



# Pacific Call

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***WWFOR** seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, equality, peace and justice. It links and strengthens FOR members and chapters throughout Western Washington in promoting activities consistent with the national FOR statement of purpose. WWFOR helps members and chapters accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone.*

## **“Practical Democracy: How Can we Make It Work for All of Us?” WWFOR’s Annual Fall Retreat on Saturday November 7, 2015**

All across our nation, people are outraged that democracy is being stolen away from us:

Our economy has been hijacked by the 1% -- and even by the 1% of the 1% -- forcing the rest of us to suffer with lower incomes and austerity cutbacks in basic services.

The public wants peace, but the military-industrial complex and “national-security state” launch endless wars.

The public wants food that is safe and healthful, energy that is clean and renewable, and health care that is affordable and available, but instead giant corporations – and the politicians they fund and lobby – give us the opposite.

This anti-democratic pattern repeats itself in sector after sector: Fossil fuel companies worsen the climate crisis; the gun lobby prevents laws to reduce gun violence; real estate developers causes local governments to continue suburban sprawl; profit-making companies privatize schools and lay off teachers; giant corporations consolidate ownership of news media to become monopolies and lock out alternative voices; political parties pass laws and gerrymander districts to promote their own candidates and reduce minority voting; and the list goes on.

Many of our federal, state and local governments are run by people who are grossly ignorant, insensitive to human rights, and corrupt.

The American people deeply value the principle of **democracy**, but at the federal, state and local level, rich and powerful entities have corrupted the government to serve their narrow interests instead of the broad public interest. Some of these anti-democratic behaviors have antagonized – or prevented – voting to such an extent that the U.S. has the lowest voting turnout of any traditionally democratic nation.

But elections are only a little part of what democracy means. **Practical democracy** would empower ordinary people – not limited to those eligible to vote – to equip themselves with accurate information, and it would empower them to wield actual power all year around, not just on certain election days. It would do this not only for electing government officials, but also for **making substantive decisions in all sectors** (economics, energy, environment, media, policing, social justice issues, governmental accountability, etc.). **Practical democracy** would make the principle of democracy come to life in **every aspect of our daily lives!**

Although political parties and their funders want to narrow our focus to mere electioneering, we need to broaden and deepen our vision to how we might apply the principle of democracy more profoundly to help our people and our planet.

**Please join us for the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation’s 2015 Fall Retreat on Saturday November 7 in a pleasant setting in Lacey, near Olympia.**

We will bring people together from throughout our region to enjoy Mary Lou Finley’s stimulating keynote and your two choices from among the 8 interesting, practical workshops. We’ll enjoy connecting with old friends and meeting new ones. Yes, we can equip ourselves to make progress in our own communities after we return home that evening.

At 9:00 a.m. we will welcome people with light refreshments and social time. We’ll begin in earnest at 10:00 a.m. and continue (with **your own brownbag lunch**) until 5:00 p.m. The Fall Retreat will occur in the rustic Old Main Lodge at the Gwinwood Conference Center in Lacey.

**Location and driving directions:** The WWFOR Fall Retreat is held at the **Gwinwood Conference Center** (the old main lodge) in Lacey, near Olympia.

**From the north,** take I-5 to Exit 109. Turn right onto Martin Way, left onto College Street, left onto Lacey Boulevard, right onto Ruddell Road, left on 25th Ave SE, right on Hicks Lake Road SE, left on 30th Ave SE, right into Gwinwood and see the Old Main Lodge straight ahead when you first enter the conference center. Parking is in front of the building and beyond it.

**From the south,** take I-5 to Exit 108. Follow the very long exit to College Street. Turn right onto College and follow the rest of the above directions.

**Cost:** We keep costs low and try to just barely break even. \$15 per person will cover our costs. We give discounts to young and low-income people upon request. Persons who can afford to give more will help offset the cost for those who have less. Part of keeping the cost low is for you to **BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH.** We will provide coffee, tea, and light refreshments throughout the day.

**More information:** Look for more information soon at [www.wwfor.org](http://www.wwfor.org) and [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org) or contact Glen Anderson at (360) 491-9093 [glen@olympiafor.org](mailto:glen@olympiafor.org).

## A Good Vehicle for Local Organizing

by Lisa Kauffman

About two years ago, a group of us in West Seattle started the West Seattle Meaningful Movies—free monthly documentary films for the local community, on topics like social justice, the economy, and the environment. Along with providing information, they've been a great way to build local connections.

It hasn't been hard to get a good turnout. For busy, stressed-out people, it seems to be doable to go a nearby venue, eat some refreshments, and sit and watch a movie. And the food and the movies are free (we ask for voluntary donations). Before each film, there's a half-hour social time in which people can eat and visit with neighbors. Afterward there are community announcements, suggestions for action, and an optional discussion.

The movies have been a great vehicle for making contact with other groups in West Seattle. For example, when we showed a film about soil, we publicized it among local gardeners and used it as a way to connect with West Seattleites interested in growing food. When we showed a movie about the history of High Point, a local community with many immigrants and people of color, we door-belled at High Point and quite a few residents attended. Having community announcements brings in people who want to get the word out about their projects. When people attend, they usually sign up for our e-mail list. Then they hear about future movies and quite often come back.

Sometimes, we co-host a film with another West Seattle organization. The Southwest Seattle Historical Society helped us put on *Princess Angeline*, a movie about the Duwamish Tribe. Sustainable West Seattle and Cool Moms worked with us on a movie about Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Laureate who mobilized women in Kenya to plant millions of trees. West Seattle Neighbors for Peace and Justice helped us with *War Made Easy*. When an organization co-hosts, some of its members attend. Then they often keep coming to the movies.

Partly because of connecting at the movies, Sustainable West Seattle and the West Seattle Meaningful Movies have joined West Seattle Neighbors for Peace and Justice in their monthly vigils in the West Seattle Junction (the downtown of West Seattle). The West Seattle Green Party has also joined in and following one of the vigils led a West Seattle march against Shell. West Seattle Neighbors for Peace and Justice recently decided to read and discuss Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything—Capitalism versus the Climate*, and announcing it at the movies brought some new people to their discussions.

Organizing locally has many benefits. It's easy to keep building the relationships: people run into each other at the grocery store; they can easily attend each other's events. Having a local venue means shorter drives, which saves time and adds less CO2 to the atmosphere. It also makes it more possible to pull in neighborhood friends.

And there are other reasons, besides organizing for social change, to connect close to home. With people who live near to us, it's easier to cooperate for mutual survival (like after an

earthquake); it's easier to sustain friendships.

Rick and Diane Turner, who spearhead the Wallingford Meaningful Movies, have been a big support to us. They've also helped twelve other groups in the Puget Sound area start Meaningful Movies. Rick and others just created a fabulous new website, [www.meaningfulmovies.org](http://www.meaningfulmovies.org), with all kinds of ideas and information for setting up and sustaining a Meaningful Movies group. If you'd like to start one, you'll find a lot of support there.

## Letter to the editor of *The Chronical*

By Larry Kershner

The Obama administration has committed to a \$65 million 13 year propaganda program to adjust US thinking about what the Vietnamese call the American War. Observing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this war, President Obama stated, "we pay tribute to the more than 3 million men and women who left their families to serve bravely....fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dearly as Americans".

We might ask what ideals he is referring to. Almost 60,000 Americans died while killing 4,000,000 Vietnamese. Most of those we killed were civilians living in the South Vietnam we supposedly were there to protect. The book "Kill Anything that Moves" by journalist and historian Nick Turse documents at least 400 My Lai-type occurrences during the ten year war in which U.S. troops massacred Vietnamese civilians.

The Pentagon in this propaganda move would also like us to forget that Richard Nixon criminally sabotaged the Paris peace talks in 1968. There are recordings available in which LBJ calls Nixon's actions treason. Thousands more on both sides died unnecessarily as a result of Nixon's actions. The government would also like us to forget that many people in Vietnam are still dying from unexploded ordnance and the third and fourth-generation effects of Agent Orange. Nineteen million gallons of the lethal herbicide was sprayed over six million acres. Since then an estimated million children have been born with birth defects including children of US personnel who were exposed to Agent Orange.

Members of the Veterans for Peace have launched an educational campaign to counter the lies and historical misrepresentations coming out of the Pentagon. More complete information can be obtained at <http://www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org/>. The Obama administration seems willing to say that there is a 50-year statute of limitation on mass murder and treason.

Local chapters of Veterans for Peace and the Fellowship of Reconciliation are into our thirteenth year of weekly peace vigils each Saturday at noon in front of the Centralia Library. People will occasionally come up and thank me for my service. To those who would thank me for my service I say, "I know you mean well but I was forced by my government into a situation where I had to kill people who were protecting their homes and their children from a foreign invader. This is not something I am proud of."

US troops have been at war for 222 out of the 239 years since 1776. Pause and consider what that says about the "heroic ideals" of which President Obama spoke. The Full Disclosure Campaign is a Veterans for Peace effort to speak truth to power and to present a clear alternative to the Pentagon's current efforts to sanitize and mythologize the Vietnam War thereby legitimizing further unnecessary wars.

## Preventing Infant Deaths: What Can We Learn From Cuba?

by Mary Anne Mercer, first published in Huffington Post, March 6, 2015

On a recent trip to Cuba I determined to find out how that country manages to have an infant mortality rate well below that of the U.S., with dramatically fewer resources than we have. It defies logic, but in spite of its poverty Cuba demonstrates remarkably good health outcomes, particularly for infants. The most [recent estimates](#) show the Cuban infant mortality rate (IMR) to be 4.7 per thousand infants born alive, on par with much wealthier countries like Canada and New Zealand. That rate is significantly lower than the current U.S. rate of 6.2, much lower than the average IMR of 15 for other countries in the Latin America/Caribbean region. How did this happen?

As a public health professional, I know that the death rate for children under one year of age is a classic indicator of the health of a population. Not surprisingly, it's strongly linked with national incomes. This year's UNICEF report on [The State of the World's Children](#) lists basic economic and health facts for every country, and that relationship is easy to see. For example, Norway has an estimated gross national income (GNI) of over \$100,000 a year and an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 2 deaths for every 1000 infants born alive. In contrast, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have average GNIs of around \$1700, and average infant mortality of 61. Poorer countries nearly always have worse infant health. Except when they don't.

Cuba is a very poor country by most measures. The per capita gross national income (GNI) is around \$5900 USD a year, but the actual average income of most Cubans is much lower, with government salaries typically \$300 to \$500 a year (in addition to basic food rations provided to everyone). In the US, the average national income is \$53,700 when last estimated. The economic disparity between Cuba and U.S. is huge.

I left on this trip knowing only the basic facts about Cuba. The revolution in 1958-59 overturned the despotic regime of Fulgencio Batista. From the beginning, the new government focused its public efforts on providing free, high quality education and health care for everyone. Within a few short years, literacy increased to essentially 100 percent, where it stands today. The new health care system trained thousands of primary care physicians, around half of them women, who were placed in communities as [family doctors](#) to assume care for the small populations that lived around them. Home visits are an important part of those services.

Cuba's [100 percent literacy](#) is a possible explanation for its good standing in health, since literacy, particularly maternal literacy, has very important benefits for child health. But other nations with virtually universal literacy, such as Tajikistan and other countries of the former Soviet Union, have infant mortality rates five to ten times higher than Cuba's. Education alone, although a powerful factor in producing health, doesn't seem to be the explanation.

Cuba's universal access to health care is another likely reason for its good infant health. A common measure of how well a health system serves everyone is immunization coverage: what percent of children get the basic childhood vaccinations? But

again, a number of the same high-education countries in Eastern Europe had nearly universal coverage, so that doesn't fully explain the differences either.

Something about the commitment of Cuba's post-revolution government to health care was eluding me. Then I looked at the proportion of public spending that was allocated to health purposes for a range of countries, and began to see a clearer picture. Nearly all the poor countries of the world allocate only [2 or 3 percent of their GNP for public health](#), while the most highly developed countries spend 7 to 9 percent. In Cuba that figure is 10 percent: one out of every ten dollars produced goes for public expenditures on health. That commitment is not just for the benefit of Cubans. In addition to training doctors for their own population, the Cuban medical system trains hundreds of doctors from other countries. It sends medical brigades to countries with urgent need, such as following earthquakes and for the Ebola crisis in West Africa. As many as [15,000 Cuban doctors](#) are now serving outside the country.

This full-on commitment to health was mirrored in what we heard and saw about care for pregnant women and newborns in Cuba. The community-based doctors pay close attention to pregnant women under their care, making sure they receive extra food rations. If a home visit reveals problems of either a social or medical nature, the women are offered a bed in a maternity home for as long as needed, and are provided with rest and special food. Essentially 100 percent of deliveries are a hospital or clinic.

After an infant is born, the community doctor makes regular home visits to assure the baby is healthy and growing well. Sick babies are provided referrals to specialists, if needed. And the uncommon event of an infant death is taken extremely seriously, with the investigation as to the causes reviewed at the very highest level in the Ministry of Health. If the attending physician is found to be negligent in care of an infant who dies, he or she might even lose the license to practice medicine.

Cuba has healthy infants because the health system and those working in it actually care about them. Despite a range of serious political and economic problems that Cuba still faces, its attention to the basic needs of the population was reflected in much of what we saw, even as casual observers, in our short time in the country. Homelessness is virtually nonexistent. With very rare exceptions, everyone looked well dressed and adequately nourished, with sufficient resources to maintain their self-respect.

At the national level, Cuba has the political will to assure that pregnant women and their offspring thrive. Can we learn anything from Cuba? What prevents the United States from demonstrating this same concern?



## Robber's Cave by John M Repp

Robber's Cave is the name of a State Park in Oklahoma where Muzafer Sherif conducted a very famous social science experiment in 1954. Sherif, a social psychologist, brought twenty-two fifth grade boys to a camp and divided them into two groups, the Rattlers and the Eagles. Each group stayed in a separate cabin and for a week were kept apart. Then the Rattlers and the Eagles were pitted against each other in competitive games and skits.

Before long the boys started hurling insults at each other like 'fatso,' 'sissy,' 'baby,' and 'communist.' Then they began to raid each other's cabins carrying sticks, bats and rocks in socks. The experiment had to be shut down. Steven Pinker in his 1997 bestseller How the Mind Works describes Sherif's experiment as proof of how easy it is to separate people into "us" and "them" groups. "Jingoism is alarmingly easy to evoke even without a scarce resource to fight over." (p.513)

Indeed, don't we all know this? But Pinker, a scientist but also a mainstream and very popular science writer, fails to mention what Sherif did during the second half of the experiment. Sherif told the boys that the camp could rent the movie *Treasure Island* only if all the boys chipped in for the cost. They did. Then Sherif "arranged" for the camp truck to break down and all twenty-two of the boys had to push it to get it started. Another "malfunction" forced the Rattlers and the Eagles to share a truck for an outing. The hostility between the two groups soon dissolved. Boys from the different groups became friends and laughed at their previous exploits against each other. All chose to take the same bus home.

Sherif wrote another paper in 1958 where he proposed that traditionally hostile groups are able to overcome their differences when they must share goals, he calls "superordinate goals". John Horgan in his 2012 book The End of War makes the analogy between the Rattlers and the Eagles and sovereign the nation-states who are embedded in the war system. Today the global community has many shared goals but Horgan writes that two stand out. "One is figuring out how we can all prosper in every sense – materially as well as spiritually – without irrevocably damaging our planet. Another, which will help the first, is ending war." (p.127)

Current Evolutionary scientists are telling us that the human ability to cooperate on a vast scale is what makes us so special. (see Scientific American, Sept. 2014, pp 69-71.) Even our ability to think is cooperative if we consider that we use language, a social product, to form and express our thoughts. Cooperation is how bands of early humans survived the last ice age maximal 70,000 years ago – cooperation within nomadic bands and between nomadic bands. Our species was too sparse, too on the edge, to engage in competitive killing. A conflict over resources would result in dispersal not war.

If only our political leaders had the wisdom of our ancient ancestors and the knowledge of our contemporary scientists.

## A Review of American Nations by Colin Woodward

by Larry Kerschner

Have you ever asked yourself why in the world did people make the political and social decisions that they do? A remarkable book, *American Nations*, subtitled "a history of the eleven rival regional cultures of North America" by Colin Woodward lends answers to many of the political questions of today. Woodward shows that it is necessary to understand the history of each region and each region's interactions with the other regions before beginning to understand why the United States is as it is today.

In his introduction Woodward states, "America's most essential and abiding divisions are not between red states and blue states, conservatives and liberals, capital and labor, blacks and whites, the faithful and the secular. Rather, our divisions stem from this fact: the United States is a federation comprised of the whole or part of eleven regional nations, some of which truly do not see eye to eye with one another. These nations respect neither state nor international boundaries, bleeding over the U.S. frontiers with Canada and Mexico as readily as they divide California, Texas, Illinois, or Pennsylvania. Six joined together to liberate themselves from British rule. Four more were conquered but not vanquished by English-speaking rivals. Two more were founded in the West by a mix of American frontiersmen in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some are defined by cultural pluralism, others by their French, Spanish, or "Anglo-Saxon" heritage. Few have shown any indication that they are melting into some sort of unified American culture. On the contrary, since 1960 the fault lines between these nations have been growing wider, fueling culture wars, constitutional struggles, and ever more frequent pleas for unity."

This book showed me history on how and why this country was actually founded that I was not aware of. In reading this book I have even found some understanding for my own belief system based on the cultural systems that my ancestors lived in.

The book follows this eleven nation history right up until 2011 when it was published. In the final chapter Woodward looks at several possible future outcomes based on the historical precedents. In the epilogue Woodward says, "If the power struggles between the nations have profoundly shaped North America's history over the past four centuries, what might they hold for us in the future? Will the continent be divided into three enormous political confederations, or will it have morphed into something else: a Balkanized collection of nation-states along the lines of present day Europe; a loose E.U.-style confederation of nation-states stretching from Monterrey, Mexico, to the Canadian Arctic; a unitary state run according to biblical law as interpreted by the spiritual heirs of Jerry Falwell; a post-modernist utopian network of semi-sovereign, self-sustaining agricultural villages freed by technological innovations from the need to maintain larger governments at all? No one, if he or she is being thoughtful and honest, has any idea.

What can be said is this: given the challenges facing the United States, Mexico, and, to a lesser extent, Canada, to assume that the continent's political boundaries will remain as they were in 2010 seems as far-fetched as any of these other scenarios."



## A Plan for Lasting Peace

by John M Repp

A book review of Shift: The Beginning of War, the Ending of War (2014) by Judith L. Hand

*"None of us realized how much more powerful is instinct compared to intelligence. We would do well to bear this in mind or the tragic errors of the past may be repeated."*

*Albert Einstein, Heinz Norden, and Bertrand Russell*

*Einstein on Peace, p. 26 (1988) (p. 71 in Hand)*

In the last few years, there have been many books published that argue for the abolition of war. Examples include War No More: The Case for Abolition (2013) by David Swanson, a peace activist, and The End of War (2012) by John Horgan, a science writer. These works conclude that if humanity can just find the political will to end war, it can be abolished. Dr. Judith L. Hand believes that it is possible to end war as well, but that achieving the political will, while the most important step is not the only one. Hand thinks we need to understand human evolution and biology in order to mount a successful campaign to end war and make that achievement stick.

Hand is a biologist who has studied the behavior of complex animals. She published a paper in 1981 about a group of Laughing Gulls who were put in a confined but large space with a very unbalanced sex ratio of seven males and two females. Eventually, two of the males started "keeping house". They did not behave in the way that species usually did where males fight each other for females. They engaged in "courtship" behaviors, built a nest, and when Hand put several fertilized eggs in the nest, the two males incubated the eggs, hatched the chicks and fed them. The point is complex animals put in environments different from the ones in which they evolved can display new behaviors.

Hand writes that our ancestors evolved as nomadic foragers living in small bands. These bands dispersed rather than fight wars when there were conflicts over resources. War was not an evolutionary adaptation like walking and running on two legs or like human language. The earliest archaeological evidence of war is just 12 to 14 thousand years old. The nomadic bands were egalitarian and the females had as much status as the males, sharing power in the important decisions of the group.

It was when our species "settled down" that the tragedy began. Gaining access to reliable, rich and stable resources as the last glacial period ended, gave those groups a real war when our species "settled down" that the tragedy began. Gaining access to reliable, rich and stable resources as the last glacial period ended, gave those groups a reason to defend territory. In effect, our species started living in a radically altered environment, essentially a new ecological niche. There were three unintended consequences that we are still contending with: 1) social stratification (the new roles of chief or shaman, later emperor), 2) loss of status for women, and 3) war.

So war is not an innate behavior in our species. The existence of societies without war is evidence that war is not an innate behavior in our species. Some examples of societies without war are Hopi, Sami, Kalahari Bushman, and the modern nations of Switzerland and Norway. More evidence is the existence of the innate human aversion to killing another human (not everyone has it) who is not guilty of a serious offense. Such aversion explains the PTSD or moral injury soldiers experience when returning from war as well as the necessity for soldiers to undergo extensive training to kill before being sent to war.

However, there are four innate traits that make us susceptible to war: 1) the dominance behavioral system (DBS) ("the inclination to form dominance hierarchies, and to defer to superior authority"), 2) the passionate bonding of especially males for group defense and hunting, 3) personal sacrifice or altruism ("willingness to sacrifice oneself for the survival of the group"), and 4) xenophobia ("a tendency to be wary or suspicious of unknown groups or individuals") p.48. Notice that traits number 2 and 3 are normally viewed as good but they are used by warmongers to build armies and recruit young men to fight. Trait number 1 is the basis of armies, governments, and corporations. Our nomadic foraging ancestors were able to mitigate DBS by the whole band cooperating to prevent alpha males from dominating their small societies.

After twelve millennia of ever more lethal warfare, we face a "full world" in so many ways. We have developed nuclear weapons and that technology is spreading. The atmosphere as waste dump for greenhouse gases is more than full. We live after the development of the modern scientific method, the return to democratic and republican government, women getting to vote and having reliable family planning, and the Internet. We face a new historical situation and the opportunity to end war.

Hand thinks that ending war using nonviolent "obstructive" action should have a higher priority than nonviolent "constructive" action (doing good things). She lists nine cornerstones of a campaign to end war. (see [www.afww.org](http://www.afww.org) for more information and to order the book) She advocates the coordination and leadership model of "massively distributed collaboration" used by the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines and the successful search by the scientific community for the Higgs boson. (pp 231-233)

Hand writes that both males and females can be aggressive but manifest aggression in different ways. In general, males use violence more and a few are willing to upset the social order to advance their status, while females have a preference for several generations of social stability so they can raise their children and grandchildren. This explains why war is overwhelmingly a male endeavor. For Hand, a key condition for ending war and establishing peace, again one of the cornerstones, is to create a real partnership between males and females in all decision-making bodies in society. In her discussion of another cornerstone, the spreading of mature democratic governance, she cites the statistic that the U.S. has 16.9% participation of women in governing i.e. elected officials, far behind Sweden with 44.7%. Hand suggests women take a front-line roll during nonviolent direct action while men do the support work. This, she thinks, would change the “chemistry” on the streets.



Hand lists many organizations already working on some aspects of what could become a movement to abolish war. Fellowship of Reconciliation is listed twice under the two cornerstones of embracing the goal to end war and of promoting nonviolent conflict resolution. Shift is a good book that challenges some of the thinking of many peace activists. The book is difficult to distill in a short review or even touch all the insights in it.

By bringing in an understanding of human biology, Dr. Judith Hand has reformulated the vision of the abolition of war. Hopefully this can lead to the consensus needed among activists to begin the task. Hand thinks it can be done in two generations and that our window of opportunity may be closing.

