



## 10 Good Things About a Bad Year

**Medea Benjamin,** AlterNet December 31, 2003

No two ways about it, 2003 was a demoralizing year for those of us working for peace and justice. With George Bush in the White House, Arnold Schwarzenegger in the California State House, and Paul Bremer ruling Iraq, it was a chore just to get out of bed each morning. But get out of bed we did, and we spent our days educating, strategizing, organizing & mobilizing. As we greet the new year, let's remember and celebrate some of our hard-fought victories in a time of adversity.

1) We organized the most massive, global protests against war the world has ever seen. On February 15 alone, over 12 million people came out on the streets in over 700 cities in 60 countries and on every continent. So impressive was this outpouring of anti-war sentiment that the New York Times, not known for hyperbole, claimed there were now two super-powers: the US and global public opinion.

2) Over the last few months, mainstream Americans have been buying progressive books by the millions. Authors such as Michael Moore, Al Franken, Molly Ivins, Paul Krugman and David Corn have seen their books soar to the New York Times bestsellers list. With humor and biting exposes of the Bush administration, these authors helped our movement gain legions of new converts. No more preaching to the choir this year!

3) When the World Trade Organization met in Cancun in September to promote global rules that give even greater power to transnational corporations, they were met by well coordinated opposition from countries in the global south, hundreds of non-governmental organizations and thousands of activists. When our movement's sophisticated inside-outside strategy forced the talks to collapse, there was "gloom in the suites and dancing in the streets." And as a counter to these corporate-dominated global institutions, the fair trade movement had a stellar year.

4) The poorest country in South America, Bolivia, proved that people power is alive and well. Sparked by the Bolivian president's plan to privatize and export the nation's natural gas, an astounding grassroots movement of peasants, miners, workers, and indigenous people poured into the streets to demand his resignation. After five weeks of intense protests and a government crack-down that left 70 dead, Sanchez de Lozada was forced to resign. Now that's regime change!

5) The silver lining in the budget crisis affecting the states throughout this nation is that from Louisiana to Texas to Michigan -- and even in Schwarzenegger's California -state governments are cutting prison budgets by releasing non-violent drug offenders. The year has been marked by a steady move toward treatment instead of incarceration and a greater understanding that drug abuse should be handled in the doctors' office, not the prison cell.

*Continued on page 2*



Hmong Village

photo by George Clark

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## 10 Good Things About a Bad Year *(from page 1)*

6) For so long, celebrities have put their careers above their beliefs. This year witnessed a "coming out" of all types of celebrities on all manner of progressive issues. Jay-Z and Mariah Carey railed against the racist Rockefeller drug laws, Bono and Beyonce Knowles called for the world to fight AIDS, and a host of celebs such as Sean Penn, Susan Sarandon and Laurence Fishbourne courageously took a stand against the invasion of Iraq.

7) Progressives now have a powerful new tool for organizing: the Internet. E-activism through venues such as MoveOn, Working Assets and Meetup.com have allowed ordinary people to challenge big money and powerful institutions. We raised millions of dollars to run ads, we've confronted corporate-dominated institutions like the Federal Communications Commission, and e-activism has allowed an anti-war candidate, Howard Dean, to become a frontrunner in the 2004 elections ( temporarily).

8) In an unprecedented outpouring of local opposition to the assault on our civil liberties, over 200 cities, towns, counties and states across the country have passed resolutions against the Patriot Act. In fact, the outcry has been so profound that plans for a successor act, dubbed Patriot Act II, that would further broaden federal investigatory powers, have been scuttled. (Ed. note: Some have been slipped into other bills & passed)

9) While eclipsed by the war in Iraq, the corporate scandals that topped the headlines in 2002 continued in 2003, with indefatigable New York State Attorney-General Eliot Spitzer exposing the trading abuses in the mutual funds industry. The Enron, WorldCom

and accounting scandals produced some positive legislation against corporate crime and forced institutional investors like pension funds to become more active. And anti-corporate crusaders joined with peace activists to expose the obscene war profiteering of Halliburton and Bechtel, with more exposes to come in 2004!

10) Despite the conservative takeover of the courts, this year produced several landmark rulings we can be proud of. The Supreme Court upheld affirmative action, giving a sweeping victory to the University of Michigan and colleges all over the country. The Appeals Court ruled that the US military could not detain American citizen Jose Padilla as an "enemy combatant", and in an even more significant decision, found that all 600 detainees at Guantanamo Bay should be granted access to lawyers. (Ed. note: Some have been released.)

There are many more -- the immigrants' freedom march that crisscrossed the nation to counter the anti-immigrant backlash, the amazing youth movement that is bringing new culture and vibrancy to organizing, the renewed women's activism through groups like Code Pink, the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to an Iranian woman, Shirin Ebadi. And each one of us could add to the list.

So while we lament the present state of the world and the present occupant in the White House, just remember that even in the gloomiest days of 2003, we kept slug-ging away-and sometimes even winning. Now let's move on to score the big victory in 2004 by sending George Bush back to Crawford.

*Medea Benjamin co-founder of Global Exchange & the women's group CodePink, is a board member of odw.*





## Wage Peace

Wage peace with your breath.  
Breathe in firemen and rubble,  
breathe out whole buildings  
and flocks of redwing blackbirds.

Breathe in terrorists and breathe out sleeping children  
and freshly mown fields.  
Breathe in confusion and breathe out maple trees.  
Breathe in the fallen  
and breathe out lifelong friendships intact.

Wage peace with your listening:  
hearing sirens, pray loud.  
Remember your tools:  
flower seeds, clothes pins, clean rivers.

Make soup.  
Play music, learn the word for thank you in three languages.  
Learn to knit, and make a hat.  
Think of chaos as dancing raspberries,  
Imagine grief as the outbreath of beauty  
or the gesture of fish.  
Swim for the other side.  
Wage peace.

Never has the world seemed so fresh and precious.  
Have a cup of tea and rejoice.  
Act as if armistice has already arrived.  
Don't wait another minute.

~ Mary Oliver



## A Day of Community: March 20

Wherever you were, if you were part of a March 20 anniversary of the invasion of Iraq event, didn't you feel that you were really in a community even if you didn't know many of the people? You weren't alone. Many felt as you did. The spirit was joyous, upbeat with lots of diversity in age, race, gender...But everyone there agreed: No More War, Not in Our Name, Money for People's Needs, Not War.

Two million around the world! One thousand in San Jose!  
That's community.  
Now we'll find other ways to work together and reach out. Talk to people in line at the grocery store. In the locker room at the gym. People who agree are so pleased to find they're not alone!



Thanks to Anne Firth Murray &  
[www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org)

San Francisco March 20, 2004



## Good Reads

### **ABOVE ALL, BE KIND** by Zoe Weil

Raising a Humane Child in Challenging Times

*reviewed by Jane Krejci*

This book is inspiring, challenging and practical. It is definitely worth reading. She first identifies 10 qualities for living a humane life:

1. Willingness to choose and change.
2. Kindness
3. Compassion
4. Honesty and trustworthiness
5. Generosity
6. Courage
7. Perseverance, self-discipline and restraint
8. Humor and playfulness
9. Wisdom
10. Integrity

Her four tools to achieve this kind of life:

1. Providing Information
2. Teaching Critical Thinking
3. Instilling the 3 Rs
  - reverence - is an emotion
  - respect - is an attitude
  - responsibility - is an act
4. Offering Positive Choices

I particularly like number 3. for preschoolers

She stresses the importance of getting out into nature to learn reverence - and respect and responsibility. She has specific ideas and exercises for different ages.

Another important part of the book is an examination of choices we make regarding how we live our lives - everything from food to clothes to cars to free time (facts and resources included). She talks about the power of advertising and the media - and challenges us to determine what is a need and what is a want? There are questionnaires that help the reader identify:

- What he/she currently does.
- What he/she wants to learn and do.
- What steps he/she will take.

Mahatma Gandhi: "My Life is My Message" -  
What message are we giving our children by the way we live our lives?



### **Doug Henwood's AFTER THE NEW ECONOMY** from (p. 111)

"The amount of money it would take to bring all officially poor households up to the poverty line is amazingly small: .5% of GDP, or just over 3% of the income of the richest fifth of households. It would take a bit more money to bring the poor up to a civilized standard, but not that much. Doubling the incomes of the poorest 20% of households -- from an average of \$10,136 (in 2001) to \$20,272, still less than half the median--by taxing the richest 20% would require the affluent fifth to sacrifice less than 7% of their income, bringing it down from an average of \$145,970 to a mere 135,834..[to] reduce their share of the national pie to late-1980's levels. when the upper orders weren't suffering. But clearly it's more important that the affluent be able to buy Hummers..." It offers an accessible, entertaining account of a less-than lustrous reality ... stripping bare the extravagant pretension of unrestrained entrepreneurial hubris and revealing how it contributed to the making of a new anti corporate global movement. *Doug Henwood, editor of Left Business Review, author of Wall Street, and The State of the USA Atlas.*

**David K Johnson's Perfectly Legal** notes that people with \$100,000 income pay more taxes than those with one million dollar income! Our tax system concentrates wealth for a few very wealthy & rewards those who take their business off-shore. Congress is voting on the budget now! *David K Johnson, formerly NYT*

### **HOPE DIES LAST** by Studs Terkel

Wonderful interviews of mostly inspiring accessible people who stick their necks out to make a difference. The giraffes among us who help make history, even if only in a small way. *Studs Terkel, author of many books & interviewer par excellence!*





## She's Proof That People *Can* Change.

### CAMPAIGN 2004: SIX THINGS JOHN KERRY NEEDS TO DO TO WIN IN NOVEMBER

By Arianna Huffington

Dear Senator Kerry,

Congratulations on becoming the de facto nominee. Now the White House is gunning for you and party hacks are deafening you with advice. Take a deep breath and tune them out. Here is a simple six-point plan for becoming the 44th president of the United States.

1. You may share JFK's initials, but you need to campaign with RFK's passion. The night Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, you were on a ship coming home from Vietnam. And you have often talked about his legacy on the campaign trail, about politics as something more than "the art of the probable - tinkering around the edges without any greater vision." Ushering Bush out of the White House will take more than a critique, however masterful, of his failed policies - and more than a new-and-improved Medicare plan. It will take a bold moral vision of what America can be. As Bobby Kennedy often said, "Some men see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dream of things that never were and ask, 'Why not?'"

2. Don't pick a VP by looking at the map. Pick someone who can help you bring soul back to American politics and appeal not just to our self-interest but to our better instincts. In short, do not pick Evan Bayh.

3. Don't fall back on the tried-and-untrue swing voter strategy that has led to the prolonged identity crisis of the Democratic Party. Fifty percent of eligible voters did not vote in 2000. Speak to them - to the young, to the poor, to single women. Speak to those who have given up on our democracy, who are struggling without health care, without decent schools, without jobs. The dithering poltroons offering you focus group-tested advice on how to triangulate your way to victory won't like it. But you'll feel better about yourself, and you'll win.

4. Don't run away from your voting record. Don't run away, as you did in the New York debate, from being called a liberal. Embrace it, and define it as the foundation of the great breakthroughs in American history. The Emancipation Proclamation. The 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote. The New Deal, which put ordinary people back to work when the private sector couldn't:

Social Security. Medicare.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Clean Air Act of 1970.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

These are all milestones in our journey toward a just society. They all represent values - liberal values - held dear by most Americans. You can be the president who leads us to the next breakthrough after years of consolidation, stagnation and - under George Bush - regression.

5. Remember: He who controls the language defines the political debate. Bush Republicans' control of certain magical words, starting with "responsibility," has been a key to their success. You need to take back "responsibility" from the grossly irresponsible GOP. It wants the nation to believe we can carry the burden of a worldwide war on terror and the Iraqi occupation while giving the top hats a multitrillion dollar tax cut and the drug companies a huge new prescription drug benefit without cost containment. We can't, of course, and you need to make sure Americans realize that before they vote in November.

6. Strike a new bargain with the American people. Tell them, "Let's put an end to the tyranny of low expectations. You can expect a lot more of me, and I will ask a lot more of you." President Bush has used Sept. 11 to divide us - and as a handy visual for his new campaign ads. Imagine how different our country would be if he had used it instead to call on the American people not to go shopping but to commit themselves to a large, collective purpose. Believe in us enough to ask us to confront both the horrors wrought by terrorists and the horrors wrought by random violence in our inner cities, and by woefully



**Arianna Huffington** (continued)

necessary to build a country of real opportunity for all and a sturdy social safety net. The values and spirit that emerged on Sept. 11—generosity, selflessness, courage—are still very much a part of who we are. After years of being pandered to, and lied to, we are longing for a leader who will speak straight to us and challenge us to live up to those intangible qualities that make our nation great.

You can be that leader, but only if you ignore all those who tell you that’s not the way you win elections. Indeed, that’s the only way you’ll win this one. *Adrianna Huffington Tribune media Services, Inc.*

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Albert Einstein said,

“The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don’t do anything about it”

“Evil will succeed only if good people do nothing” Edmund Burke

President Franklin D. Roosevelt warned us, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

**Fear** is what has been driving the Bush policies and using it to rally ‘round the flag.

- \* People who have been in refugee camps for three generations are desperate.
- \* People who have been looking for a job for over a year are sometimes prone to spousal or child abuse.
- \* People who see arms with US labels coming into their countries when they don’t have enough to eat are not going to trust us.

**ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE**

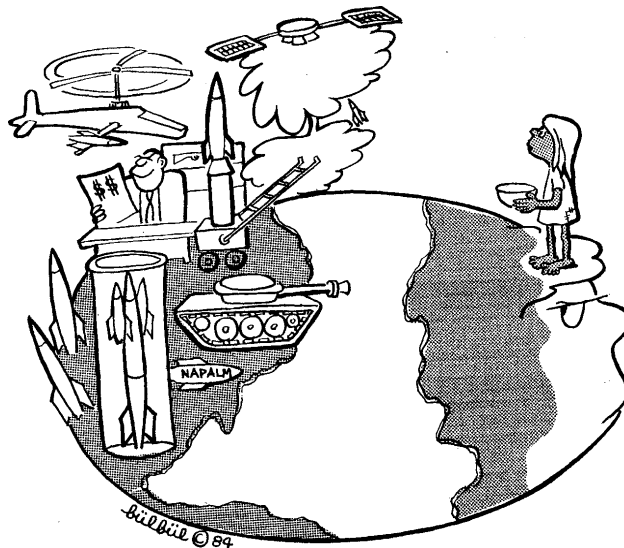
If we ask people “how can we help you to be food sufficient?” ( instead of helping our corporations make more money)

If we reach out and listen to people around the world we could learn different ways of responding to violence.

If we ask what help they need instead of coming with a one size fits all formula they’d trust us.

**Terrorism doesn’t just happen.**

We can take steps to make recruitment by terrorists less effective instead of recruiting for them by bad policies



Never Give Up by The xiv Dalai Lama  
No matter what is going on,  
Never give up  
Develop the heart  
Too much energy in your country  
Is spent developing the mind, Instead of the heart  
Be compassionate, Not just to your friends  
But to everyone, Be compassionate  
Work for peace, In your heart and in the world  
Work for peace  
And I say again, Never give up  
No matter what is going on around you  
Never give up

**SAVE MAY 22, 7:30 pm FOR A FUN FUNDRAISER for odw** Scholarship fund with a Cuban theme:music for dancing, Silent auction, door prizes, the video 'Fidel' shown. Bring your favorite dancing world music CDs, donations for the Silent Auction. \$25 for the first mojito & finger food, \$20 in advance. Seconds on drinks \$3.50 each. Bring your friends & unholy socks. Shoes by the door. **Save the date. Let's have some fun!**  
**odw is tax deductible**  
Hugh Molotsi is sharing his lovely gray home with **odw** friends. From 280 Exit Foothill Blvd, left from 280-S, right 280-N) right at the first light:Cristo Rey Drive up to the circle. Make the leftmost turn (the fourth turn) onto Canyon Oak. Drive up to the power lines, Canyon Oak curves left. Left at cul de sac after curve to gray house at 10493 Peralta Ct Cupertino.

**Join us!**  
**Friday vigil** 4:30 - 6 Second & San Carlos, San Jose  
Come when you can & stay as long as you can. \*  
**Friday, April 23** 6:30 potluck,, 7:30 program\*  
**WATER.HYDROPOLITICS**, The corporate assault on the world's water by Rosa Escamilla.  
Water may be the next pretext for war: Is it a human right or a commodity to be privatized, bought& sold? What can/should we do?  
Take #85 to Saratoga Ave exit. Go east away from the hills to light at Cox. Turn right to first intersection:Paseo Presada, go one short block and cross Paseo Lado to 13004. The lavender door is to the left of the driveways.

**Saturday, May 22** 7:30 pm Cuban theme **odw** party See description & directions in left column.

\*Fair Trade coffee, decaf, cocoa, chocolate bars for sale

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