

The Peace Goes On

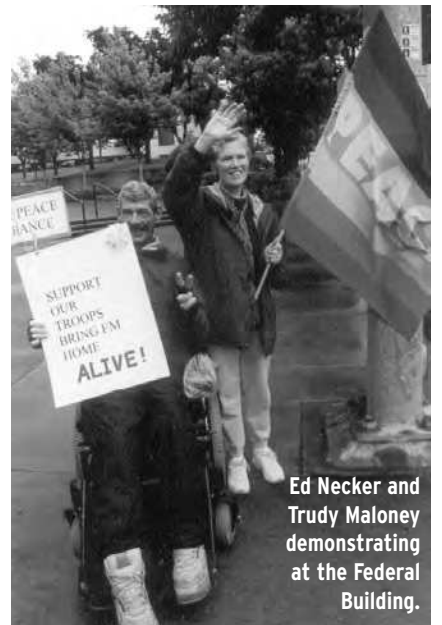
Citizens and groups are working to change the world. Are you in? STORY & PHOTOS BY BOBBIE WILLIS

Peace activist Trudy Maloney's father taught her, "Stand up for what you believe in, even if you stand alone." Every Wednesday afternoon, around 4:30 pm, Maloney, a ShelterCare volunteer by day, stands up for peace in front of the Federal Building at the corner of 7th Avenue and Pearl Street. "Sometimes I *am* here all by myself," she says with a smile. She is often joined by her husband, Ed Necker, as well as by up to a half dozen other peace demonstrators carrying cardboard signs and/or giant rainbow-striped peace flags. They smile and wave, let out the occasional cheer and a victorious raised fist at the honking horns of supportive passersby.

Maloney first participated in such demonstrations after 9/11 through Faith in Action, but now she's out here for her own reasons. "This war is a big mistake," she says. "I take it from a theological perspective — I believe we were created by love to love."

On this particular Wednesday, Maloney and Necker are joined by another regular demonstrator, Helen Liguori. Liguori is here because she believes it is up to people to make the change. "There is the election," she says, "but I don't put much stock in the administration. It will be the transformation of people that will stop this war."

But actual transformation is sometimes easier said than done: Liguori explains it isn't always supportive car honking they encounter during these hour-long vigils. "People spit," she says matter-of-factly. Maloney adds, "Oh yeah, spit. And sometimes there's the finger, you know, people giving us the finger." She pauses, and you can see in the thoughtful tilt of her head, in the twinkle of her eyes as she smiles — you can see the unflappable force of the peace machine as she shrugs and adds, "But if you think about it, the finger is just half a peace sign." And she turns back to wave and smile at the stream of oncoming traffic.



Ed Necker and Trudy Maloney demonstrating at the Federal Building.



Faith in Action's Joan Bayless, Gordie Albi and Joan Pierson planning June 30 Call for Transformation service.

A Place in the Continuum

On March 20, 2003, just after President Bush's declaration of war on Iraq, AlterNet former Senior Editor Tai Moses wrote, "What to do with our discouragement, our horror, our exhaustion? If you have invested any of your energy and heart in resisting the war efforts of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, et al., depression is going to be your occasional companion. We can try to avoid despair in these dark times by recognizing that we each have a valuable place in the continuum that is the struggle for peace, which has existed as long as there has been war."

This was written just after the flurry of demonstrations against going to war with Iraq. The energy of local peace rallies last year in Eugene was electrifying — community members gathered together in candlelight vigils or pounding the pavement in marches to protest the oppressive roar of Bush's war machine; people bound by both fear and hope, creating through sheer numbers a surge of power in a situation where they were being made to feel powerless.

A year later, a year into war, where has

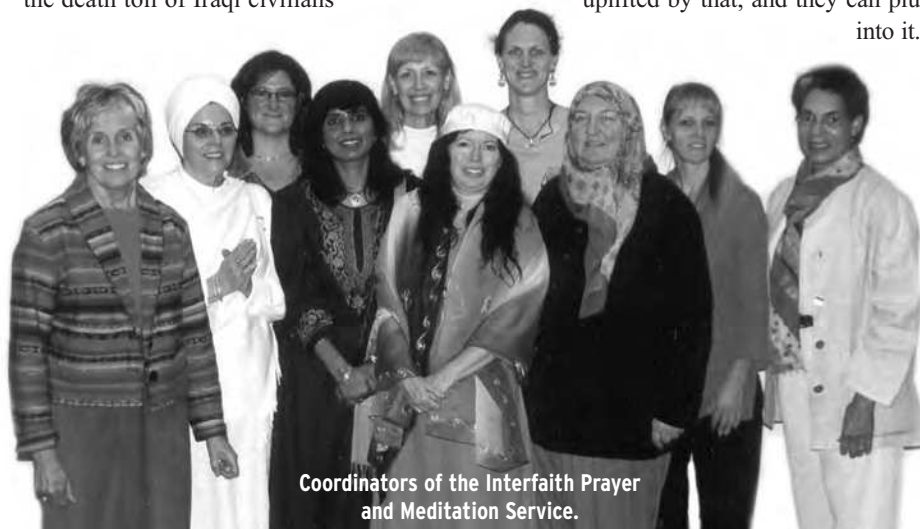
that power gone? It would be easy to feel downtrodden in the year's events: White House figures released at the end of May show President Bush and Congress have so far provided \$191 billion for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and defensive military operations at home. According to a June 10 CNN count, there are 950 dead coalition soldiers, which includes 834 Americans. According to the website Iraq Body Count (www.iraqbodycount.org), the death toll of Iraqi civilians

is somewhere between 9,000 and 11,000. The numbers of dead, both coalition and Iraqi, grow every day.

But rather than being downtrodden, the peace effort has grown more intent and more focused than ever. The more highly visible efforts of last year's demonstrations have died down with the administration's move to fight, but the work for peace continues in smaller groups with sharper, more specific goals for change.

Dan Goldrich, retired UO political science professor and a member of Progressive Responses, a group that came together in response to 9/11, says, "A lot of people have been putting energy into various electoral campaigns." Michael Carrigan, development director of Citizens Alliance of Lane County and member of the Justice Not War Coalition adds, "Recent election results here in Eugene mean hope at the next level ... We're continuing to get out the message that the Bush administration is bad for people and people need to get out and vote."

Bo Adan, writer, teacher, poet, activist, and community member of Concerned Faculty for Peace and Justice says, "There are people out there who feel despair and isolation, and that can be lifted. We continue to be active and these people can be uplifted by that, and they can plug into it."



Coordinators of the Interfaith Prayer and Meditation Service.

If you're under the impression that this situation is hopeless, that Bush's battle cry means defeat for the local anti-war effort, if you're under the impression that Eugene's peace movement is just three or six people standing with peace flags at the Federal Building downtown, you are mistaken. Trudy Maloney is far from standing alone in her efforts to cultivate peace and justice. She is only one valuable stitch in a long swathe of peace community fabric, a swathe including, to name just a few groups: Beyond War, Citizens Alliance of Lane County, Eugene Middle East Peace Group, Eugene PeaceWorks, Faith in Action, Friendly Neighbors for Peace, Justice Not War Coalition, Lane County Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries, UO Concerned Faculty for Peace and Justice, Women's Action for New Directions, Women in Black and SOAWatch (Peg Morton returns to Eugene July 6 after serving time for protesting the School of the Americas at Fort Benning in Georgia last summer) ... and more. For details and information see the Justice Not War Coalition site (<http://members.efn.org/~jnotwar/links.htm>).

Here's a community working furiously to prevent further injustice, working to undo the damages of war. On the continuum that is the struggle for peace and justice, Eugene is full of citizens who are working to change the world.

Youth of a Nation

The last class day before finals at the UO is a beautiful, clear Friday. The intersection at the corner of 13th Avenue and Kincaid Street is teeming with the energy and vitality of college students, young men in ball caps and sweatshirts, young women in brightly colored T-shirts and flip-flops.

In the shade of large tree across the street from the campus bookstore, a dozen representatives of Concerned Faculty for Peace and Justice stand behind chest-high sheets of cardboard displaying the names and photographs of Americans killed so far in the Iraqi War.