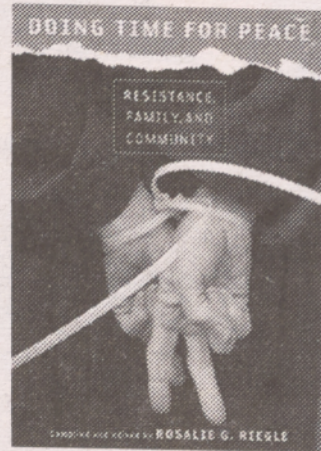


# Activists give the lowdown on being locked up

BY JOE MARTIN  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



**Doing Time for Peace: Resistance, Family and Community**, compiled and edited by Rosalie G. Riegler

John Dear is a Jesuit priest and peace activist who has done serious jail time for nonviolent civil disobedience. In his book "Peace Behind Bars" (1995), Dear asserts that imprisonment can be arduous: "Jail is awful. Nelson Mandela emerged from 27 years in a South African prison to offer his nation and the world the hope of reconciliation and healing. Gandhi, King, and Dorothy Day urged young people to 'fill the jails' in opposition to war and injustice. Thoreau wrote that the only place for a just person in an unjust society is in jail. Nevertheless, there is nothing romantic about jail."

Dear is one of over 70 courageous individuals who share their journeys in radical nonviolence in "Doing Time for Peace," a chorus of voices brought together by Rosalie Riegler. A mother and peace activist, Riegler is a cofounder of two Catholic Worker houses in Saginaw, Mich. The Catholic Worker is a movement founded in 1932 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. Members of Catholic Worker communities practice Christian anarchism. They provide hospitality and food programs for the poor and homeless. Some engage in nonviolent confrontations with forces of militarism and corporate exploitation. They risk arrest and jail time. Riegler's book is an impassioned convocation of activists — some Christian, some not — who speak of their experiences and recount influences that led them to lives of nonviolent resistance against the dominant American culture of war, militarism and consumerism.

What happens when a married parent with young children is arrested and incarcerated?

A jail sentence can be brief, but some individuals have served long and repeated stretches in very inhospitable places. Riegler's volume is replete with such stories. All agree that the parent on the outside can be the one doing "hard time" — particularly if that parent must tend to the needs of

little kids, run a soup kitchen, provide hospitality to the homeless and coordinate support for the spouse and other resisters in prison. Of the Civil Rights and Vietnam eras, Riegler writes, "Not all the resistance marriages of the 1960s and early 1970s survived the times ... especially given the challenges of imprisonment and of the changing gender roles and identities."

A few of the people in the book are folks from Puget Sound. Tom Karlin shares his recollection of the early protests in the 1970s at the Trident Submarine base in Kitsap County. He had participated in a number of civil disobedience actions at the base but had not been given any jail time. Then the feds brought in Judge "Tommy-gun" Thompson from Orange County, Calif. As Karlin again went to court he recalls, "When I left home that morning, I figured it would be the same as before — suspended sentences or probation. But I didn't enter the house again for four months! Didn't even say goodbye to Ida, my wife. She was a nurse and had to work that day, and my baby daughter was only about seven months old. We had two more daughters, too, one six and one four." Like everyone else in this book, Karlin emphasizes the critical need for a loving and sustainable community of support for the one in jail and the family and friends on the outside. Recalls Karlin, "My wife got the toughest sentence, with her work and the three little kids."

Seattleites Kim and Bill Wahl share their experiences resisting Trident. After finishing her nursing school and then marrying Bill, Kim says, "[We] went into the military and had three children, and I was a good army wife for ten years. After that, we moved to the Northwest and Bill started his medical practice. I worked some in his office but was mostly an at-home mom, always there when [our children] got home from school." Their mutual move into active resistance to nuclear weapons was gradual and influenced by their Catholic faith. Bill relates his involvement with Physicians for Social Responsibility: "PSR began a huge

campaign, showing the health effects of nuclear war. I joined and Kim joined with me, and I became a lecturer for PSR during those years. I had to get my facts straight, so I did a lot of study about nuclear weapons."

Both would eventually see the inside of jail. Kim shares an amusing anecdote of an incarceration in Seattle: "I was in the King County Jail, and there was absolutely nothing to do. I remember I finally got a pencil and paper from the chaplain, but you had to yell for the guard to sharpen your pencil, and I was too scared to do it. [This other prisoner] grabbed my pencil. 'I can't believe you dare do those things that got you in here, and you're scared to even ask the guard to sharpen your pencil! You're a wimp!' But she got it sharpened."

Brian Terrell, whose family resides on a small farm in Iowa, is a lifelong resister who has done significant jail time for nonviolent protests against rampant militarism. He describes the Washington, D.C. jail as a "fantastic strange place. Bigger than most state prison systems." He and a fellow arrested resister are white. They are brought to the jail. Apparently only African American arrestees were expected, so booking forms are filled out ahead of time indicating "black hair and black eyes and dark complexions." Terrell states, "They didn't have any blank forms, so they had to white-out and photocopy some in order to even book us. A real reality check as to who D.C. sees as real criminals. Every time I hear of some white government guy doing something despicable, I think of that and realize that the D.C. jail doesn't even have the paperwork to receive the real criminals."

"Doing Time For Peace" is wonderful, a challenging book worth any reader's time. It could inspire a new generation of resisters for peace and justice.

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## Autumn

by Michelle Grant

It starts with the longest days in an unending searing heat,  
And the morsel of a prayer for an earlier sunset,  
A spore of a memory from an ingrained pattern of recognition programmed  
Since infancy — knowing it won't last  
Imagination fondles your logic  
But the blocks on the calendar support your certainty  
That something must change  
Then the temporal film lays itself across one's vision,  
Across the Willamette and over east-rooted arbs bubbled and globed under  
The cityscape, high yet low, proving.  
They glint in the rays with their gradients  
Of green to yellow, assuring relief will come soon  
And it does. Twilight seeps its purples quicker,  
Changing the shadows — joining them.  
Dried leaves instantly appear, pushed into order by urban keepers  
Until at last, the equinox looms, the code word appears:  
Pumpkin Spice.

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