



JUDI BARI

CHAMPION OF THE REDWOODS

The following tribute to Judi Bari has been excerpted from the EnviroLink Network (ENS) (www.envirolink.org) and reprinted from *The Oregon Peaceworker*. A lasting memorial might be giving her name to the redwood forest she tried to save.

Judi Beatrice Bari, protector of California's world famous redwood forests, died in March of cancer at age 47 in her tiny cabin in the rural community of Willits.

In Sacramento, the California State Senate adjourned in her memory at the request of Senator Tom Hayden, a Democrat representing Los Angeles who chairs the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

"She was a wonderful inspiration to all of us and a steadfast champion of our natural heritage," Senator Hayden said. "She was instrumental in bringing the plight of the ancient redwood forests to national attention. We will sorely miss the energy she provided, particularly in the negotiating fog that envelops the Headwaters forest today, but she has left a legacy of dedicated activists who will carry her banner flying high."

A key organizer of 1990's Redwood Summer, Judi Bari never let any obstacles deter her from her message which communicated the vital importance of the old growth and ancient forests to our ecology. "She worked hard for creative solutions which showed that the need for productive jobs need not perpetuate the current decimation of our vital forest ecosystem," Senator Hayden said.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 7, 1949, Bari is survived by her daughter Lisa Bari, 16, her younger daughter Jessica, her parents Arthur and Ruth Bari, her younger sister Martha, and her older sister Gina Kolata, a science reporter for *The New York Times*.

January 31 was the last time Bari's health allowed her to host her popular weekly public affairs radio show on Mendocino County public radio station KZYX.

During her college years at the University of Maryland, Bari was an anti-Vietnam War protester. She married fellow

easterner Mike Sweeney after they moved separately to California in the early 1980s. Their first home was in Sonoma County where Bari worked with the Committee In Solidarity With the People of El Salvador. After the couple moved to Redwood Valley in Mendocino County, they divorced peaceably and cared jointly for their two daughters.

A carpenter by trade, Bari first became aware of the danger to California's thousand-year-old redwoods when she noticed the ancient wood she was using on the job.

As an Earth First! leader in Northern California in the early 1990s, Bari forged an unprecedented bridge between sawmill workers and loggers on one hand and environmentalists on the other. She persuaded Earth First! to give up the tactic of spiking trees because the spikes could endanger workers in the lumber mills. When workers were doused with toxic fluid in an accident in the Louisiana-Pacific Sawmill at Fort Bragg, Bari organized the affected workers into Local # 1 of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and argued their case successfully in U.S. Labor Court.

Bari was proud of the success of her initial Earth First! campaign in 1988, the blockade of logging on public land near

Cahto Peak near the headwaters of the South Fork Eel River. The 16,000 acre old-growth forest eventually became part of the Cahto Wilderness.

Bari was a ceaseless critic of the deal brokered in 1996 by U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein to save 7500 acres of the 60,000 Headwaters Forest from the loggers of Pacific Lumber Company owned by Maxxam owner Charles Hurwitz. During an interview with ENS last October Bari said, "There are 6 old-growth groves in Headwaters Forest and only 2 of them are protected in this supposed deal. The other 4 — right now we've already won protection for them through the courts. Right now it's illegal for Maxxam to log them. These are ancient redwood groves and they're the last of their kind left on the planet." Bari insisted on protection for all 60,000 acres of the Headwaters Forest.

At Bari's request a big potluck "party" was held in her honor a few days after her death. Her passing was marked with music, dancing and poetry. Her close colleague and friend Daryl Chemey attended.

Chemey is a co-plaintiff with Bari in their case against the FBI, the Oakland Police Department and several individual officers in federal court in Oakland. That case will proceed despite Bari's death. It arose from a car bomb that exploded on May 24, 1990 in Oakland, blowing apart the car in which Bari and Chemey were traveling to a Redwood Summer organizing meeting. Bari's pelvis was severely damaged and she suffered constant pain afterwards. Chemey sustained lesser injuries.

Although the FBI claimed Bari and Chemey were the only suspects in the bombing, charges were never brought against them. Bari and Chemey's case against the law enforcement agencies claims violation of their civil rights among other charges.

Betty Ball, coordinator of the Mendocino Environmental Center in Ukiah, began working with Bari when the Center first opened in 1987. She recalls Bari as, "The most enigmatic imp I ever met. She knew movement history and was a quick study. She could take technical issues and put them forward so that ordinary people could understand and act on them. She was a great orator who held audiences captivated."

ANATOMY OF A TREE

We taxpayers could save ourselves a large amount of money by using appropriate vegetation.

Here in the Pacific Northwest our natural landscape varies from low-lying rivers and creeks to steep terrain. Each biome has its indigenous vegetation. I have spent a lot of time in the forest observing my surroundings and have come to realize there are big differences in the characteristics of trees. Some trees, mainly conifers, have large taproots that hold them and the ground under them stable. Even on a steep slope they grow vertically with no lean in any direction.

On the other hand, other trees, alders in particular, have no taproot, just a fibrous root system barely under the surface of the ground. A mature alder will lean and eventually fall over. It is by nature designed to do so. Alders naturally propagate through blowdowns. A cutting will grow roots and become a tree when stuck in the ground. Knowing this and the fact that alders occur naturally in valley bottoms near rivers or creeks, I have come to the conclusion that the devastating mudslides we get every year could be prevented by careful management of critical hillsides.

Modern logging practices have inadvertently caused unstable stands of alder to grow at the top of almost every ridge. Trees, including alders, are usually dragged from the valley bottom up to the landing where they are limbed, sectioned and loaded on trucks. In the huge piles of slash alders root and take over the bare ridge. Knowing this, you can see how we have seeded the hillsides with them and created the potential for the mudslides that plague us today.

We spend millions of tax dollars to clean up the mess. We are given higher power rates because of trees that fall over the power lines. Replacing the alders with other ground-holding vegetation such as conifer trees or salal would reduce the chances of slides and power failure, and might save us some money on taxes and power rates.

Proof of my point can be easily seen. Just drive down Highway 30. Look at the trees growing on the slopes above the road. If they are leaning, fallen over or being cleared from the roadway by a highway crew, they are probably alder.

While firs and cedars both have a good root system, in my opinion if you want to plant trees next to roads and highways the cedar is the best bet. Unlike the fir it doesn't shed limbs. Lower maintenance costs should mean less cost to us taxpayers. Or more money for other endeavors such as a new bridge crossing the Columbia River at Longview.

Removal of alders and planting of more ground-supporting trees will most likely not eliminate all slides and power failures, but in my belief will be better than doing nothing.

~TED CHAPMAN

Ted Chapman lives in Westport.

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