

cordon and tried to prevent vandalism by this group. As it happened, there were no police in the area.

Later reports of this event left out the attempts of the protesters to stop the vandalism. Today, reports of this event claim that vandalism was done by part of the protest group!

And Watt sent us this story from a woman named **Starhawk** ...

Vision and Spirit:

The action included art, dance, celebration, song, ritual and magic. It was more than a protest; it was an uprising of a vision of true abundance, a celebration of life and creativity and connection, that remained joyful in the face of brutality and brought alive the creative forces that can truly counter those of injustice and control. Many people brought the strength of their personal spiritual practice to the action.

I saw Buddhists turn away angry delegates with loving kindness. We Witches led rituals before the action and in jail, and called on the elements of nature to sustain us. I was given Reiki when sick and we celebrated Hanukkah with no candles, but only the blessings and the story of the struggle for religious freedom. We found the spirit to sing in our cells, to dance a spiral dance in the holding cell, to laugh at the hundred petty humiliations the jail inflicts, to comfort each other and listen to each other in tense moments, to use our time together to continue teaching and organizing and envisioning the flourishing of this movement. For me, it was one of the most profound spiritual experiences of my life.

I'm writing this for two reasons. First, I want to give credit to the DAN organizers who did a brilliant and difficult job, who learned and applied the lessons of the last twenty years of nonviolent direct action, and who created a powerful, successful and life-changing action in the face of enormous odds, an action that has changed the global political landscape and radicalized a new generation. And secondly, because the true story of how this action was organized provides a powerful model that activists can learn from. Seattle was only a beginning. We have before us the task of building a global movement to overthrow corporate control and create a new economy based on fairness and justice, on a sound ecology and a healthy environment, one that protects human rights and serves freedom. We have many campaigns ahead of us, and we deserve to learn the true lessons of our successes.

Your beloved editor spent most of his day walking and watching people and talking to people and generally trying to feel the energy so I could describe it to you. Words don't make it. The only thing comparable to the streets of Seattle on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 1999, is standing on the rocks at Silver Point in a full gale. Watching the Ocean crash and surge, the energy burst and flow is the closest I can come to what it looked like. There were so many things to see: like a guy in a long yellow convertible, with a "Hemp Racing Team" sign on the door, being followed by twelve, count 'em, twelve motorcycle cops, who were all laughing.

Finally, after marching for miles, and being tear gassed, it was time to find a friendly bar. You could tell the friendly bars, there were protest signs stacked outside. Five Corners Café sits in the shadow of the space needle, out front is the statue of Chief Seattle, signs with Steelworkers slogans were stacked out front, the sign on the front door said; "Smokers welcome, Non-smokers beware." It looked like home to me. The jukebox was blasting and the tv above the bar was showing the action a

few blocks away. I grabbed the only empty stool next to a long haired steelworker. I ordered a bud, and lit a camel, the steelworker bummed a smoke, and told the bartender to put my beer on his tab. We talked. I bought the next round. The bartender's tee-shirt said "Five Corners Café; Alcoholics serving alcoholics since 1929." and he said the place was open 24 hours a day. Yep, my kind of place. By then it was dark outside and the television told us the Mayor had declared a 'civil emergency' and placed a 7pm curfew on the downtown area, which included the Five Corners. I check the clock, quarter to seven. Someone asked if we got free beer under marshall law, the answer was no. People started finishing their drinks and heading for the door, saying they might as well go home and watch it all on television.

I followed and headed towards the Seattle Center on my way to Queen Anne Hill where I was hoping to meet the folks who had offered a couch for the night. A young woman approached and asked if I knew how to get to the Labor Temple. I explained that it was downtown and that downtown was under a curfew. She said she had to meet her friends to get a ride to the airport to catch her flight back to Massachusetts, where she was studying labor law or something. She said her Union had paid her way to Seattle, and she'd had a great time but she had to get home. I couldn't think of any way to help her except maybe help her find a phone to call her friends. I offered to escort her to the neighborhood McMenimim's so she could use the phone and I could meet my friends. She, perhaps wisely, perhaps foolishly, decided to take her chances downtown alone in the night. I hope you made it home safely, Pilar.

The rest of my stay I kept away from downtown, visiting friends, buying books, and talking to people about what was happening. An elderly woman at the bus stop, who didn't like the violence at all; an early morning bartender in Ballard who said when he'd talked to folks about whether they were going to protest or not, the ones that were definitely going to were the ones who knew the least about the WTO; a guy on the bus said he thought the cops should have used firehoses instead of tear gas and rubber bullets, "It's safer, it's cheaper, it's more effective, especially in Seattle in November, and you clean the streets at the same time." I think that guy should be Mayor.

So, all in all it was an experience that I will always remember, a historic moment, a shift of power that will be felt for decades to come. There was little actual violence considering the forces arrayed against each other. One tragic story I heard was of a woman who miscarried after being tear gassed. The estimates of damage done were \$2 million dollars, and \$20 million in revenue lost. And the WTO left town without doing what they had gathered to do, which was to make the world safe for corporations to pollute the planet, exploit children, and undermine democracy.

I was listening to KMUN when I got back and Dave Ambrose was speaking to a woman who had interviewed delegates to the WTO, and she had asked several what they thought about the demonstrations. A delegate from France said he was surprised that so many Americans would actually take to the streets. A South African delegate echoed these sentiments and allowed as it reminded him of the days when he demonstrated against apartheid. And it has been said that when the African and Caribbean and Pacific delegates stopped the show by refusing to accept certain agricultural and fishing rules, they were encouraged by seeing so many Americans who were willing to stand up to the WTO.

So, did we stop the WTO? No, they are still in business. Do we need treaties on global trade? Yes, but they need to be written by the people not the corporations. And until the people have a place at the table, they will be in the streets. Is this fun or what?

"A clever man commits no minor blunders."
- Goethe (1749-1832)

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FROM THE LOWER LEFT CORNER

Victoria Stoppello

Happy Christian New Year

I heard a radio personality wish the listeners "Happy Christian New Year" and chuckled at my own surprise and then realization that, yes, it is only Christians or people living in cultures dominated by Christianity, that celebrate the beginning of the New Year on January 1. Other faiths have other calendars: there's a Jewish New Year, a Muslim New Year and a Buddhist New Year, which we Americans generalize to "Chinese" New Year, even though lots of other Asian people celebrate new year at roughly the same time.

It was pointed out to me that Catholic Pope Gregory decreed the new year would begin ten days after the winter solstice, just enough off the pagan observation of the beginning of the new cycle to confuse the rest of us. The other calendars, of course, are a lot older, including the Jewish, Chinese, and Mayan. This would be 5760 in the Jewish system and the new year would begin in the month of Tishrei, close to the time the first rains arrive in Israel's fall.

I got interested in calendars last year when I heard that the US was hurrying up to bomb Iraq before the beginning of Ramadan. I vaguely remembered that Ramadan was a period similar to Christian Lent, a time of self-denial, prayer, and assessment of one's spiritual condition. I assumed that Ramadan floated on the calendar similar to Lent—but I was slightly, but not all, wrong. Ramadan is actually the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. During that month, devout Muslims fast between dawn and sunset. Luckily most Muslims live in the northern hemisphere and last year, Ramadan occurred during the northern hemisphere's winter, so the days were short and the period of fasting each day wasn't as long as it would have been if it occurred near summer solstice. The Iraqi people have enough hardship as it is.

Both the Jewish and Islamic calendars are sensible, I think, in that instead of an arbitrary set of days and months, they follow the lunar cycle. There's a connection between these lunar calendars and our own, ever so obscure. This attending to the moon as a source of human timing, is also part of a very Christian holiday. I always wondered why Easter floats around, confusing me about the time of spring vacation. Turns out that Easter has pagan roots—it is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after spring equinox. Very handy for early Christians who were probably necessarily mobile and didn't carry a lot of stuff with them, certainly not written calendars. Can you imagine a day-timer written on stone tablets? Nah, they probably would have used hemp or papyrus, like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

These lunar based, seasonal approaches to counting time are so much more sensible. With a husband like mine, who is a stargazer and sun worshipper, Easter is an easy Sunday to peg. He always knows, not only when equinox gives us days and nights of equal length, but also roughly what phase the moon is in—certainly the day of the full moon every month. You can have a sense of the "month" by paying attention to the moon phase, the angle of the sun, and the condition of the landscape, whether draped with rotting leaves or sprinkled with fresh green buds. Just tune in to the natural cycles. But we couldn't sell a lot of calendars if we did it that way. Plus, that ancient pope may have had some political agenda that would be served by this arbitrary calendar—or perhaps he was merely a Virgo like me and wanted to tidy up our sense of time. My hunch is that it was one more way the clergy could have a distinctive role in the congregation; most people couldn't read and if timing were based on arbitrary rather than natural cycles, that was one more reason to consult your clergyman.

So, as we approach the end of a century and a millennium, according to our "Christian" calendar, people scurry around, as in the year 999 and worry about the end of the world as we know it. Many of us are concerned about what end of century disruptions will occur, especially those generated by our computer dependent, technological society. Ah, well, not even all those things will create a problem. This time IBM failed us. If we ran everything on Macintosh, things would be just fine. Apple computers are set up with a whole different system of timing and won't turn toes up until 2034.

Victoria Stoppello is a writer living in Ilwaco, at the lower left corner of Washington State.

P.S. This piece was written to poke fun at our millennial fever and cultural biases, but a very serious correspondent in Naselle has pointed out several historical inaccuracies; if you want to know more, contact me.

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