

Brainstorms from the  
2008 Peace & Democracy Conference  
work group session

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These are the four questions that Bob Wing presented:

- a.** What are some of the strengths and weaknesses in the composition and activity of the local peace and justice movement? List as many groups as you can and note what segments of the population or issues they take on. Are there important political or social distinctions among the groups? What have been the most successful activities recently?
- b.** What key questions of strategy or organizing confront the local movement, and what tentative ideas do you have about overcoming them? What antiwar or global justice activities are ongoing and have in what ways have they been successful or not so successful? Does the peace movement link to social justice, environmental, racial justice or immigrant rights activities in the area? What has been successful or not about such attempts? Has the peace movement been involved in any electoral activity? What have been the positive or negative lessons learned in this?
- c.** What opportunities for building unity are ongoing or coming up, and how might local organizers best take advantage of them?
- d.** What have you learned from the conference that you hope to bring into your organizing work? What do you hope the new Peace Center at Lane can add to the local peace and justice movement?

These are the brainstorms that followed:

A

CALC: Strengths: Homogeneity, longevity, expansive groups, cooperative,

SDS: Strengths: Student movement, fresh, youth

Weakness: inexperienced

LASC: Strengths: Longevity, education programs

Weakness: lack of diversity

NATIVE FOREST COUNCIL: Strength: Non-compromising

Weakness: Non-compromising

CASCADIA WILDS: Weakness: Not well known

ESSN (Eugene Springfield solidarity): Strength: Unifying org.

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Groups: CALC, EPW, CLDC, Cut The Funding, Lane Peace Center, UO Peace Studies, Lane Interfaith Alliance, Eugene Middle East Peace Group, Dem. Peace Caucus, Code Pink, W.I.B., Spiritual Life Center, Eugene Peace Choir, Justice Not War Coalition, Rotary- Peace Com., Veterans for Peace, Food Not Bombs, Tax Resisters, AFSC, Occupation Project, ESSN, Centro Latino, CAUSA, War Resisters League, Eugene Human Rights Com.

Strengths: Longevity, stable leadership, any active groups, support for activism, Lane current calendar

Weaknesses: Competing for community resources, lack of coordination with events, lack of youth bringing up next generation of leaders, lack of media support

Successful Events: Iraq Body Count, Peace Conference, The Peace Worker demonstrations, Million Moms March, Eugene Celebration

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Groups:

CALC, Beyond War, Code Pink, Million Mom March, Eugene Peace Works, WAND, CAUSA, Justice Not War, SDS, Move On, Vets for Peace, Rural Organizing Project, Food Not Lawns, LASC, Peace Alliance

Strengths: Lots of energy, many different accomplishments, lane current calendar, many different segments represented (Liberals, queer rights, youth, antiwar, mothers, gun control, hippies, women, Hispanic, coalition, students, vets, rural, hungry, Central America)

Weaknesses: Too many groups?, too small groups?, too many elders, personality issues

Needs:

- Invite all local groups to participate in this outlined process:
    1. Participating groups brainstorm priorities within their group
    2. All participating groups share their priorities in a "priorities pool"
    3. Each group then identifies which members are interested in putting energy into each priority
    4. People among all groups interested in the same issue become informal action teams perhaps linked by Peace Alliance List-serve
  - Conference that provides leadership skills for organizers
  - Use list-serve to communicate and fit people into appropriate group
  - Conflict management
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Strengths: Passion, commitment, active, dedicated, continuous, diversity, group in Springfield, focus networking, bridge of communication; Israeli/Arab, calc/Pacifica, Iso/anarchist, gender groups, spiritual, unifying principals—one common goal—MLK—to be free

Weaknesses: Not enough diversity; color-talking-- not enough action, focus on negative, Listen to the masses, meeting style-white culture, groups do not work together—need more networking, divisive, “Us/Them”

Successes: Israeli/Palestine coalition, this event right here, music, food, fun events, election year

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Strengths: Passion, knowledge, ability to listen and organize, bringing up next generation, we are all here talking

Weaknesses: “We” are elite, have “the” answers, disconnect between educated experts and general population, tend to tear each other down, almost “too many” it can be overwhelming

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B

We must agree to find common ground. Understanding that each one of our issues is important. Expand the framework of thinking they are not separate but inherently connected.

- Utilizing the Peace Center as a central hub for connecting the numerous groups
- Broadening the base—including a more diverse participation.

There have been small successes:

- The Peace Conference and preceding similar conferences, ie; numerous and more to come.
- BUT, we must have more follow-through after these conferences.
- Must become more clear on what we want and not just what we don't want. Changing the movement from an ANTI perspective to a POSITIVE one. From anti-war to Pro-love.
- Assume positive intent of everyone and every peace movement
- The peace movement and elections YES!

Opportunities for Unity:

- Oregon Country Fair as a resource for community groups all year long
  - Possibility of national support for Eugene becoming a model city (Cities of peace initiative)
  - Youth led initiative
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Increasing demographics—YOUTH!

Role of education; integrating peace concepts into regular curriculum.

Prepare us for social machine vs economic/military machines

Parenting project—NVC creates new relationships w/our kids (and it doesn't cost much)

What inspires imagination to realize to realize we are the solution

Why do we have student groups here tabling, but hardly any students here?

Middle and high school requires community service (garden project, FFLC)

Peace groups work with youth groups from churches/faith community

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More groups not already listed:

Grandmother's Council, Women in Black, ASLCC, Climate Crisis, Friends Church, Green Peace, Sierra Club, Take back America, SOA Watch, Helios, Permaculture Guild, Radiant Life, Zen Buddhist, SGI Buddhist Org meditation Center, Non violence as a Way of Life

Need: A Compassionate Listening project

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Key Questions of Strategy:

- People need to be talking about these issues outside of "organized sessions" (conferences etc...) This issues should be part of our daily discussions
- Feeling ineffective, hopeless. Difficulty getting people together
- Social Apathy
- Join the Dark Side! Change a conservatives mind w/one on one dialogue
- Public opinion too influenced by corporate media
- New fashioned "Cry In" "Hug In" vent despair
- Go to politician's offices en masses with specific demands
- Watered down actions
- Need more options—actual accountability from our elected officials
- Diversity of tactics

Put Action in Activism—instead of just a "peace rally", bring peace activists together to DO social services for the community; clean-up. Help your neighbor, etc... manifest peace through selective peaceful action

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Who are we not including?

Youth, LBGT, native American, Homeless, Multi-ethnic community

Peace movement not effectively picked up on Immigrant Rights Issue

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- NEED for more/better inter-group communication—coalition building
  - Build on common ideals within diversity
  - Energy wasted on infighting (competition for community resources)
  - Emphasis on trust and mutual support for ALL issues
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Learn more about immigrant community ( in Springfield?) Listen—include their needs in our conversation

“Teach-In” listening event

LETS Take ownership of new Lane Peace Center:

- Individual and collective responsibility for its growth
- Create new paradigms, breakthroughs
- Catalyst for bridge and community-building

Remove ‘right ’ and “wrong” from our vocabulary

Need to unify among confliction strategies

Get minorities involved from the start

“Each One Teach One” --We need personal contact/friendships w/at least one person of color

Green Summit Expo Event

Distinguishing—peace movement/ antiwar movement; reframe our movement so it won’t be temporary

We need community building

How do we keep our passion/motivation high and constant?

Need more smaller events? FUN!

Overwhelm prevention

Mutual empowerment, acknowledgment, nurturance

Quality instead of quantity

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C

Opportunities for building unity

- Elections—all levels
- Build intergenerational ties
- Ballot measures need solidarity (#19—English only, #112—anti-immigrant licenses)
- Peace Studies programs—new paradigms
- Public sentiment is more progressive—organize it
- Economic crisis—opportunity for alliances, not allow scapegoating, war-militarism/econ crisis
- Opposition within military
- Universal Health care
- Human rights frame

- Cross—issue, cross community work. Need to educate ourselves
- Ecological state—urgent, HR issue, anti-militarism issue, environment and public trust
- Listen/learn across cultures
- Dominant culture has work to do—privilege, racism, elitism. How to be real allies
- Process of consulting w/folks/ Building relationships
- Peace Movement or Peace and Justice

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### Opportunities?

- March 16: Iraq War Anniversary
- Election
- Basic Principals: Declaration of Human Rights  
Global Issues; Housing, Health Care, Personal well being, Children, Dislocation of peoples
- Peace Center at Lane: Bring together different groups
- HUGE interrelated issues

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D

Unification of many groups

Support for those groups

- Resource center
- Teaching youth

Sharing of successful organizing models from other communities

Focus on non-violent and diverse communication addressing injustice

Historical Significance

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1. Interconnection w/all social justice groups
  2. "Burnout is a luxury"
  3. Urgency of environmental issue; global warming, resources, US as major consumer
  4. Big picture vs Little picture, time pressure—overwhelmed, keep on keeping on...
  5. Divisiveness or diversity?

Discussions/conferences:

- Unity of Action from Diversity of Issues
- Learn to Listen
- Direct Action training
- Rallies on campus and in town

Emphasize similarities rather than differences

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- The example of Medea Benjamin & Code Pink  
Fearlessness, creativity, basis of love, joyness about their work,  
humor!
- HOPE that the Lane Peace Center reached out to the broad  
Eugene/Springfield Lane county community and communicated to the  
community
- Create space through Peace Center for community to meet and have  
events/actions emerge
- Place or hub for organizations in the county to unite—a united front for  
organizations
- Archive /historical memory of successful or unsuccessful efforts
- Reach beyond the choir, reach past leftist activist communities
- Create bridges across peace worker communities
- Education for Peace
- Draw young people