

Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp

by Sandra Jo Palm

Who is at the Peace Camp?

We are the ordinary women: mothers, daughters, sisters, workers. And we feel that time is running out for all of life on earth. We are camped near the Boeing Cruise missile plant in Kent, Washington. Our Peace Camp was inspired by the courageous women of Greenham Common Royal Air Base since 1981.

What are you trying to do?

We are a peaceful force to halt production of the Cruise and to encourage conversion to peaceful production in the Puget Sound Region. We want to stop all forms of violence at home and abroad. We want to live in a new way, based on respect and harmony with each other and the earth.

What do you actually do?

We have daily vigils outside the Boeing plant and frequent actions to remind the Boeing workers and community that two nuclear Cruise missiles are produced here every day. We speak to local groups about the need for Boeing workers to have the right to work and to have a voice in what their work produces. We work both in coalitions and independently through action and workshops to create an awareness of the connections between rise of U.S. militarism and violence toward all oppressed groups: women, poor people, people of color, Jewish people, Native Americans, the mentally and physically disabled, the young and elderly, lesbians and gay men. We expand and experiment with feminist process so that it contributes to each woman's self-esteem and the expansion of her repertoire of behavior.

Why are you an all woman camp?

The view that women and men are essentially the same and should relate to each other as fellow (note this word) human beings is not historical. Women have and still have barriers that prevent them from full participation in economic, social, political and religious concerns of the world. The effects of

this sexism are twofold: a woman has not been able to develop all the parts of herself and the world has not been influenced by those values that it has relegated to women. A community of women is a powerful force to work against both these effects. Our goal in all our Peace Camp practices is to empower each other in the true sense of the word *power* (from the Latin *Potere*, to be able). We are also exploring ways of making the axis of the world pass through women's values. Many groups of men and women are incorporating feminist philosophy and process. All too often, however, men rely on women to get out the newsletter mailings and "man" the literature tables while they do the speaking and media work. At present women's communities are the most fertile ground for the development of women's visions.

What's it like living at the Peace Camp?

It is very exciting. Each day is different. Every woman finds herself doing things she never thought she would be doing. A typical day at the camp for a woman might include planning morning exercise for those interested, attending a community meeting, doing a household chore, attending a police liaison meeting, answering the phone, greeting visitors, speaking at a college class or a noon club meeting, writing a proposal for the general meeting or a newsletter article or news release, helping a child build a play house, holding our Peace Camp banner at the afternoon Boeing vigil, helping with dinner and facilitating an evening meeting (political, street theater, affinity group, outreach, coalition, etc.) Days are always full and never long enough to get everything done. There is the satisfaction that you have had the privilege of spending the entire day working for peace and justice.

How do you get your money?

An amazing amount of \$5, \$10, and \$20 checks come in the mail, primarily from women in the Northwest. Around 100 women and men pledge \$5 a month. We also sell T-shirts and sweatshirts and often receive honorariums for speaking. Most participants donate expenses of their activities, including stamps. Neighbors and friends donate food. We have no paid workers. Every penny we spend is carefully considered at weekly money meetings.

How many women are involved in camp?

We have around 50 participants who give an incredible amount of time. Half of these consider the Peace Camp their full-time work (some of these have full time paying jobs, also). A few of these participants live at the

camp. The camp often has foreign, California and Pacific Northwest visitors. The encampment work leans heavily on fresh energy from visitors.

How are lesbians treated at Camp?

Our camp is one of those unique places on earth where lesbians and heterosexual women do not find a need to form sub-groups based on sexuality. We respect and love each other and take seriously all sexuality choices — lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual and celibate.

Is there a lot of Goddess worship?

There is a shared feeling among women that organized religion is not pointing the way to women's spirituality. In addition, feminists find religious institutions hierarchical, spectator-oriented, and sexist. Many women at the Peace Camp are exploring new and old ways of developing their spirituality. These include centering circles, participatory rituals developed for specific occasions, optional small group traditional rituals, shabbat, Quaker meeting for worship, Buddhist drumming and chanting, meditation and goddess visualization exercises.

How can we help?

Everything you are now doing for peace helps us at the camp because we are all connected. Specific ways to help the camp include spending at least a night, monthly pledges of \$5, donations of food and house or camp equipment. In small ways keep changing your life to reflect the fact that you accept personal responsibility for ending nuclear war and social, political, and economic injustice. We can be reached by writing Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp, 7604 212th S., Kent, Washington 98032 or phone 206-872-3482.

Editor's note: Sandra Jo is a Portland artist who has been living at the Peace Camp since its beginning last summer.

**SUPPORT OUR
ADVERTISERS
THEY
SUPPORT
US**

ALICE D. ELLIS
ATTORNEY AT LAW

**PARKINSON, FONTANA, SCHUMANN, JONES,
ELLIS and STEENSON**

415 N.W. 18th, PORTLAND, • 221-1792

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION

GENERAL PRACTICE, INCLUDING:
INJURY ACCIDENTS • REAL ESTATE
DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS
DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE
CRIMINAL DEFENSE • POLICE ABUSE

WE FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS
MEMBERS — NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

Distinctive Handcrafted Shades



Our specialty — Victorian styling — silk, satin, lace and georgette are blended with beaded and silk fringes.
Bases for sale separately.

Custom work available to fit your tastes & color scheme, from elaborate to elegantly simple.

Shipping available — write for our brochure.

YESTERSHADES

3534 SE Hawthorne
Portland, OR 97214
238-5755

MON-THURS 11:30 AM-10 PM
FRI & SAT 11:30 AM-midnite

*The Food Goddess
Restaurant*



1233 S.W. Morrison
Portland, Oregon 97205
1-503-228-3536

International Natural Foods

orders to go

catering

THE COOKIE BARREL
WHOLESALE • RETAIL

531 S.W. 3rd Ave.
Portland, OR 97204

• Michael
• Dennis

PHONE 241-3344