



Peace Activist Trial Nears

by Don Maddox

Activist and Humboldt County resident Katherine Zimmerman's trial is coming up. Kat was one of four HSU students arrested while riding bicycles on Hwy 101 to the Nov. 2, 2005 peace rally in Eureka. Several VFP members were cited in Eureka the same day while exercising their First Amendment rights protesting the war on Iraq. As reported by Kat and witnesses at the scene, she was brutally knocked off her bicycle by CHP officer Randy Price, resulting in her receiving a mild concussion. After regaining consciousness, Kat was allowed to ride on to Eureka where she was taken down again and arrested, this time by EPD. Kat says she is still feeling the affects of the trauma, both physically and emotionally.

As is often the case when protesters and law enforcement encounter each other in protests and activists are injured, police turn things around and charge the activist with battery. Kat was singled out and received the bulk of charges handed out by law enforcement. She is charged with three misdemeanors; Battery of a Police Officer, Obstructing or Delaying a Police Officer and Resisting Arrest. She is also charged with an infraction, Disobeying the Minimum Speed Limit. Kat tells me that if found guilty of these charges, she could receive a combined sentence of up to three years in jail.

Kat was originally charged with a Felony Battery of a Police Officer. This charge was later dropped to a misdemeanor by the DA when reportedly x-rays could not confirm the injuries claimed by Officer Price. According to Kat, her original court date was delayed when Officer Price claimed he could not attend court proceedings because he was taking strong pain medications for his claimed injuries.

Kat has requested that people contact DA Paul Gallegos and request that her charges

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Thou Shalt Not Commit Capitalism

by Dave Tschoepe

Separation of church and state has never truly existed in America, and is becoming less apparent. If Christianity has become synonymous with our military-enforced brand of capitalism, then it is clear why "third world" nations despise Americans and Christians.

After serving in South Vietnam (1967-68), I have taken varied journeys in my struggle to adapt as a veteran. On one journey, I studied toward becoming a priest in the Episcopal Church. I pursued a Master of Divinity degree in a theological seminary for two years. After Vietnam, I developed serious issues with authority. I inevitably realized that I could not obey the authorities within church hierarchy, thus I dropped out of seminary. My seminary experience clarified what I saw as hypocrisy in a nation, based on Christianity, with lip service to freedom of religion. For most of our history, that freedom has been granted mostly to white, male Protestants. In our lifetimes, employment preferences have been granted to white Protestants over Catholics, Jews and Muslims. Hindus, Buddhists, and others not fitting into our ethnocentric stereotypes were labeled as "heathens." Before the election of John F. Kennedy, a Catholic could not have been president. But we still have and will have religious bigotry.

Over the last four years, a quote from one of my seminary professors has been ringing in my ears—"Religion is imbedded in politics in primitive cultures." In spite of advances in technology and medicine, our politics, economy, and culture are still primitive. In antiquity, powerful cultures conquered weaker cultures and looted their resources. The Vikings did a lot of conquering and looting, and believed that good warriors would go to Valhalla in death. With our massive war technology, we still conquer weaker nations and loot their resources on an exponentially greater scale than any time in history. Today's medical technology saves the lives of many soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. In past wars, many of these young lives would have been lost, but they will survive to become disabled veterans. But as disabled veterans, many will not get the health care that they need from the V.A., because money that is needed for medical care is diverted to feed our gluttonous war in Iraq.

Religion is imbedded in (or printed on) our money as "In God We Trust." Many view the use of money as a religious experience. One can keep up with the "Joneses" by making contributions to their religious institution or political party. Because Christmas is a national holiday, it appears that we still profess to be a "Christian Nation." If an alien from another planet visited the U.S. during the Christmas shopping season, the alien would accurately think that we worshiped Santa Claus. Sadly, Christmas spending is the most accurate indicator for the strength of our economy. Christmas spending is a huge neon sign reading "Consumption!" Because our own natural resources cannot sustain our addiction to consumption, we behave like drug addicts on the streets. We commit crimes against others to steal resources and maintain our addiction.

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NEXT VFP 56 MEETING

May 4, 2006 • 7:00 pm

Marsh Commons, 101 H Street, Arcata, California

Info: 707-822-4975 • www.vfp56.org

VFP Profile: Dave Tschoepe

by Becky Luening

Dave Tschoepe, the oldest of six children (two boys and four girls), was born in 1947. His father, a Texas native, never graduated from high school and farmed for a living. His mother, on the other hand, came from a privileged Pittsburgh family and attended an exclusive women's college through her junior year. For the first 12 years of his life Dave's family lived in Ligonier, Pennsylvania (about 50 miles east of Pittsburgh). They then relocated to Ontario, California.

Dave had planned to go to college to become a graphic artist, but when he graduated from high school in the 1960s there was a war going on. Dave felt an obligation to follow in the footsteps of the previous generation's WWII soldiers. In addition, he thought military training would lead to a great career, like it had for a friend's father who had served as an aircraft mechanic in WWII. Expecting to be drafted anyway, Dave volunteered for the Air Force and began service in September 1965.

During the first two months of grueling physical workouts and an in-your-face drill sergeant yelling all the time, Dave remembers thinking, "Oh man, I could be in college right now." After basic training he had three-and-a-half months of aircraft mechanic training in Texas, then was transferred to Kansas where he served as "crew chief" responsible for C130 cargo aircraft maintenance. When off duty, Dave and his buddies drank beer and had fun with Kansas girls.

After a year and a half, Dave was shipped out to an Air Force detachment in Taiwan. One month later, he volunteered to go to Vietnam. One friend from Kansas had already been shot down in the war, and that gave him pause. But Dave was still basing his decisions on the WWII model. He figured the status of "war vet" would earn points later with potential employers.

Dave was stationed at an airbase in Nha Trang from September '67 to March '68. Once there, he volunteered to work in the aircraft tire shop instead of continuing as crew chief. There were four cavernous C130 cargo planes on base. Painted black, they carried top-secret electronics (probably for surveillance), and had booms on their front ends. There were also several C123 planes, used for Agent Orange spraying missions, some old WWII C47s, used for dropping flares around the base at night to illuminate enemy movement, and WWII model A1Es, used for dropping napalm around the base perimeter.

Nha Trang, a beautiful coastal town about 30 miles north of Cam Ranh Bay, is the Vietnamese equivalent of the French Riviera. Whenever Dave left the base, he was shocked at the hatred displayed by the locals toward American servicemen. People often threw dirt clods at them and yelled things like "Go to hell GIs!" It was puzzling, considering they were there to help.

After a while, a lot of the men in Dave's outfit began questioning the official story. Nevertheless, Dave basically had a good time during his first two months in Vietnam. He had been told it was a safe assignment, and it seemed so.

Then came his first mortar attack. About 100 guys were in the dining hall around midnight when they heard the first loud thud. The enemy's target was the flight line, 50 to 100 feet away. Inexperienced Dave followed everyone else making a beeline to the nearest bunker: maximum capacity 25. After standing in line for a few minutes with 75 other guys, Dave realized they weren't getting in. The second bunker he ran to was also full. Panic set in. Finally he dashed about 100 feet to the latrine which, surrounded by sandbags, was safer than being out in the open.

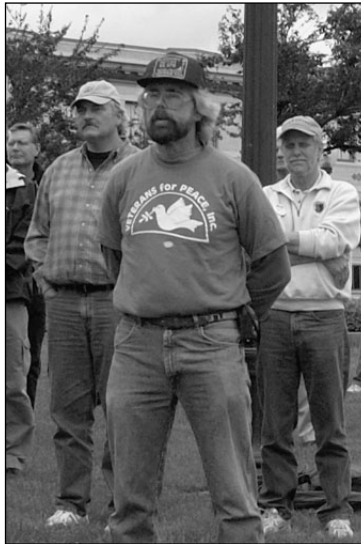
When the all-clear signal came a couple hours later, Dave did not feel safe going back to his bunker, as it was located right next to the targeted C130 flight line and one C130 already had been destroyed that night. Instead he headed to the tire shop. There, in a big metal enclosure designed to protect workers in case of tire explosions, he felt more secure, but he never did get to sleep.

Mortar attacks came fairly frequently after that, and though they usually weren't as bad and didn't last as long, Dave's nerves started getting badly frayed. Around Christmastime, LBJ's bombing of North Vietnam brought retaliation against U.S. bases in the south. On Christmas Eve, the enlisted men were treated to a nice meal, throughout which they listened to the drone of A1E aircraft napalming the base perimeter. Disturbed by the noise, Dave responded by getting drunk. During his carefree Kansas days Dave drank 3/2 beer. Now he drank whiskey, and often had alcohol-induced blackouts.

A second C130 was shot down on a mission in the middle of the night and five men were killed in the crash, including two enlisted men from Dave's unit. Loadmaster Williams had been a good friend. He was an easy-going family man with a couple kids at home. Flight engineer Bones had been known for his wild sense of humor. Only two C130s of the original four remained.

The "grand finale" of Dave's Vietnam experience came during the Tet offensive of 1968. Tet is the Vietnamese celebration of Lunar New Year. Dave remembers going to town one night to check out the festivities. There were booths with food and trinkets and people setting off strings of firecrackers. But underneath the festive atmosphere Dave picked up on some very strong bad vibes. He and his buddies drank a few quick beers and returned to their base.

Late on the night of January 30, the mortars began falling. Practically every base in South Vietnam was hit. The usual protocol was for men to dive under their bunks first, and then wait for a quiet spell to move to the bunker. On this night the quiet spell never came. Security police responsible for patrolling the base perimeter came by to warn the airmen that the entire base



Dave Tschoepe at Arcata vigil.

PHOTO BY DON MADDOX



was surrounded and recommended they arm themselves. Unfortunately, although there were supposed to be weapons in every barracks on the base, the men in Dave's outfit were never issued weapons and never had access to them. Being unarmed that night only added to their anxiety.

The next morning, Dave felt immense relief at being alive. Immediately that evening, anyone who wanted to go was evacuated to Taiwan for R&R. Already sleepless for two days, an intense adrenaline rush and a night of drinking kept everyone up for another night. A week of Chinese New Year frolicking and heavy drinking helped extinguish the adrenaline fire, but it wasn't what you'd call "rest and relaxation." By the time he returned to Nha Trang, Dave's nerves were basically shot.

Three new C130s soon arrived to replace the two that had been lost, bringing the total to five. In addition, more enlisted men were brought in. When told there were too many men on the base, Dave immediately volunteered to go back to Taiwan.

The day he left Vietnam was one of the most memorable of Dave's service. He remembers the frighteningly slow lift-off in the old C47, and the relief he felt once the plane was elevated. At the airport in Saigon, he sat under a gaping hole in the roof where a couple American soldiers (plus some civilians) had been blown away the day before just as they were about to leave the country after completing their tour.

Prior to Vietnam, Dave had been a conscientious airman, always scoring high on performance reviews. Post Vietnam, while stationed in Taiwan, he was often belligerent and disobedient. Full of nervous, wild energy, he self medicated for the rest of his 13 months in the military. Drunk five nights a week, he usually drank himself to sleep. Although a disappointment to his NCOs (they didn't even bother reviewing his performance), his peers admired Dave's insubordination. He was let go four months early.

As they say in those Marine ads, "the change is forever." Dave's nervousness, anti-authority attitude and heavy alcohol use came back to haunt him as he attempted to return to civilian life. A big wake-up call came in October 1969. By this time he could drink a quart of whiskey in an evening and remain standing, which is what he had done the night he was picked up for drunk driving. After his arrest, when given the opportunity to make a phone call, his belligerence surfaced. "Hell no! I don't want to make any calls!" He didn't realize it would be his only opportunity. Luckily, his father was concerned when Dave didn't return home, and finally tracked him down and bailed him out. In the meantime, he missed a job interview. After this incident, Dave stopped drinking hard liquor. If he hadn't, he muses, "I probably wouldn't be alive today."

It turned out that Dave's career opportunities were not enhanced by his veteran status. For one thing, Defense contractors were laying off as the war wound down, and there too many vets competed for few available jobs. In addition, unlike WWII soldiers, Vietnam veterans got little respect. In 1969 Dave met an ex-marine who talked about killing off whole villages of Vietnamese. He had heard a similar story from another friend who had been in the army. That friend told how the guys in his

platoon couldn't handle the killing demanded by their platoon sergeant and so they eventually killed him. Shortly after Dave heard this, Lt. William Calley was indicted for the gruesome My Lai Massacre. With these kinds of stories coming out of Vietnam, there was no pride and little validation back home for the soldiers who had served there.

Dave went through three factory jobs in a year's time before deciding to go to college in early 1971. That fall he discovered the existence of a Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) chapter on his Chaffey Junior College campus in Alta Loma, California. For the first time he embraced his veteran identity, joining VVAW protests against the war. A full-time student, he eventually drifted away from activism, but throughout his college years most of his friends were other Vietnam vets.

Dave graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 1974 with a BA in Behavioral Science. He worked for a while in a psychiatric ward but his anti-authoritarian attitude rubbed his employers the wrong way and they finally forced him to resign. He attended grad school for a month, then dropped out. He tried studying mechanical engineering but dropped out after a year and a half due to the stress of attending school and working at the same time. All told, he tried going back to school five or six different times, but always found it hard to keep the energy up.

Finally, in his 30s, Dave hit on the vocation that would carry him for 20+ years—metal fabrication. Although he found satisfaction in working with metal, he still had problems holding down jobs, and estimates he has held 30 to 40 different jobs over his lifetime. He also has made an on-and-off attempt at being an artist—his favorite medium is acrylic paint—but figures his art career will have to wait until retirement. He currently works as a maintenance technician at the Open Door Clinic.

After his brief experience with VVAW during college, Dave mostly hid the fact he was a veteran. For 30 years he rarely admitted it due to shame about the Vietnam war. But when George H.W. Bush bombed Iraq in the early '90s his anxiety level shot way up. And when Dubya sent troops into Iraq three years ago it happened again. He felt resentful at the way the Iraq soldiers were treated as "heroes." He felt like a lost soul.

One day he spotted VFP-22's blue-and-white "Spirit of Garberville" bus at the Arcata Co-op. Then he saw Edilith Eckart on KEET's Living Biographies show on TV. Learning there was a local Veterans For Peace chapter, he sought it out. When he came to his first meeting at the Redwood Peace & Justice Center in February 2003, Dave says, "I felt like I'd come home...I met my tribe." He is a regular at the Friday vigils on the Arcata Plaza.

Joining VFP not only allowed Dave to reclaim his identity as a veteran. It was his salvation. It helps to know that other veterans were going through the same things. On the recommendation of Bill Thompson and Brian Willson, Dave finally took the step of going to the veterans' counseling center. He is now receiving help for his anxiety and insomnia. He admits his life has been a wild ride, and although he still has ups and downs, they are not quite as dramatic. VFP has been a big part of his ongoing healing process. His girlfriend Sarah, who he's been with for almost two years, is another solid anchor in his life.



Urgent: The Time is Ripe for Revolutionary Choice

by S. Brian Willson

Civilization: The Trauma that Sidetracked Humans

After several thousand years of the Agricultural Revolution that followed the last Ice Age, a new concept sprang into the human mind: "surplus." About 5,500 years ago, surplus became a significant factor paving the way for the Urban Revolution, ushering in what we call "civilization." The basic ingredients of "Western civilization" were introduced at that time, causing a traumatic disruption in the development over thousands of years of human autonomy within small, interactive social organizations.

The basic model of "civilization," for all but the most isolated and exceptional Indigenous groups, has seen the advent of powerful male oligarchs surrounded by elite bureaucracies of scribes and priests, overseeing hierarchies that involuntarily force, or induce through mind-numbing ideologies, large numbers of laborers to construct large projects for the pleasure and profit of the king. Wars, systematic violence, and harsh class division originated with "civilization." Secrecy of priestly knowledge about cosmic regularities and calendar-making assured that such knowledge was monopolized by a small elite surrounding the oligarch. And the maxim, "the best defense is attack," was often used in early warfare, roots of today's preventive strikes. There have been nearly 15,000 major wars during the last 5,000 years.

This male-dominator, hierarchical, bureaucratic model, dependent upon violence, terror, class and secrecy to induce mass compliance in service to the oligarch, has been accomplished through our participation and obedi-

ence; ironically, by our choice. Corporations, representative democracies, as well as monarchial and dictatorial regimes, all follow a similar pattern: tyranny imposed by vertical power "authorities" that tragically undermines archetypal human features of autonomous interaction within local steady-state economies and cultures.

Recovery: The Ecozoic Age

We are now at a pivotal point in history, and it is an extraordinary moment to be alive. We are witnessing the end of a long, dark era, perhaps the terrifying conclusion of our own species, but at the same time knowing we are capable of participating in a new revolution as dramatic as the earlier agricultural and urban revolutions. Precariously perched on this ledge, we can easily see our imminent extinction after a 7- to 8-million-year hominid journey, *and*, the dawn of a new, biocentric, healing era. Some version of these dramatic and apparently contradictory destinies is immediately and readily visible.

Our obedience to the vertical authorities that ruptured the organic accounting system that was possible when living close to the Earth, is in its last throes. Our nearly religious belief in and uncritical dependence upon dangerous, mind-numbing technology puts us at the brink. We have plundered paradise, and are about to exhaust Earth's supply of finite resources, while mindlessly committing suicide with the toxic byproducts of converting those resources to energy thanks to our avarice and our obsession with speed and size. We have forgotten that small, slow, and local are beautiful. It is amazing, and tragic, to think that we, the laborers and consumers, have provided the funding and

legitimizing energy that has enabled this power structure to destroy life—our life—under the delusion that it was the good life we were getting in return.

Luckily we are a *choice-making* species, not immutably stuck with the systems we have created, grown up with, and been obedient to. By shifting our thinking and our choices, our stories and dreams can begin to reflect our honest experiences and imaginings of the sacred weave of all life. The Gaia (the living earth) is begging us to choose active participation in our human evolutionary journey. This is done exactly where we are in this moment—right here, right now.

Mindfulness in *all* of our choices—from the food we eat and the items we acquire, to the tools we make, the manner in which we move our bodies, and how we express our creative talents—is a revolutionary and life-saving act. We can practice mutual mindfulness, seeking sustainability in all we do and healing from addictions reinforced by dumbed-down "market" forces. When we access the submerged ancient wisdom residing in each of us, rooted in the rhythms of Mother Earth and Father Sky, a new path unfolds before our eyes. As we integrate with the Gaia, new energies and wisdom unfold as quantum physics suggests.

Being mindful of *every* choice, every day, matters immensely! In fact it means life or death. Whether the Ecozoic age emerges via our new biocentric consciousness, or whether we stubbornly remain plunderers stuck in technozoic addictions and anthropomorphic arrogance, is our choice. It is time to let go of *Homo Sapiens* (mistakenly referring to us as wise), and enable our recovery as humble *Homo Amicus* (friendly to ourselves and all life).



Vets Cycling to Seattle

The motto for the annual Veterans For Peace convention in Seattle, August 10-13, 2006 is "Sow Justice—Reap Peace: Struggles For Moving Beyond War." In the spirit of struggle for moving beyond war, some veterans plan to cycle to the convention, demonstrating a commitment to dramatically reduce dependence upon/addiction to oil, and reduce personal production of greenhouse gases that directly contribute to catastrophic global warming.

It is a fact that our insatiable consumptive way of life, facilitated by the brief historical blip of an oil era now peaking, is a major cause of war. For 500 years colonialism has enriched 20 percent of the world's Eurocentric population by violently enforcing impoverishment and repression of the remaining 80 percent, through policies rooted in a deep racism. This colonialism, now in its last gasps, has left most of us disturbingly addicted to an unsustainable way of life while we have been led to believe the mythology of living in an exceptional "representative democracy." But the truth is out: we know this rhetorical conditioning of our minds has disguised a way of life, and political oligarchic system, that is dependent upon theft by violence, both at home and abroad—based on systemic, structural injustices.

With but 4.5 percent of the world's population, U.S. people collectively consume anywhere from 25 percent to nearly half the world's resources. This destructive footprint requires more than 5 times what the earth can provide per person, and 6 times than that of an average "Third World" person. It is critical in this moment to imagine radical leaps in the way we think and see reality, and the way we behave, including what we eat, how we work, what materials we choose for our homes, etc. Changing personal travel patterns of U.S. Americans becomes a revolutionary opportunity, as with other "consumer" choices.

As vets, our decision to travel without using petroleum or emitting poisons, is a message directly addressing a significant cause of war—shockingly, one of which is our up-to-now mindless behavior and choices enabled solely by oil, and the long record of illegal U.S. interventions stealing resources, markets, and labor from others. Cycling to Seattle is a chance to model personal responsibility by seeking peak oil alternatives, initiating anti-war activities, living more sustainably, promoting local community reliance, becoming physically and mentally fit, choosing to eat local organic food, etc.

As plans stand at this moment, there will be a large send-off in Eugene, Oregon, some 350 miles south of Seattle in the latter part of July. An undetermined number of vets are coming from as far south as Santa Barbara to cycle with us, and veterans in VFP and VVAW chapters in Oregon and Washington, as well as community groups, will assist in organizing events along the way. Several people from Chapter 56, and other locals, have expressed intention to participate.

Dave Tschoepe, one of our most loyal and active members, who will be traveling on his Arcata self-made bicycle, suggested creating a local "cycling to the convention committee" to begin planning details, where the devil often resides. This is a heads up for those who want to assist in this revolutionary act.

—S. Brian Willson

THOU SHALT NOT...continued from page 1

Mr. President flaunts his religion that is imbedded in his politics. He claims that he prays for guidance in decision-making every day. Perhaps I should not question the validity of another's religious experience, but George W's sanctimonious attitude enrages me. For an evangelical fundamentalist, there is no possibility of varied interpretation of the Bible's texts (even though there are contradictions between the Bible's different books). As an evangelical Christian, Bush claims to believe the biblical texts literally. But, the fruit of his labor betrays the Bible's messages. He has brought death, destruction, sickness, and poverty to Afghanistan, Iraq, and America. This administration told America's pliable masses many lies, and convinced them that we needed to go into Iraq and kill many of their people and ours. If W looked into the texts of the Ten Commandments, he would read that he is not to lie and kill. A relevant quote from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" As we recall when we first invaded Iraq, there were protests all around the U.S. and the rest of the world. Bush wrote off those of us who wanted peace as "focus groups." It was a lie that attacking Iraq was a peacemaking effort. In the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus also addressed public piety: "Beware of practicing your piety in public; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." Of course W got his reward in votes from the "Religious Right." When a rich man asked Jesus what he should do, Jesus told him to sell all of his belongings, give the proceeds to the poor, and to follow Jesus. After the rich man sadly left, Jesus said, "... it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Jesus and his values would be unpopular in the U.S. today, as they contradict capitalism. If he came to twenty-first century America with the same messages, he would be labeled as "anti-American," a "whacko," a "bleeding heart," and a "hippie."

Bush is not the whole problem, but he is the instrument of the powerful and greedy. Corporate America and war profiteers love this administration for the flood of tax dollars and for lifting of environmental restrictions. Bush has fulfilled their wildest dreams. The tax cuts continue to shift the tax burden downward toward working people, while corporations and wealthy individuals pay less and less of the taxes. The Bush administration has inflicted a huge amount of destruction to our planet and humanity on a global scale. We all share some of the blame, as all of us have used gasoline, and we all have consumed a huge share of resources in proportion with the rest of the world. We need not beat up on ourselves in our error of consumption, because we all grew up believing in the system. Now that we understand the pitfalls of capitalism, we can reduce or nearly eliminate our purchase of corporate goods and petroleum. We can divert more dollars locally in buying locally produced products, and we can buy used items at yard sales and thrift shops. Buying used items keeps money out of corporate coffers and reduces our propensity to over-consume, waste, and pollute. Driving electric and biodiesel vehicles is great for anybody who is fortunate enough to own one. Those who must drive petroleum-powered vehicles can be fuel-efficient by driving less. One can accomplish more errands per trip, and car-pooling is an option—not just to be efficient, but to save our ever-shrinking dollars. We can also walk more and ride bicycles. We can learn how enjoyable this can make our lives, as we slow down and notice the amazing planet that we live on.



SB1720 Rolls On

The Veterans Health and Safety Act of 2006

by Fred Hummel

After months of scrambling, the bill to help test returning California service members for exposure to DU is finally starting to make headway. This is the bill that VFP56's DU/WMD Committee has been working on in cooperation with State Senator Wes Chesbro. On Tuesday, April 25, SB1720 will face its first hearing before a senate committee, the Veterans Affairs Committee chaired by Republican Bill Morrow. On hand to testify before the Solons will be our own Peter Aronson, chair of our local committee.

Peter will be carrying the ball solo as our side will be allowed only one person to testify. Will there be opposition? We can assume the CA Department of Veterans Affairs, as the department that will carry the brunt of enforcing the statute, might at least have a strong interest in how the bill is written. Crafting a bill in any legislature, however, has always been compared to making sausage, you might like the product but you wouldn't want to watch it being made. And we can report

that the text of SB1720 has already gone through one revision before its first hearing. You can read the bill itself by logging on to www.sen.ca.gov. Click on "Legislation" and enter SB1720 when prompted.

What, exactly, will SB1720 require? For starters, the State of California must assist eligible returning service members and veterans in obtaining a best practice health screening for exposure to DU. An outreach plan, essential to identify those who are eligible, would also be mandated. Once these individuals have been identified, they will then be interviewed to determine the adequacy of pre- and post-deployment military training for determining whether they had exposure to DU. An annual report would be produced which would clearly define the scope and adequacy of such training.

Further, information garnered in this process will be used to make findings regarding the health risks of exposure to DU thus exposing to the public facts which should have been made public years ago. What the feds will not do, the states must. Louisiana and Connecticut have already adopted somewhat similar legislation and many states, including Hawai'i, New York, Washington, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Minnesota currently have DU bills before their legislatures or are planning to do so.

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Major Shifts in Nuclear Weapons Policy

by June Thompson, Associate Member VFP-56

In the February Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship newsletter, John Sloane noted that the Department of Energy has received \$25 million for a program "to lead to a family of modern nuclear weapons." Let me expand on this.

What is actually proposed is simply staggering. The initial report called for "manufacturing a new generation of more flexible warheads *at a single site* that would consolidate activities previously done at plants across the country" to produce 125 new warheads a year by 2030 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 15, 2005). Earlier proposals called for "more usable nuclear weapons," but that explicit adjective has been changed to "more flexible" or "more reliable," as in the present term, "the Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW). And then there's my personal favorite: the "capability-based" force "to defeat any new foes, even if it does not know what capabilities are needed at this time or what the missions are."

Congress appropriated the \$25 million for research with full bipartisan support because it was "viewed as an exercise in restraint" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, November 28, 2005). Actually it is a down payment on a major policy shift that will ultimately cost many billions.

This was later revealed by Linton Brooks, head of the

National Nuclear Security Administration that manages the arsenal. He describes a redesign of virtually all components of the warhead that will likely be heavier and larger than the ones they replace. They will require new plutonium pits produced by melting down the present ones and recasting them (*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 15, 2006).

Brooks confirmed that the existing stockpile (more than 10,000 warheads) is still in perfect working order. The Stockpile Stewardship Program has spent an estimated \$60 billion to assure that they are functional and will remain so. He also insists that the new warheads will not require underground testing, banned since 1992, even though critics argue that the military will never deploy an untested nuclear weapon. The task force report, meanwhile, has urged construction of new facilities at the Nevada Test Site, including preparation for possible underground testing.

These new weapons will most likely need new delivery systems. To put this in perspective, even without this sweeping policy change, the nuclear weapons budget has more than doubled from the mid-1990s to about \$6.5 billion annually.

Ramping up our nuclear weapons program will mean completely ignoring the Non-Proliferation Treaty; hence, no possible curbs on any other nation and their nuclear ambitions. This can only make the world more dangerous and unlivable. Is that what we want?

Reprinted from Humboldt Unitarian Universal Fellowship newsletter. For an update see: "Need for new U.S. Nuclear Arsenal Disputed" (San Francisco Chronicle, 3/21/06).



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Since DU is clearly a federal issue, had the US Congress found the will to address DU legislation like that repeatedly proposed by Congressmen Serrano (D-NY) and McDermott (D-WA) we might already have seen the scourge of DU being lifted. Going through state legislatures may be a slower approach but that's the path that's left to us and we won't turn away.

Please mention SB1720 to your circle of friends and family and ask for their support. Pick up your pen, your phone or peck at your keyboard and express your support of SB1720 to Sen. Chesbro. He's going to need all the help he can get from veterans on this issue. (See contact information below.) For VFP56 members who live in different counties, writing to your senators will give them a heads-up on the DU issue and the knowledge that vets in their districts want to see SB1720 become law.

As it stands now, our VFP56 DU committee has contact information for about 1,400 vets groups around the state. Our goal is to make contact with each of them and urge their endorsement of SB1720. Initial response has been positive but, as you well know, across the broad spectrum of vets groups one can find many different perspectives. We need to have them all aboard on this issue.

Write to: Wes Chesbro
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Or phone: Capitol office 916-445-3375
Eureka office 707-445-6508

Or email: senator.chesbro@sen.ca.gov

PEACE ACTIVIST TRIAL NEARS ...continued from front page

be dropped. Remind Paul that it was progressives of the county that led the effort to elect him to office and that he should uphold his promise to prosecute all equally and that should include prosecution of abuse by law enforcement.

Call Paul: 800-962-8261.
(Ask for Paul and leave message.)

Or write to: DA Paul Gallegos
825 5th Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Please support our young peace activist by attending Kat's trial. A packed court room in support of a defendant has a profound impact on jurors and the judge. Together we can help Kat beat these bogus charges. Kat's next scheduled court appearances are on May 9 at 2pm in Courtroom 3 at the county courthouse for trial confirmation and on May 15 in the same room at 8:30am for the trial. Bear in mind that these dates can change. I'll try to stay on top of this so you can call me if you would like an update. My phone number is 825-0553 and my email is dosma@pacbell.net . Call me also to arrange carpooling. I'll try to post trial updates on the rpjc-announce list as well. Bear in mind that these dates can change. Contact me for updates (825-0553 or dosma@pacbell.net) and to arrange carpooling. I'll try to post trial update emails as well.

IN A GLIMPSE

In a glimpse the nature of life pictured!

The birds putting their struggle for life
in their babies' mouths!

The tadpoles clinging to life on reeds—
striving not to be eaten before they become frogs!

In a glimpse all life forms struggling to survive—
striving to become!

In a glimpse all the lonely people searching for that glimpse
in another's eye—to make us feel wanted—to make us feel whole!

In a glimpse—our separation some call freedom—
bringing us in the end only cosmic tears!

In a glimpse the whole world is watching our connection
and our failure to connect!

In a glimpse our human failure—the starving, the persecuted,
the neglected and the greedy always trying in vain
to fill their own void!

In a glimpse our individualism gone berserk—
our separateness always at war!

In a glimpse the word democracy plagiarized—
scrawled on the warhead of a missile pointed at children!

In a glimpse depleted uranium babies with no eyes!

In a glimpse all the bald Iraqi children dying
from leukemia, lung cancer, liver cancer, skin cancer—
the legacy of U.S. nuclear war!

In a glimpse the malignant tumor of corporate capitalism
devouring the organs of life!

In a glimpse the neurons metastasize its cancer of the soul and body
throughout our host—this body Earth!

In a glimpse the earth is calling 911—we need another glimpse—
we need another glimpse!

A glimpse of ourselves in the other's eyes!

A glimpse of our freedom—
being each our own unique reflection of the whole!

In a glimpse the Lotus—the frog—the turtle—the bird—the wolf
call us to our unity—
call us to take a glimpse of our redemption—
joining the circle again—coming back to each other—
coming back home to Mother Earth again—
and in that glimpse we will see our true freedom—
the freedom of ONE!

— Rob Hepburn





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

**NEW Phone: 707-822-4975
Email: VFP56@aol.com**

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!
<http://www.vfp56.org>**

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Kathie Kelly**

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COMMITTEES**

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General Store: Doug Smith
Media: Becky Luening
VEOP: Laura Simpson
Carl Stancil**

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read that might interest the members of VFP-56, please email it to turtldncer@aol.com in Word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.

Do Your Laundry and Celebrate Mother's Day – Two Great Ways to Support The Emma Center –

Saturday, May 6th – Do your wash at Emerald City Laundry. All proceeds from laundry washed and dried at Emerald City that day will go towards The Emma Center.

Sunday, May 14th – The Emma Center hosts a Mother's Day Brunch at the Bayside Grange! Enjoy an array of wonderful gourmet food with entertainment by The Fabulous Blue Jayz. There will be fun surprises and activities for the entire family, including a silent auction. The fun starts at 9:00am and goes until 1:00pm. Brunch is \$10 per person; \$5 for kids 10 and under. For more information call 825-6680.



Founded a year ago by VFP-56 associate member Paige Alisen, The Emma Center has already provided services to over 100 women dealing with trauma and abuse issues and conducted several community workshops on PTSD and healing from trauma. The Emma Center offers walk-in services, weekly support groups, a lending library, and referrals to local professionals who donate counseling and bodywork services. The focus is on an integrative, holistic approach to healing from the long-term effects of abuse. All services are free or low-cost sliding scale. The Emma Center is in the very beginning stages of manifesting a women's residential center for trauma survivors. Call 825-6680 for more information or visit www.emmacenter.org.



**Veterans For Peace Chapter 56
P.O. Box 532
Bayside, CA 95524**