

The Invisible Light

Bringing hope in dark times

Dark days, long and cold nights, trees shedding leaves, lead the way to hibernation: stillness. Nature is in a state of reflection and repose. The dark and cold winter season is punctuated by shimmering lights, warmth of family and friends gatherings during winter holidays. Is it a coincidence that most religions celebrate some of their most important holidays in the winter season? They are in synchronicity in bringing light, which represents life, inner strength and hope in dark times.



In nature, hibernation in the womb of darkness is not barren, but is pregnant with the birth of the sprouting of golden daffodils and multi-colored tulips in the early spring. Maybe in this winter season we should sow seeds for the flowers of trust, love and hope. As Gandhi said, "In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness." It is a time for repose and reflection: learning from Mother Nature, who renounces her golden leaves to give birth to new leaves and rests in the bitter cold, waiting for rejuvenation. In the outer and inner stillness I contemplate renunciation, reconciliation and rejuvenation;

Renunciation: Gandhi, the peace protagonist, called for renunciation by saying, “There is no limit to renunciation.” He was referring to renunciation of selfish desires, unnecessary wants, harmful habits and unhealthy emotions. As human beings, we are the only creatures who can gain control of our desires, feelings and actions. We need strength and skill to acquire possessions and accomplish goals, but it takes even greater inner power to renounce – to give up something, to let go of attachment to what is unwholesome and superfluous. If we put our mind to it, we could choose to renounce an unhealthy habit, give up excess possessions, or even kick out an addiction. Gandhi’s renunciation is the symbol of inner strength for me. Ironically, I never realized the depth and breadth of Gandhi’s soul power and his renunciate lifestyle for the service to humanity until I moved to the wealthiest country on earth. Gandhi found his inner strength by testing himself on the touchstone of renunciation.

Reconciliation: What I love about winter holidays is the family time – giving and sharing. It is also a time to mend old forgotten relations and heal broken hearts. During the holidays, I miss my mother who lives 12,000 miles away. But I always remember her wise advice: “Forgiving, at times, is difficult, but when practiced it showers with blessings. God loves those who forgive.” In today’s climate, I find it is important to come together in peace and harmony with forgiveness in our hearts.

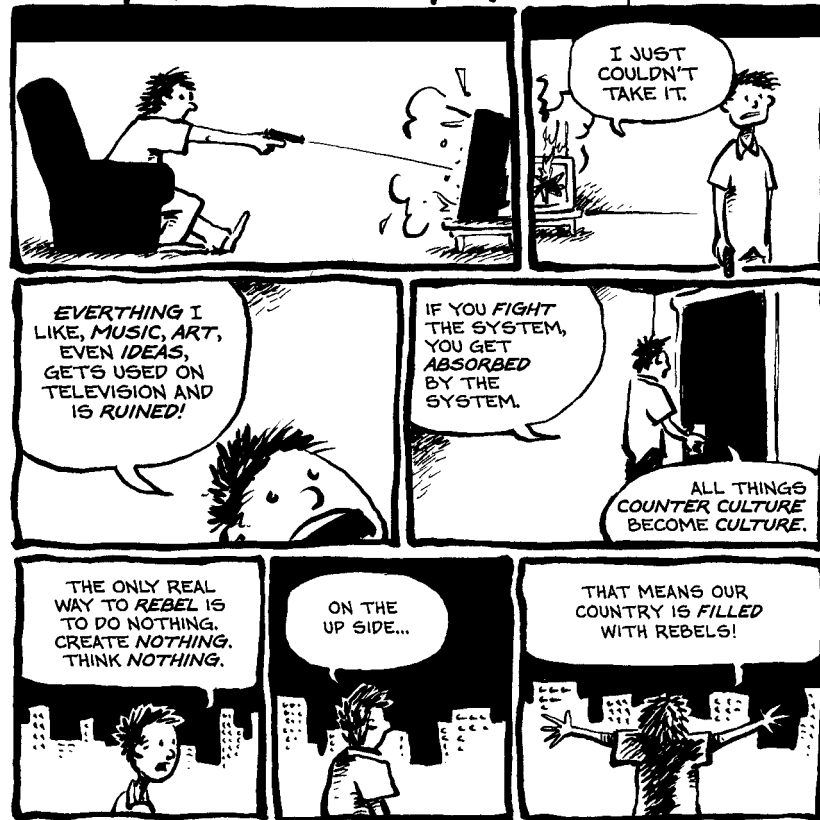
Rejuvenation: The light of the New Year arises from the womb of dark winter and marks a rejuvenation. It is just another day, but it symbolizes a new beginning. Therefore, people make vows, renew old vows, make new resolutions, and reconsider old resolutions. Vows can be seen as binding, but I find them liberating. I had taken a vow as a young girl never to try a drink of alcohol, not knowing that my destiny would take me to a far away Western world where social drinking is a norm. I experience freedom and strength in saying no when offered wine in an enticing crystal, slim-waisted glass. In my simple *no*, I experience willpower and grace.

This holiday season I offer my deepest gratitude to my great teacher in India, whose wisdom always guides me. He emphasizes that inner strength and power is far greater than material strength: *Let not the visible darkness and despair discourage you. The veil of darkness is just a momentary illusion.* Search for invisible light and keep alive the flame of hope with trust in new beginnings.

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TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

by Shannon Wheeler



Letters TO THE EDITOR

FED WITCH-HUNT

It seems that the good ol' boys (CEOs of the timber, mining, military, oil and agriculture industries) who really run this country have sent their attack dogs (FBI, ATF and Office of Homeland Security) to reap revenge and to intimidate the people's activist movements here in the Pacific Northwest, as well as forest activists involved in Warner Creek, Fall Creek and the Shutdown of the WTO in Seattle in 1999.

The FBI, ATF and Office of Homeland Security have subpoenaed local individuals for a grand jury in Eugene convening in March 2006. Publicly, the Feds have stated that the investigation is very narrowly focused on several arson fires in Oregon and Washington that occurred from 1996 to 2001.

Don't be fooled. These Feds will NOT stick to a very narrow focus of information gathering. Their big picture strategy includes gathering as much information as possible on as many left-leaning groups and outspoken individuals in the Pacific Northwest Community as possible.

So, if you are approached by these feds, don't trick yourself into believing that they won't "pump you" for names of anyone you may have worked, lived, loved, drank beer or even held a protest sign with. You are much more likely to be subpoenaed by being cooperative when first approached and realizing too late that you need to refuse to answer subsequent probing questions.

Remember, the feds are here to intimidate the will of good people who stand for true justice and oppose the good ol' boys' version of "just us."

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, visit www.FBIwitchhunt.com

OPB SNOOKERED

After reading video producer Eric Cain's opinion piece ("Fear of Forestry," 12/8) I am

now more convinced than ever that OPB
blew it with their recent pro-logging mocku-
mentary.

The long list of errors and omissions in OPB's pro-logging story is now well-known (see <http://tinyurl.com/bbx4ji>). OPB is apparently feeling a bit defensive about the fact that they got snookered by a bunch of pro-logging activists masquerading as concerned community leaders. Why does OPB trust those who profit from forest destruction, rather than those with public interest motivations?



Producer Eric Cain claims that his critics suffer from “fear of forestry.” How wrong and how revealing of how the timber industry has molded his assumptions about conservationists! Conservationists do not fear forestry, we believe in

GOOD forestry, while we oppose BAD forestry (not to mention bad journalism that fails to accurately represent the impacts of bad logging and the viewpoints of conservationists).

Our biggest concern with OPB's *Rethinking Forests* video is that OPB missed an important opportunity to tell the story of real "restoration forestry." Our public forests are severely damaged by decades of abuse at the hands of the timber industry that pulled strings in Congress to control the Forest Service. Now that those errors have been exposed, there is a consensus building around a vision for comprehensive restoration of our public forests. New scientific research is revealing the possibility that we can restore habitat, create jobs, and produce some wood products by fixing crumbling logging roads and by carefully thinning small trees in areas previously damaged by clear-cutting and fire suppression.

These new restoration methods are still evolving. They must be continually evaluated and most importantly driven by sound science (see <http://tinyurl.com/cmmz3>). In con-



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