spoke of Guatemala. You should have heard the husk in his voice as he spoke about the paradise it might yet be. You should have shared the ache and the beauty in the atmosphere as he related his struggle with poverty, violence and indifference. I myself was riveted in my seat, oblivious to the highland breeze and roar of trucks heading into Antigua, engrossed by the interview between PLU junior Rachel Curry and John Huebsch. Huebsch is the director Common Hope, of the organization we were staying at for Spring Break.

Our trip was nearly over: our University Congregation Holy Week group had already spent a lot of time in Antigua watching Easter processions, shopping and observing what we could. Because much of the staff was on vacation, we did not meet and talk to the people running Common Hope until the end of our trip. Now we could speak with social workers, teachers and technicians to learn about how a

non-profit is run. From personal testimonies and hard facts provided us, our understanding of Guatemala and our own potential for service was wonderfully strengthened.

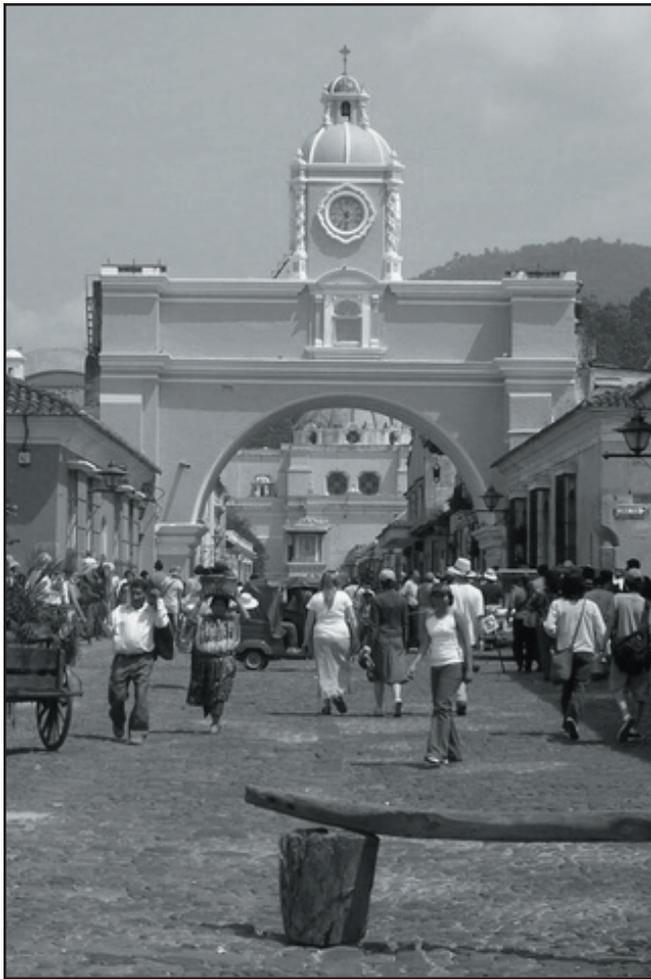
There are few facts I am going to provide readers about Guatemala. I will say that the need in Guatemala for sanitation, basic development (like plumbing,) health care, proper nutrition and education is extreme, and that the government is not strong enough to address these synergistic problems. Common Hope, a non-profit service organization founded in 1985 by John Huebsch's parents, emphasizes education, and works with local families to help solve all the above problems. Eighty-four percent of their income goes directly to programs, and most of their employees are Guatemalans, which means most of the money that doesn't go directly into programs is still going into paychecks for Guatemalans.

Far more compelling than any fact sheet was what I saw on the ground at Common Hope. I sensed little to no paternalism. I saw individuals sacrificing time and their own economic opportunity to help families crushed by civil war, overpopulation and poverty. Instead of viewing Guatemala's problems with that awful mix of disengaged curiosity, pity and a superficial desire to "save" that often characterizes First World attitudes toward the Third World, Common Hope sees things differently. This is what I saw in John's eyes. Their worldview has no place for "problems." They only have space for human beings. Their vision of Guatemala includes themselves; they properly recognize that their own well-being, even if they are US volunteers or relatively well-paid Guatemalans, is tied to the well-being of those they help. Their mission finds its source not in a desire to mold Guatemala into their own image, nor to prove their own righteousness, but rather springs from the very real and very attainable ability for people to shed indifference, connect and respond with compassion and integrity to the pain and need of others. They overcome the idea of "Other" itself, which is why their hope is a common one.

I now have advice I sincerely think you should follow; find these types of people and stick around them. They have much to teach about love in action. The look in their eyes as they share their dreams can ignite hope you didn't know existed in yourself. Their love and relationship with those they help bridges the gap that arises



The citizens of Antigua make carpets or *alfombras* of colored sawdust or sand for religious processions to walk upon during Holy Week.



in the civil war, which like most conflicts, saw poor people versus poor people while the rich remained insulated, even though incredible wealth disparity was a cause of the fighting. I had extraordinary conversations with people; Guatemalan children, Mayan peasant women, ladino bartenders and long-haired American college-grad soil grubbers named Franklin. I felt at times like an ugly white gringo, but it was the friendliness of the Guatemalans, the people with the most right to take offense at my presence, that broke through my alienation.

I believe hope grows most quickly where it is needed. Guatemala needs hope. Its people suffer from powerful enemies (the economic machinations of the First World that drain resources and labor and inflict debt), indifferent visitors (I ate very well there, better than most

between cynicism and utopian dreaming too easily when we are separated from “the problems.” They are also somewhat frightening; they challenge apathy and expose the lie of the various excuses we concoct to defend our choice in priorities. This is the most obnoxious thing about these people and hope in general. Hope requires change if it is going to be genuine. It flips the world on its head and invites you to join in the fun, just as the Common Hope staff did for me. It is galvanic, forcing us to think, violating our personal space, not letting things return to “normal.” It breaks us apart so we can be built into something better. Perhaps, because of all the discomfort and effort involved, this is why there seems to be so little hope in the world today.

I saw things both terrible and beautiful in Guatemala. I saw the Mayan people isolated, discriminated against and experiencing ethnocide, yet somehow living with a quiet joy in the midst of struggle, a joy that shames me with my own material standards for what counts as “living fully.” I heard those verdant, dry-land hills screaming from the genocide inflicted within them

Guatemalans), overpopulation, poverty and much more. And yet, what I saw was people refusing to surrender their dignity or compassion, on both sides of the entrenched wealth disparity that is ripping this world apart. I saw Guatemalans negating despair in their lives; by loving, by working, by forging and reinforcing the communal connections that are the purest essences of existence in this universe. I saw refusal to die. I saw hope fueling a joy and dogged persistence that transcended racial, cultural and class distinction. I caught sight of it as ladino women wielded four-foot machetes in Sunday morning dresses chopping firewood and Mayan mothers tying their babies to their backs with ka-

leidoscope sashes. I glimpsed it in Rachel Curry’s insatiable curiosity and courtesy in speaking with all the people she could. I saw it in John’s eyes and felt it through his handshake.

Hope is born when we act in love. The initiative is with us. It is with all people who through circumstance or choice are on the wrong side of justice. The people at Common Hope have it right. So do the Guatemalans who rise above the poverty and violence thrust upon them. Hope is not an idea or concept; it cannot be read about or discerned. It reveals itself when we begin acting on the loving bonds that connect us to all people and things, living and non-living, terrestrial and celestial, that make up creation. Our hope is a living one. It is time we started living.

Common Hope can be contacted at www.commonhope.org. One can sponsor a child, make a donation, or learn about volunteer opportunities from their website.

Left: The Arch, located near a church by the edge of Antigua, is a landmark of the city

Below: In the time leading up to Holy Week, and especially on Palm Sunday, many people assemble arrangements of flowers and palms for worshippers. Some, like these young women, usually live in the countryside, and move into Antigua to sell their arrangements during the week. This picture was taken on Palm Sunday morning, on the steps of a church.



Kathi Breazeale
 Beth Kraig
 Tamara Williams
 Barbara & Peter Temple-Thurston
 Gina Hames
 Paloma Martinez-Carbajo
 Amy Post
 Tosh Kakar
 Muggs
 Angee Foster
 Stephanie Marron
 Rikki Lynn
 Judy Mladineo
 Nathan Bendickson
 Josh Smith
 Adam Oswald
 Mary Jo Marquardt
 Rachel Esbjornson
 Rachid Benkhalti
 Deborah Miranda
 Lisa Marcus
 Diane Wallace
 Wooly
 Georgia Williams
 Gabi Brockman
 Crystal & Ruby
 Carlee Smith
 Greta Jaeger
 Jane Asay
 Shannon Lord
 Ashley Miller
 Laine Walters

Alexa Folsom-Hill
 Mariesa Bus
 Tighe Stewart
 Clare Charles
 Jamie Marble
 Rachel Curry
 Eric Finseth
 Erika Helm
 Whittaker Harpel
 Sharon Jansen
 Tom Campbell
 Rebekka Esbjornson
 Gerow
 Julie Locke
 Lacie Runolfson
 Rachel Williams-Martinez
 Nova Schauss
 Sue Mkrkichian
 Laurie Rogers
 Jessica Patrick
 Colleen Hacker
 Bobbi Hughes
 Ken & Carrie Little
 Dave Wolbrecht
 Jeannie Sur
 Jamie Forslund
 Erin Dana
 Candice Hughes
 Alan Rollins
 Stephanie Johnson
 Mandy Schommer
 Lindsey Webb

Sara Burkes
 Kent Leatham
 Dan Wilson
 Dixie Rose
 Heather Waymack
 Claire Barr
 Graham Murtaugh
 Lindsay Marshal
 Asheia Bias
 Mark Jensen
 Matt Newport
 Asha Ajmani
 Erin Hoge
 Jessica Robins
 Bob Stivers
 Paul Ingram
 Bob Ericksen
 Dennis Martin times 2
 Angie Alexander
 Sheri Tonn
 Ann Kelleher
 David Hansen
 Megan
 Kenneth Ngwa
 Marit Trelstad
 Jennifer Newman
 Lorraine Homem
 Liz Boyd
 Sara Bergman
 Gail Egbers
 Kelly Robbins
 Ted Wiegand
 Susan Westering
 Marty Gengenbach
 Hakme Lee
 Ginger Peck
 Stefanie Hotra
 Rona Kaufman
 Yu-Jen Wang
 Kay and Thom McDade
 Juliet Mize
 Everett Barr
 John Yu
 and countless others...

We've started the list of people who inspire us with hope, now it's your turn to continue it. Detach the slip below and share it with someone who brightens your day, opens your mind, skips with you through the good times or the bad or just generally rocks your face off.

Congratulations!

You, _____,
 are hereby recognized as a source of hope.

Thank you for your inspiration!

THE MATRIX
 THE MATRIX

_____ From

"There is no hope of joy except in human relations."

-Antoine de Saint-Exupery

"In every community there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it."

-Marianne Williamson

"Come out of the circle of time And into the circle of love."

-Rumi