

More Than a Paycheck REFUSING to PAY for WAR

June | July 2013



30 Years of Resistance

Redirection: Our "Constructive Program"

By Bill Ramsey

The spinning wheel was the center of Gandhi's constructive program. Redirection is the war tax resistance movement's spinning wheel. The "constructive program" is positive action that builds structures, systems, and processes alongside the obstructive program of direct confrontation to or noncooperation with oppression. When we redirect our war taxes, we invest in imaginative and positive projects in our communities and around the world.

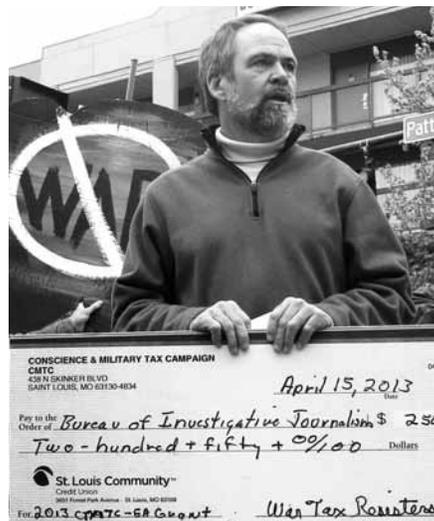
On Saturday morning of the May 3-6 NWTRCC meeting in Asheville, participants gathered in front of the downtown federal building to "spin a little cloth" with people who live on the street. Their community, the BeLoved House, had prepared breakfast for all of us. A street musician sang, "Come on people now, smile on your brother, everybody get together try to love one another right now!" as we gathered. One-by-one homeless people crossed the street to join us for eggs, oatmeal, fruit salad, and coffee.

We stood under a banner that read "War is a theft from the poor" and announced over \$38,000 of grants from redirected war taxes from resisters in New England, California, Oregon, and from the Conscience and Military Tax Campaign (CMTC) Escrow Fund's depositors across the country.

Each year, underfunded, innovative community projects move forward with infusions of redirected funds withheld from the Pentagon. On this day, CMTC's oversized checks were presented to eleven projects from Pakistan to Costa Rica; from the streets of Asheville to a high school in Queens; from young people's projects in North Carolina to St. Louis; and from the West Bank to Guatemala.

Then we stepped out to follow in the "footsteps of the most vulnerable," as gusts of wind tilted our signs. On the way, we stopped at a center that provides showers and phones to the 500 people who are homeless on any given night in Asheville. We gathered in an empty lot, where people seek temporary, exploitative, backbreaking day-labor. Our next way station was an overcrowded shelter for men, women, and children.

As we crested a hill, we caught a glimpse of scores of 50-year-old public housing units lined up like barracks and confined on all sides by interstate highways. Down alongside the French Broad River, we viewed the bridges and overpasses where people camp illegally and scurry to hide from police enforcement.



Bill Ramsey announcing the grants from redirected war taxes. Photo by Ruth Benn.

Like Us!

Erica Weiland is NWTRCC's Social Media Consultant, working about five hours a week to spread the war tax resistance message through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and more. Here are some things you can do:

We are forming a social media committee to direct Erica's work and get more folks involved. We are seeking additional members, particularly women and folks knowledgeable about social media. Send an email to our social media address, wartaxresister@nwtrcc.org, if you are interested in joining.

Support NWTRCC on social media by sharing posts and messages with us, and "liking," commenting on, and sharing our content! Specifically, you can:

- send items of interest to wartaxresister@nwtrcc.org;
- follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/wartaxresister; retweet our messages to your followers; tweet us news items or thoughts;
- join the Facebook Group at facebook.com/groups/nwtrcc; post items of interest or discussion questions, and comment on/like/share posts;
- like our Facebook Page at facebook.com/pages/National-War-Tax-Resistance-Coordinating-Committee-NWTRCC, and comment on/like/share posts and post items yourself;
- follow "NWTRCC" on YouTube, and "wartaxresister" on Pinterest. •

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NWTRCC sees poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, economic exploitation, environmental destruction and militarization of law enforcement as integrally linked with the militarism which we abhor. Through the redirection of our tax dollars, NWTRCC members contribute directly to the struggle for peace and justice for all.

Subscriptions are \$15 per year.

NWTRCC

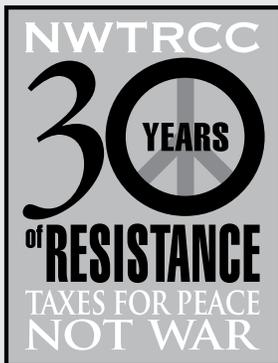
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Counseling Notes

Barriers to War Tax Resistance

Two recent articles in the *New York Times* presented issues that we need to reckon with as war tax resistance counselors.

In the past most war tax resisters found that they could live perfectly good lives without worrying about their credit rating, which looks bad when you have a tax debt. Some had concerns about buying a home or property, but in many cases they were able to arrange financing without bad credit being an issue. Today the issue has gotten stickier as prospective employers often use credit reports as another way to screen applicants. The May 12 article, "The Long Shadow of Bad Credit," says that nearly half of employers use credit checks for some positions, and one in eight does a credit check before every hire, including the biggest retail chains for low-wage jobs. While the credit bureaus promote this practice because they make money off it, advocacy groups are pressing states to stop credit checks in hiring. Nine states have legislation that limits its use, and federal legislation has been introduced in Congress.

"Heavy Load of Student Loan Debt is Weighing on the Economy, Too," (May 11) bemoans the fact that young adults are delaying purchase of cars, homes, and other more expensive items that boost the consumer economy. In our counseling, it is not the consumption that is an issue, but the fact that a young person who is already \$45,000 in debt might find it overwhelming to consider risking tax debt too. The article mentions that student loan debt has exceeded \$1 trillion in total. Some readers may be involved in campaigns that encourage forgiveness of this debt, and we would be interested in your stories. WTRs have life experience that can be useful to young people living with debt—like living in ways mentioned in the next item provided by David Gross. We can also talk about resisting excise taxes or low levels of income tax resistance that might be more manageable.

Shadowy Numbers

There's something fishy in the latest economic statistics. Paychecks are down (thanks to a recent boost in the payroll tax), incomes haven't been rising in other ways to make up for it, bank account savings aren't rising, and people aren't charging more on their credit cards or taking out more loans and yet, consumer spending is doing just fine, as if somehow the money was materializing anyway. What's the trick? Bernard Baumohl of the Economic Outlook Group thinks it's the underground economy: Severe recessions have historically driven jobless Americans into the shadow economy. We suspect the destructive nature of the last downturn and the prolonged weak recovery pushed a record number of people into that murky world of cash transactions – something many tax resisters are used to.

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Many Thanks

To **New South Network of War Resisters, Asheville**, for all their work on the May NWTRCC gathering.

To **Northern California People's Life Fund** for a tax day grant
To all the individuals who continue to support this organization.
An appeal was sent in May, and we hope that you will be as generous as possible to help boost our bank account before the dry days of summer set in. To donate online, please see nwtrcc.org/contact_donate.php.

Network Updates

The latest Network List of Affiliates, Area Contacts, Counselors, and Alternative Funds is on the NWTRCC website, nwtrcc.org/contacts_counselors.php. You may also request a printed list by mail from the NWTRCC office.

Please note that "Area Contacts" are not meant to be war tax resistance Counselors. We try to keep those coded with a "C" updated on issues important to WTR counseling. Contacts are intended to be people supportive or interested in war tax resistance, who should know something about the NWTRCC network and be able to provide written materials or make referrals if they are contacted. If you feel that you have not gotten proper information from our network, please let us know and we will endeavor to improve the system. Contact the NWTRCC office at nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or 1-800-269-7464.

Along the railroad tracks, we saw the former site of the Old Ice House, where one homeless mentally ill man had startled another and was killed. Instead of initiating additional mental healthcare programs, authorities razed the ice house to the ground, leaving only a chimney standing.

Spinning against these hard realities, we filed into the Phil Mechanic Building, another ice house now refurbished and housing art studios, galleries, a bio-fuel processing plant, and the local chapter of Veterans for Peace. It stands, itself, as a constructive program—NWTRCC's home for the weekend. •

Bill Ramsey lives in Asheville, North Carolina, after decades of activism in St. Louis. He manages the Conscience and Military Tax Campaign Escrow Account on behalf of 278 war tax resisters. For more information on the fund contact, CMTC, PO Box 2551, Asheville, NC. 28802, (314) 374-7446, cmtcea@gmail.com.



Preparing for the march outside the Federal Building in Asheville. Photo by Ruth Benn.

How We Want Our Tax Dollars Used!

Reports are in from some of the groups that announce grants at public redirection ceremonies, like the one in Asheville that Bill Ramsey describes in this issue. Along with the group redirections, we know that individual war tax resisters around the country make their own redirection choices, but we have not been to come up with a system to collect that information and offer a total. So, consider the amounts listed here as the tip of the iceberg!

The 2013 grants totaling \$9,000 from the **Conscience and Military Tax Campaign Escrow Fund** were given to Anti-Racist Alliance for the work of a student social worker in Bronx public high school; Beloved House for self-employment workshops for chronically unemployed people; Bureau of Investigative Journalism in London for research and publishing the names of all those killed by U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan; Christian Peacemaker Teams in Chicago for counseling for returning volunteer accompaniers; DMZ in Massachusetts, a new public education campaign on the ineffectiveness of, suffering from, and complicity with war; First Friends of New Jersey and New York to purchase phone cards for destitute detainees in four immigration detainee facilities; North Carolina Student Power Union to challenge the influence of wealthy opponents of public education; Pied Asp Music in Massachusetts for promotion of a multi-media presentation illustrating the history of U.S. social change movements; Sweet Home Costa Rica to support a film on pacifists who formed a community in Costa Rica where the armed forces had been abolished; Western Carolinians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East for a local artist to teach painting on the West Bank and return with an art exhibit; and Young Activists United St. Louis to raise public awareness of the student debt dilemma.

\$22,000 in grants from **Northern California People's Life Fund** (PLF) were distributed in a ceremony on tax day evening at the Co-Housing Common House in Berkeley. One of the priorities is to fund groups that

include in their leadership the people impacted by the work of the organization. Among this year's grantees are Berkeley Copwatch; Berkeley Students & Families for Equality for supplies for homeless student support; Communities United Against Violence for leadership skills development; Courage to Resist for Rivera family support fund; Emiliano Zapata Street Academy for restorative justice staff training; Hella Organized Bay Area Koreans to send material goods to North Korea; Love Balm Project for artist fees; Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives for information, consultations and referrals; Northridge Cooperative Homes for a community garden; Students for Justice in Palestine for "DAM" musical performance; and Youth Spirit Artworks for the "Art Cart" jobs venture.

New England War Tax Resistance (NEWTR) in Boston Massachusetts, divided \$3,800 among these grantees: Association of Haitian Women, Beantown Society, Coalition to Fund Our Communities / Cut Military Spending 25%, Dorchester People for Peace, Prison Birth Project, and Youth Justice and Power Union. NEWTR member Mary Regan reported, "I was going to a tax day event to announce the grants from our refused taxes. It was a protest to spotlight the need for our economy to turn from war to human needs. But because of the terrible events of [April 15] in Boston, the event was canceled. People are hunkering down to be with family, but I wish we were still protesting, because we need to show that violence should be met with love."

Oregon Community of War Tax Resisters in Portland meet before tax day, and each puts some redirected taxes into a combined fund, which totaled \$3,250 this year. Then they decide together which groups will receive grants, making sure the grantees are willing to accept publicly. On tax day they held a potluck dinner and redirection ceremony at the Peace House and gave grants to Food Not Bombs, One Million Bones Project, and the Bradley Manning Defense Fund. •

A list of alternative funds can be found at nwtrcc.org/alternative_funds.php.



Kima Garrison (l) and Celeste Howard (r) of the Portland group listen as Elizabeth accepts the grant for Food Not Bombs. Photo by Al Stern.

Tax Day 2013 – Another World Is Possible

1. New York, New York

Rude Mechanical Orchestra chanting for a future without war and greed at the post office after a lively march from the IRS.

Photo by Ed Hedemann.



2. Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A small but dedicated group picketed Milwaukee's Army base, and spoke with and gave flyers to many soldiers and civilians. Long-time war tax resister Fr. Don Timmerman blocked the driveway as an act of civil disobedience and was arrested when he walked onto the base.

Photo by Joshua Campbell.

3. Colorado Springs, Colorado

A penny poll proved a good way to engage passers-by. Given the very military nature of Colorado Springs (five bases and many "defense" industry contractors), it's significant that the military received a 6% vote while healthcare and hunger each received more than three times as much. Penny polls were also held in many other communities including Sitka, Alaska; Eugene, Oregon; Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Seattle, Washington.

Photo by Donna Johnson.



4. Brattleboro, Vermont

A lively bunch sang, vigiled, handed out flyers, and talked outside the post office. Kathleen Simms and Daniel Sicken provided the musical entertainment, while Tom Wilson, Juanita Nelson, and Tom Namaya made themselves available to discuss their messages. The tax day presence was sponsored by Pioneer Valley War Tax Resistance.

Photo by Jane Michaud.

5. Ithaca, New York

Tom Joyce, Mary Loehr, and Garry Thomas outside the post office in downtown Ithaca. They also displayed the 20-foot banner with a graph about the discretionary budget made by the American Friends Service Committee, and many people stopped to look or talk. Mary says, "We were there from 3-5, which I think is a great time. We didn't have flyers to pass out, and I actually think that made people more inclined to stop, as they were not feeling 'pressured.'"

Photos by Leslie Schultz.



6. Burlington, North Carolina

War tax resister Daniel Woodham (left) joined members of the Alamance County Peace Coalition for bannering and leafleting. Daniel says, "The photo was taken by Vinny G, a passerby, who engaged the group for a half-hour discussion and then took this photo from his iPhone."

7. Eugene, Oregon

Activists gathered at the Eugene downtown post offices and listened to Patty Hines of Occupy Interfaith speak. Members of Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network-Jobs with Justice spoke out for postal workers and keeping the Gateway mail processing center open. The Raging Grannies sang, and war tax resisters redirected their "war" taxes to local organizations, including Sponsors, Shelter Care, and Occupy Medical.

Photo courtesy of Jain Elliott.



8. Tucson, Arizona

Betts Putnam-Hidalgowas among other peace activists who rose with the sun on April 15 to hold signs outside Tucson's Raytheon Missile Systems while the workers arrived for the early morning shift.

Photo by Felice Cohen-Joppa.



Media Report

Every year for 30 years NWTRCC has sent out a press release in advance of tax day, listing actions around the country and war tax resistance contacts available for media interviews. The release is posted on our website and emailed to hundreds of media outlets from blogs to international television networks. Although the response has been low in recent years, the potential readership is worldwide. Quite a few online, progressive news sources post the full text and links to our action list, and the spike in visits to our website every April indicates that we do get noticed.

This year Ed Hedemann appeared on *Democracy Now!* with Amy Goodman, a forum that provides perhaps the best outreach to what should be the most receptive audience. Leafleting on tax day in South Bend, Indiana, got the attention of a local TV reporter who interviewed WTR counselor Peter Smith for the evening news. Ruth Benn was interviewed on a student station in Northern California, and on the opposite coast Mary Regan was on a Cambridge program, "Radio with a View." A pre-tax day workshop given by David Waters in Birmingham, Alabama, made a connection to a TV reporter who did a post-tax day interview that appeared on Birmingham's local evening news.

Happily all these interviews are still posted online, and you can find links to these and other interviews and more tax day reports and photos at nwtrcc.org/taxday2013-reports.php.

Remembrances

Kennett Love died at 88 on May 13 in Southampton, New York. He was a foreign correspondent for the *New York Times* and a 1960s war tax resister. Along with Pete Seeger, Allen Ginsberg, and Brad Lyttle, Love participated in the 1969 founding conference of National War Tax Resistance. In 1967, he began by refusing the telephone tax and

in 1968 joined the Writers and Editors War Tax Protest. He also wrote the widely distributed 6-page pamphlet "Tax Resistance: Hell No – I Won't Pay" that had appeared as a 1969 *Washington Monthly* article. As a foreign correspondent for the *Times* he covered the Middle East in the 1950s and after.

In October 1967 **Ira Sandperl** and Joan Baez and 55 others filed suit in Federal court to seek refunds of their 1965 and 1966 taxes that were used for military purposes. They based their case on conscientious objector arguments, which was not successful but brought wide attention to war tax resistance. Ira died in California at age 90 on April 13. He was a passionate teacher of active Gandhian nonviolence and a mentor to many in the pacifist movement. He and Joan Baez started the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence in the mid-1960's.

Spanish Model

In Spain, the war tax resistance movement has linked up with critics of bank bailouts, austerity budgets, and centralization, to promote tax resistance and redirection in service of what it calls "comprehensive disobedience." This "involves breaking the social contract with the state of the territory where you live, in order to make a new social contract with a community in which the individual feels really connected." The movement has opened Offices of Economic Disobedience in several towns to help counsel resisters and coordinate redirection. See derechoderebelion.net/desobediencia-integral.

Save the Date! New England Gathering

The 28th Annual New England Regional Gathering of War Tax Resisters and Supporters will be held Sept. 27–29, 2013, at Amazing Planet! Farm & Justice Center in Williamsville, Vermont (near Brattleboro). More details will be included in future issues of *MTAP* or contact: Susan Lannen, susanlannen@hotmail.com, (617) 233-7975. ●

Resources

Changes Are Needed!

Here are a few things that we need help with:

■ New Logo and Slogan?

We've been using this sturdy logo since NWTRCC was founded, and a few people at our Asheville meeting suggested the time has come for a change. Proposed designs need to be presented at our Coordinating Committee meeting at the beginning of November. Submit your ideas by September 30 for consideration.



■ Penny Poll Kits?

Here's another design opportunity. Many groups use penny polls on tax day and throughout the year to bring attention to the government's militarized priorities. The suggestion came up to design a kit that we could then raise money to produce using one of the crowdfunding

sites like Indigogo. We tried a banner project earlier this year, but didn't give it enough time. Penny poll kits was suggested as something that many groups would use if we could produce them and send them out free or at low cost. If you want to see what various penny polls look like, go to nwtrcc.org/penny_polls.php. Contact the office if you have ideas for this project.

■ **Practical War Tax Resistance #6, "Organizational War Tax Resistance, Employers, Contractors, and Financial Institutions,"** needs to be updated. We hope to work on this during the summer. This booklet includes cases of organizations refusing to participate with IRS collections, and organizations that have specific policies for how to support war tax resisters on their staffs. You can read the current version at nwtrcc.org/practical6.php, and if you have information that would be useful for a new version, please contact Ruth Benn at the NWTRCC office. ●

How Militarism Impacts Us

WTR Gathering in Asheville

The impact of militarism became the defacto theme for the National War Tax Resistance Gathering hosted by the New South Network of War Resisters in Asheville, North Carolina, over the weekend of May 3-5.

Starting the weekend with a round of introductions after Friday's dinner each person mentioned briefly what brought them to this weekend. The connections between militarism and many issues were mentioned, from economic policy to feminism to experience in the military to growing up pacifist to caring for the earth.

Author, activist, and speaker David Swanson's talk that evening emphasized the Kellogg-Briand Pact, "when the world outlawed war." This slice of history is something that antiwar activists should build on, says Swanson, even as the militarists leading the world to disaster would like to keep that history buried. Drones and how we respond to this new style of war became a focus of the question and answer session.

Saturday morning's redirection ceremony and march through Asheville, described by Bill Ramsey in this issue, put faces on the impact of how war steals from communities and forces people into poverty. We were joined for the day by Amy Cantrell of BeLoved House Community, which promotes intergenerational community building and facilitates neighbors helping neighbors with basic necessities (food, clothes, healthcare, etc.). Amy spoke on an afternoon panel about community members and homeless people who died as a direct impact of militarism, including the Korean war vet who could not live with the carnage of that war and "drank himself through life and into death."

Others on the panel included Ed Stein from a nearby Earth First! encampment, where the militarization of the police is directly experienced by nonviolent blockaders. Police showed up in armored vehicles, wearing body armor with rifles pointed to evict peaceful squatters. "Now we are expecting drones; the Forest Service might use drones ostensibly to look for other things. All this is completely out of proportion to what activists are trying to do. We are not anti-people we are pro-environment."

Poet DeWayne "B-Love" Barton said, "War and militarism has gotten me into art and poetry." He grew up in southeast DC and remembers helicopters with spotlights that flew over the neighborhood on a regular basis. "We keep the police in practice in our community," he says. "When you see other young people go down—art has saved me from that. I'm doing art specifically about peace, about the environment."

David Gross brought stories from the International War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaign Conference in Colombia, which he attended as NWTRCC's representative. The host group focuses on the ever-present militarism in their daily lives, especially in their work to prevent young men from being taken off the streets and forced into the military.

Clare Hanrahan and Coleman Smith's workshop, "War on Earth! Environmental Impact: Atomic Appalachia and the Militarized Southeast," detailed the toxic legacy of the military-industrial-complex in their region. Other workshops offered ways to respond to this legacy, whether by living simply and with consciousness, learning about refusing to pay for war, organizing



The gathering was held at Phil Mechanic Studios, an ice house converted to studios and galleries. Coleman Smith designed the great banner. Photo by Ellen Thomas.

more efficiently and effectively with social media, and promoting alternative media through an anti-war/pro-peace newspaper *War Crimes Times*. "Reservations and Resistance: a conversation on what holds us back and what moves us forward as war opponents and war tax resisters" featured David Swanson talking about his concerns about war tax resistance with response from longtime resister Bill Ramsey.

Finally, on Saturday night Cindy Sheehan spoke about her life on the "hamster wheel" as she called it—commuting, working, raising a family—until "I was violently pushed off the hamster wheel by the death of my son." He was killed in Iraq just a few days after his unit was deployed in 2004, and she quickly realized "that whatever life was going to look like, it was not going to look anything like before." War tax resistance became a part of her full-throttle antiwar activism, about which she says, "What it's about is preventing it from happening to other people. Absent the total collapse of empire, I don't see this nation becoming a nation where I'll be willing to pay my taxes." Cindy is now biking from California to DC, and talking to groups and the media at stops along the way. The Tour de Peace ends in DC on July 4. See the full schedule at tourdepeace.org.

Coordinating Committee Meeting

Thirty people attended NWTRCC's business meeting on Sunday morning in Asheville, many representing affiliates including from Vermont, Oregon, DC, Alabama, Tennessee, Illinois, and Colorado. Ruth Benn received a beautiful certificate and thanks for completing ten years as NWTRCC Coordinator. Asheville resident Ruth Clark was also honored with a framed certificate for her "lifetime of work for peace in solidarity with the poor through simple living and steadfast refusal to pay for weapons and war."

The finance report shows the organization as status quo, with a fundraising committee meeting monthly to try to increase the income to enhance outreach and program work. Erica Weiland in Seattle has replaced Jason Duffield as our Social Media Consultant. She worked hard before tax day to get our message out and boost our following on Twitter and Facebook.

A proposal to add an endorsement category to the NWTRCC network (which now includes affiliates, contacts, counselors, and alternative funds) will be considered again in November after some changes were suggested. Going from two to one meeting a year was tabled, but a Strategy Committee (volunteers welcome) was established to discuss structure and programs and prepare ideas and proposals for November.

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David Swanson and Cindy Sheehan joined the Saturday morning march and spoke at the gathering.
Photo by Carlos Steward.



Clare Hanrahan reading at a stop on the "impact of militarism" community tour, led by Amy Cantrell (right).
Photo by Ruth Benn.



B-Love reciting one of his poems, which is how he has responded to the impact of militarism on his life.
Photo by Ruth Benn.

Jerry Chernow and Paula Rogge in Wisconsin are working on a film about longtime war tax resisters, and the group agreed that NWTRCC could be listed as a sponsor to facilitate their outreach. Strong interest was expressed in a proposal to establish "circuit riders" who would travel and speak about WTR or bring specific skills to a project related to WTR. A committee will develop this idea for a decision in November also.

Special thanks to Kima Garrison and Jason Rawn who finished their terms on the Administrative Committee, and the group selected Ari Rosenberg of Philadelphia and Greg Straight Edge of Brooklyn to fill the open alternate seats. Rick Bickhart, Carlos Steward, Elizabeth Boardman, and Rob Stenger are full members.

Our next meeting will be the first weekend in November, although we

are still undecided about the location. Cleveland and New York City are possibilities. If you would be interested in having NWTRCC come to your area, please contact the office, and we will help make it as easy a task as we can.

We are very grateful to Clare Hanrahan, Coleman Smith, Carlos Steward, Redmoonsong, Bill Ramsey, and the Fools of Conscience for all their work in making the Asheville weekend such a success. The food from Rosetta's Kitchen, Firestorm Café, and local cooks was terrific. Big thanks to everyone who opened their homes to out-of-state participants, to Amy Cantrell for the community tour, and to all the speakers for their presentations and for spending time with us. It was a special weekend. ●

Counseling Notes

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Pity the IRS?

The IRS is suffering from budget cuts, which is not necessarily bad news for WTRs. It has shed thousands of employees over the past few years, has frozen pay levels, and recently announced a series of furloughs in which agency offices will be closed and all employees sent home without pay for several days this year.

The agency was also recently caught in a series of scandals:

- They used taxpayer funds to produce tacky and expensive "Star Trek" and "Gilligan's Island" parody videos to play at agency conferences (William "Captain Kirk" Shatner himself chimed in, saying "I am appalled at the utter waste of U.S. tax dollars.").
- They were found to have used partisan political criteria to harass groups that were applying for 501(c)(4) "social welfare" status.
- And the ACLU discovered that the IRS criminal tax division had put out a Search Warrant Handbook for its criminal investigation personnel that baldly stated that Americans have no 4th Amendment right to prevent the IRS from reading their email without a warrant "because internet users do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in such communications." (The agency has since backtracked from this position.)

This has made the agency more unpopular in Congress (and in general), which in turn has made it more desperate in its appeals for a budget boost. The acting IRS commissioner told Congress that the current budget means the government will get less revenue from audits and collection, and the "voluntary compliance" rate can also be expected to fall as a result.

Counselor Training

David Gross, Karl Meyer, and Ruth Benn led a training on Monday, May 6, in Asheville, following the gathering. David helped clarify goals and methods when talking to new resisters; his slideshow is linked at nwtrcc.org/CC_minutes_May2013.php#other. Karl spoke about social security and inheritance. Some issues, like the frivolous penalty, could take a whole weekend. There is some good news on that front though. WTR Vicki Aldrich has fought the IRS for a couple years over the \$5,000 penalty she received for enclosing a letter with her tax return. Eventually that was reduced to \$500, which she paid. After filing for a refund with Form 843 a few months ago, she recently heard from the IRS that the full penalty would be refunded. We'll work on a summary of the session, so if you are interested please be in touch with the NWTRCC office. ●

Passionate for Peace

By Jason Rawn

Aanya Adler Friess has been resisting war taxes since the 1960s. At age 86, she no longer attends meetings on a regular basis, though she lives below the taxable income level. She discusses war tax resistance with activists from the organizations that make up Albuquerque’s Peace and Justice Organizations Linking Arms (PAJOLA), of which she is a founding member. She “stood with Occupy for a while” and works on water issues in arid, militarized (Kirkland Air Force Base, in particular) New Mexico.

“It’s wicked what we’re doing,” she says.



Aanya Adler Friess (2004). Photo by Singeli Agnew.

In the 1970s, Aanya’s WTR work included offering canned goods as payment of her “tax obligation.”

“The IRS people were amused, not hostile,” she recalls. She and her friend and fellow activist Dorie Bunting left the cans with the IRS, though they were not accepted as payment.

After devoting decades of her life to dance, including performing on Broadway and earning a Master of Arts in Theater and Dance History from the University of New Mexico, Aanya now has time and energy to focus on poetry, another of her lifelong passions. She’s active in a writer’s group, working toward their fifth collaborative chapbook.

The poem is excerpted from her collection *Praises, Protests & Songs*, published by Watermelon Mountain Press in celebration of her 80th birthday.

Peace-Making

People carry their hurts
their passions
so crudely
(precious cargo?)
afraid to drop them
afraid they’d be trampled
or overlooked
if they don’t defend their turf.

Even the Master of the Tao
defends his turf
his opinions
his certitude
while urging us to merge
into the great ocean of being.

It’s a turbulent ocean.
Explosive force
powers this universe.
Seeing the great clouds of gas
the blazing stars
How can we long for peace?
How can we not?

Jason Rawn just finished a 3-year term on NWTRCC’s Administrative Committee. He met Aanya while traveling in the Southwest after NWTRCC’s Colorado Springs meeting last November. He earned an MFA in Writing and Poetics from Naropa University and is currently working toward bridging permaculture and WTR.



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