

# The Praxis Axis

of Peace, Social Justice and Sustainable Economics

Praxis Peace Institute Newsletter #31  
Spring/Summer 2010



## UPCOMING PRAXIS EVENTS

(See back page for Events List)

**Mondragón Seminar and Tour – Sept. 12 - 18, 2010**

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Notes from George Lakoff's talk at Praxis' 10th Anniversary Lunch

Ten years of Praxis highlights with photos

Reprint of speech by U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich at 2002 Praxis  
Dubrovnik Conference

Please see our website for further details and upcoming  
events: [www.praxispeace.org](http://www.praxispeace.org)

Or, call Praxis 707-939-2973

### Praxis Peace Institute

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## About Our Name

Praxis means the “practical application of a branch of learning, an established practice.” From the Greek: doing or action. Or, to consider the definition most relevant to our purposes, Praxis is the relationship between theory and practice.

In 1963, the University of Zagreb, Croatia (then, Yugoslavia) opened their first international summer school on the island of Korcula, and the main symposium was organized by a group of forward-thinking philosophers, sociologists, economists, and historians who wrote for the Zagreb review, “Praxis.” The Praxis School was essentially a Marxist Humanist philosophical movement that had its roots in both Zagreb and Belgrade. Their emphasis was on the writings of the young Marx and in opening an inquiry into the future of mankind. Deliberately leaving dogma behind, their purpose was to better understand how we could improve life for all.

This summer school was soon an annual international event that drew scholars from all over the world. The Korcula Summer School met every summer from 1963 to 1975. Some of the topics would be a perfect fit with our conferences in today. A few of their themes: *Utopia and Reality, What is History?, Creativity and Reification, Progress and Culture.*

A few internationally-known attendees of these symposia, who also wrote for the Praxis Review, included Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Jurgen Habermas, and Howard Zinn. Several philosophical symposia also took place in Dubrovnik during these years. And, similar programs are sometimes conducted at the Inter University Centre in Dubrovnik today.

The actual “Praxis” group that met on the island of Korcula was disbanded by the Yugoslav government in 1975. And, even though 35 years have passed, everyone in former Yugoslavia knows about Praxis. There is a fondness for what Praxis represented and for the deep inquiries that these scholars initiated.

So, with the name “Praxis Peace Institute,” we are remembering a tradition of scholarship, inquiry, and humanism. We are reinstating symposia that will ask the questions for our times. Since three Praxis Peace Institute conferences took place in Dubrovnik, I feel that we are building on their foundation. We recognize and honor the environment of Dubrovnik that supports inquiry, that assumes there is much we do not know, and that nurtures our quest for understanding, respect, and human dignity

Photos from May 23 Praxis 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch in Sonoma



George Lakoff, *Keynote Speaker at event*



Steve Bhaerman (*aka Swami Beyondananda*), Laurie Gallian (*Sonoma City Council*), Georgia Kelly (*Praxis Director*) and George Lakoff (*cognitive scientist, author of “The Political Mind,” “Don’t Think of an Elephant,” and others*)

## Praxis Peace Institute – A Brief Summary of Ten Years

**The Query** that started it all:

The events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which spawned the United Nations, thousands of peace organizations, and a wave of inner work --- including the human potential movement, a myriad of spiritual awakenings, and international meditations and prayers for peace --- also brought us the bloodiest century of war in recorded history.

**What were we not seeing? Why did we not learn the lessons of history? Why did we repeat the same wars, for the same reasons, century after century?**

**2000** – Georgia Kelly organized the first conference under the auspices of Pathways to Peace, a Marin non-profit organization, to address those questions. We held the conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, once a thriving city-state that managed to avoid war for the nearly 600 years of its existence as a state (early 1200s to 1808). **Dubrovnik** was an example of what we didn't learn in our history books. It didn't fit the model we seemed to value: amassing territory, exploiting resources and people, and building empire. Dubrovnik had different values.

**Lessons from the conference:**

- 1) We learned about the background that generated and maintained Dubrovnik's peaceful history.
- 2) We learned how peace leaders from Nigeria, Ireland, and Bosnia created peace among former enemies and re-established civil society.
- 3) Praxis Peace Institute was formed at this conference in order to continue the inquiry and to identify models that support cultures of peace.

**Question:** Why wasn't the focus on spiritual development and peace organizations having a noticeable impact on evolving the culture away from war?

**2002** – Praxis produced a week-long conference, *The Alchemy of Peacebuilding: Integrating Spiritual Vision and Active Citizenship*, which brought together young peace leaders from all areas of the Balkans with their counterparts from Watts, LA. The purpose was to share experiences and broaden peacebuilding information and strategies. Watts' leaders were from the Community Self-Determination Institute, which hosted after school programs for youths and were committed to keeping young people from joining gangs. The Balkan youth were forging communication between peace workers in formerly warring countries. Without this conference Balkan peace workers would not have been able to secure a visa to visit Croatia and meet with other peace workers.

Conference speakers addressed many issues that contribute to war and suggested alternative models.

**Lessons:**

- 1) Basic peacemaking skills could be repeated in many different environments with success.
- 2) The importance of Restorative Justice, Forgiveness, and Truth and Reconciliation processes.
- 3) Civic participation of ordinary citizens was critical in helping to maintain or restore peace.
- 4) The connection between spiritual values and social action was important in inspiring civic action.

**Question:** What motivates people to become active in civic affairs? What inspires responsible citizenship?

**On March 29, 2003**, Praxis Peace Institute hosted **U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich** for an evening event in the Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium in San Rafael, CA. The evening included poetry from Sebastopol Mayor, Larry Robinson, a teen a Capella choir, an overview of Praxis Peace Institute by Georgia Kelly, and an introduction by U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey. The evening was a big success and the largest audience that Kucinich had seen to date. It was also the largest Praxis event: 1,700 people!

**2004 Conference** – *The Alchemy of Democracy: Restoring Soul to Culture*. Convened in Pacific Grove, CA, the focus was on the role that informed civic participation plays in creating democracy. We brought together elected officials, including two congresspersons and local and state representatives, in order to learn how to work with the political structure and our representatives. We offered a workshop on how to

run for office that was conducted by two city mayors and the president of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco. As a result, three participants ran for office that fall and one was elected to a city council and is now a CA state assemblywoman. **From a survey taken 4 months after the conference, 98% of respondents said they had become more active in civic affairs as a result of attending this conference.**

**Lesson:** We had assembled programs and leaders that inspired, informed and motivated active citizenship by showing participants how they could make a difference and how to go about it.

**Questions:** What are the cultural factors limiting the discussion and blinding us to possibilities? How were we captive within our culture? What are the cultural interventions that break the trance?

**Conference themes were building a systematic body of information in a useful sequence.**

### **Culture and Mythos Series**

#### **The purpose:**

- 1) To explore cultural roots and the influence they wield on our behavior and beliefs.
- 2) To identify emerging stories that can guide a transformation of culture.

#### **The questions:**

- 1) What is required to change the cultural story?
- 2) How do cultures and people change from the dominator system of social organization to a cooperative model? Where are existing examples? How do they work?

The 2-year series culminated in the **Praxis 2007 conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia**, “Transforming Culture: From Empire to Global Community.”

#### **Lessons:**

1) We learned about projects that were already transforming culture, e.g., the worker-owned Mondragón Cooperatives in Spain, the role of non-profits and alternative media in shaping the discussion, and artistic projects that create a cultural intervention and provide a vision for the future.

2) We learned creative ways of generating solutions through a day-long workshop with international peace negotiator and the founder of modern peace studies, Johan Galtung.

3) We learned about the Shadow side of peace --- scapegoating, denial, selective memory, --- and the importance of recognizing and addressing their influences on behavior.

4) We learned about the roots of the dominator system of social organization and its hidden agenda. We addressed ways to expand the discourse and educate for a partnership model of social relations.

After the conference, a group from Praxis provided content for David Korten’s Study Guide for Earth Community dialogues, based on his book, *The Great Turning*.

**2006 – Invitational Conference – *The Sixth Extinction Round Table to Avert the Loss of Biodiversity***, held in conjunction with the Threshold Foundation. We invited scientists, church leaders, media, journalists, filmmakers, environmentalists and donors to brainstorm ways in which the severity of species extinctions and diversity loss could be successfully communicated to a larger population.

#### **A Few Results:**

- 1) A detailed program on Bill Moyers’ Journal on the severity of species extinction and habitat loss;
- 2) The purchase of a large parcel of land in the rainforest to preserve many species and natural habitats;
- 3) Educational films were produced by filmmakers in attendance.
- 4) Cognitive scientist George Lakoff spent an afternoon helping the scientists and journalists reframe their messaging.

**2008 – Mondragón, Spain** – Seminar and Tour of the Mondragón Cooperatives, the world’s largest consortium of worker-owned businesses (120 businesses; 100,000 worker-owners) – in preparation for *The Economics of Peace* Conference. Upon returning to the states, several of us spoke at conferences and

on panels about the Mondragón model and/or wrote articles for major publications. This trip was so successful that we are taking another group September 12-18, 2010. (**NOTE:** Spaces are still available.)

**2009 – *The Economics of Peace Conference*** in Sonoma – Co-produced with RSF Social Finance –We presented alternative economic ideas and models, e.g., Local Currencies, Mondragón Cooperatives & U.S. worker-owned businesses, Public Banks, Time Banks, Fair Trade, economic justice, and an assessment of where we are today economically. Speakers included James Galbraith, Vandana Shiva, Ellen Brown, U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey, Andrew Kimbrell (who has successfully sued Monsanto 3 times!), David Korten, Sam Keen, A.T. Ariyaratne, and many others. Workshop leaders presented practical solutions for a vibrant, socially just, and environmentally sustainable economy.

**Results:**

- 1) All presentations of conference speakers are available online for free. As of mid June, there have been nearly 8,000 viewings.
- 2) There has been a follow-up conference on local currencies.
- 3) Articles have been published about the ideas and models presented at the conference, making this information widely available.
- 4) The “Move Your Money” campaign started here. Many conference goers have moved their money from the mega banks to community banks and credit unions.
- 5) Comprehensive information on economics and alternative financial models were presented.

**In** the brief summary of ten years in this issue, we were not able to include the many projects and outcomes that our conferences and workshops have produced. We hope to fully detail these results and methods in book form within the next couple of years.

**Speaker Series:** Speakers for Praxis events have included some of today’s leading thinkers and activists: Arianna Huffington, Tom Hayden, William Greider, Riane Eisler, Helen Caldicott, David Korten, Sam Keen, U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich, U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey, U.S. Rep. Sam Farr, Angeles Arrien, Jeremy Rifkin, Frances Moore Lappe, George Lakoff, Norman Solomon, Paul Hawken, Ervin Lazslo, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Matt Gonzalez (then President of San Francisco Board of Supervisors), and many others.

**Workshop Facilitators:** Johan Galtung, Angeles Arrien, Sam Keen, George Lakoff, Tom Hayden, Georgia Kelly, and Kimberly Weichel.

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**The Board of Praxis Peace Institute:**

Charlie Bloom, Sandra Hay, Georgia Kelly, and Osprey Orielle Lake.

**We** wish to thank all those who have supported Praxis Peace Institute during the past ten years.

**Foundation Support** – We are grateful to the following foundations that have supported our work during the past ten years:

Fetzer Institute, Threshold Foundation, Calvert Giving Fund, Angeles Arrien Foundation, The Firedoll Foundation, International Center for Technology Assessment, The Seattle Foundation, Kendeda Foundation, Global Cooperation Project, New Resource Bank, and RSF Social Finance.

**We** also wish to thank individual donors who have contributed to Praxis this year and who made significant and/or continuous donations in previous years:

Micki Aronson, Philip Beard, Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Linda & Charlie Bloom, Jeannine Bonstelle, Deborah Breitbart, Robert Carey, Maureen Cleveland, Helen Cooluris, Vergilia & Henry Dakin, Don Davis, Leah and Kenneth Dick, Cathleen Dorinson, Carl & Bonnie Claire Erling, Jodie Evans, Russ Faure-Brac, Lion Goodman, Bonnie & John Gray, Rosemary Hayes, Joanie Misrack Ciardelli, Melita Figueroa & Peg Sipos, Jonathan Frieman & Moira Brennan, Bob and Chandra Friese, Nora Gallaher, Laurie & Raymond Gallian, Robert Gordon, Bob Gorman, Sandra Hay, Shaula Massena, Pamela & Raymond Honda, Marileen & Don Johnson, Anodea Judith, Margaret Kaplan, Charles Kellogg, Andrew Kimbrell, Sandra Krasnow, Alan & Ruth Larson, Chris Lindstrom, Matt Marshall, George Mateljan, Fred Moon, Jim McNely, Cathleen O’Brien, Ellen Pillard, Kaaren Rada, David Ransom, Elisabeth Rees, Robin Remington, Larry Robinson, Dick and Barbara Senn, Vincent Sicilliano, Faye and

Sandor Straus, John & Natasha Suter, Gina & John Thompson, Lila and David Tresemer, Jessica Warner, Caroline West, Patty Westerbeke, Celeste Wolfe, and others. We apologize for others we may have inadvertently omitted.

For in-kind contributions and support with events, we thank the following:

The Apple Box (Petaluma), Larry Barnett of Epiphanet Web Design, Sonoma Flowers, David & Grace Noyes (Noyes Wine), Frane Franicevic (Sunce Winery), Benziger Family Winery, Sonoma Community Center, Strauss Creamery, Thanksgiving Coffee, Esalen Institute, Westerbeke Ranch, Yes! Magazine, Patt's Copy World, The Framery in Sonoma, Esalen Institute, Out to Lunch Catering, El Dorado Kitchen, Red Grape Restaurant, Common Ground Magazine, Murphy's Irish Pub, Mother Jones Magazine, Spirits in Stone, Kimberly & Simon Blattner, Ken Brown, Angeles Arrien, Sam Keen, Connie Madden, Kathy Swett, Wendy Peterson the Sonoma Visitors' Bureau, Wedekinds Nursury, the Sonoma Index Tribune, and the Sonoma Valley Sun.

We wish to also thank elected representatives that have been supportive of Praxis Peace Institute with their time and acknowledgements:

U.S. Representative Lynn Woolsey (CA), U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich (OH), U.S. Representative Sam Farr (CA), Tom Hayden (18-year CA state legislator), John Vasconcellos (40-year CA state legislator), Pam Torliatt (Mayor of Petaluma, CA) Ken Brown (Sonoma City Council member and 3-time Mayor), Larry Robinson (Sebastopol City Council member and former Mayor), Larry Barnett (former Sonoma City Council member and Mayor), Laurie Gallian (Sonoma City Council member), and Matt Gonzalez (former President, San Francisco Board of Supervisors).

**If you have not yet contributed to Praxis Peace Institute yet this year, please support our work with a contribution today! Thank you for being part of our community. You may also renew or begin a Praxis membership with this form.**

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**Donation Form – Please Print**

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**NOTE:** All donations for the amounts listed above include membership. If you are already a member, we will extend your membership for another year from when your dues should be renewed.

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**Online: [www.praxispeace.org/donate](http://www.praxispeace.org/donate)**



**Praxis Conference 2002 – Dubrovnik, Croatia**



Café Discussion Group



Congressman Dennis Kucinich at Conference



Riane Eisler with husband David Loye



Aqeela Sherrills, *Watts, Los Angeles*



Youth Group – Lara Petrovic (*Serbia*), Andrija Ilıc (*Serbia*), Erion Veliaj (*Albania*)

**Praxis Conference 2004 – Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California**



The late Peter Camejo and Matt Gonzalez (*then President of San Francisco Board of Supervisors*)



Van Jones, *speaking at 2004 conference*



Marijanna Shurtz on left, *with Youth Group*

**Invitational Conference 2006 – Berkeley California**



Stuart Pimm, *professor of conservation ecology at Duke University*, speaks with Scott Mullins (*Hive Advertising*) with Jerry Mander in background



Conference Organizers:  
Joanie Ciardelli, Jim Fournier,  
Georgia Kelly, Jonathan Frieman



Healy Hamilton, *Research Scientist at California Academy of Sciences, SF*



Thom Hartmann,  
*Radio Host,  
Author*

William Brangham,  
*Producer of PBS NOW  
& Bill Moyers Journal*



**Praxis Fundraiser with Arianna Huffington - September 2006**



Gaye Lub, Patricia de Jong, Sam Keen



Georgia Kelly and Arianna Huffington at Sam Keen's home

**Praxis Conference 2007 – Dubrovnik, Croatia**



Tom Hayden, *Activist, Author and former CA state legislator*



Rose Welch (*Institute of Noetic Sciences*) and Charlie Bloom (*Praxis Board President*)



Steve Bhaerman (*aka Swami Beyondananda*), Osprey Orielle Lake, Frances Moore Lappe

**The Mondragon Project 2008 – Mondragon, Spain**



Mondragon Cooperatives Headquarters



Group photo of all participants

**Praxis Conference 2009 – Sonoma California – *The Economics of Peace***



James Galbraith, *Economist and Conference speaker*



Conference Speakers: Ellen Brown (*author: Web of Debt*) and Judy Wicks (*co-founder of Business Alliance for Local Living Economies*)



Chris Lindstrom, *Conference Planning Comm.* and A.T. Ariyaratne, *founder: Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka*



John Bloom, *RSF Social Finance and Conference Planning Comm.* and Fred Freundlich, *Mondragon Cooperatives, Spain*



Vandana Shiva, *Indian physicist, author, environmentalist*





## GEORGE LAKOFF

Notes from Lakoff's talk at The Lodge at Sonoma, celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Praxis Peace Institute, Sunday May 23, 2010.

Compiled and Edited by Georgia Kelly

In my introductory remarks about Praxis Peace Institute during the past ten years, I mentioned the three types of violence that international peace negotiator and educator, Johna Galtung, identified: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Lakoff, who is very familiar with Galtung and noted him as someone he highly respects, said that Galtung needed to add one more type of violence to his list: cognitive violence, the violence in our minds.

Lakoff noted that the progressive left is plagued with "Enlightenment Reason," a belief that emotion gets in the way of reason. "Most of the Democratic Party leadership buys into this idea," he said. However, ninety-eight percent of thought is unconscious. Every idea is physical. It is in our brain circuits. The semantic part of the brain is connected to the emotional part of the brain. Mythic stories build up in the brain. We can't be rational without being emotional. In fact, being rational requires emotion, he told us.

When Giacomo Rizzolatti, a neuroscientist at the University of Parma in Italy was studying the brains of monkeys, he witnessed the mirror neurons at work. One afternoon upon returning to the lab after a nice Italian lunch, he picked up a banana and started peeling it. The monkey, wired up for measurement, immediately lit up the board as if he were peeling the banana himself. This demonstration of empathy is the manifestation of mirror neurons. Even more highly developed in humans, the human brain has multiple mirror neuron systems that specialize in carrying out and understanding the actions and intentions of others as well as the social meaning of their behavior and emotions. This brain activity proves that empathy is a physical experience. Cooperation is built into our brains.

Lakoff's interest in understanding the conservative mind led to his research in examining the conceptual systems that frame our political thinking. The two conceptual systems that Lakoff identified are 1) the strict father model, and 2) the nurturing parent model. Both models are here to stay, he said, so understanding them is very important in understanding political behavior. And, both systems can co-exist in our brains. Lakoff calls people who operate with both systems, bi-conceptuals.

With bi-conceptuals, the activation of one model inhibits the other, so that a strict father frame can diminish the directives of the nurturing parent frame. Bi-conceptuals comprehend an issue depending on the way it is framed (see example of how this works in the polling information at the end of this article).

Understanding bi-conceptualism reveals that the so-called "political center" is really a misunderstanding of the way people process information. "There is no such thing as a political center." Or, as former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich wrote,

"The political "center" is imaginary, and its recent elevation as a desirable place for politicians to inhabit is dangerously misleading. What's more, the politician who seeks to move there is abdicating any semblance of political leadership. By one view, the center is wherever most people happen to be -- whatever positions are supported by the broadest consensus. Yet, as Walter Lippmann noted 80 years ago, public opinion is amorphous and doesn't stay in one spot for long. Staying centered, by this dim light, is nothing more than shifting with the polls."

- *The Political Center, Straight Up* by Robert Reich, published in *The American Prospect*, June 17, 2001 (web only).

The point being that there is no leadership in chasing an imaginary political center.

Or, as Lakoff wrote in his book, "Thinking Points":

"There is a common belief that there is an ideological 'center' --- a large group of voters either with a consistent ideology of their own, or lined up left to right on the issues, or forming a 'mainstream,' all with the same positions on issues. In fact, the co-called center is made up of bi-conceptuals, people who are conservative in some aspects of life and progressive in others.....There is no singular or definable 'moderate' ideology or worldview, no consistency to what 'moderates' believe.....By moving to the right, progressives actually help activate the right's values and give up on their own."

Lakoff asked us to consider what liberals and conservatives study in college as a way to understand why conservatives are so much better at framing and getting their message across. Conservatives study business, marketing and the psychology of marketing. Liberals study political science, law, sociology and adopt the traditional view of reason from Enlightenment philosophy. Conservatives address direct causation; Liberals address systemic causation.

"The failure to understand systemic risk is what caused the financial meltdown. Nobody asks about systemic causation, or we wouldn't drill in the ocean," Lakoff noted. But, he continued, "Progressives have not framed issues in a way that address systemic causes."

### **Framing**

In a nutshell, Lakoff said that we think in terms of structures called frames. Related words fit into a frame and the frames have a neural structure. Everything we learn causes a brain change. Some neurons die off so that others can focus. Synapses get stronger or weaker depending on how neurons are fired. Lakoff cited an early pioneer in this field, Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman, who wrote *Frame Analysis* in 1974.

If we don't have a neural structure for understanding something, the facts will be ignored. This also applies to our political understanding. All politics are moral. If an idea doesn't fit our moral system, we don't see it. Conservatives will vote against their interests to serve their moral system.

"Sarah Palin has a strict father moral system, which she understands perfectly," Lakoff said, "and, she is powerful within that system." Conservative populist leaders activate the conservative part of the brain. The conservative populists invented the idea of the "liberal elite," the latte liberals, the limousine liberals that look down on the less educated or those living outside of sophisticated urban centers. Conservative populists have been propagating these clichés since 1967 with no rebuttal from liberals!

Lakoff noted that Obama clearly got the message on framing during his campaign, but he abandoned it once in office. Policy wonkism took over in explaining the Healthcare bill. Policy wonkism, which assumes that facts alone will convince people of a bill's merits, losses to moral politics every time. Such a thorough focus on facts reflects the enlightenment reasoning that Lakoff warned about earlier. "This reasoning assumes that reason is conscious, literal, logical, unemotional, disembodied, universal, and functions to serve our interests. This theory of human reason has been shown to be false in every particular, but it persists."\* In debates, when it's issues versus morals, morals win every time.

Lakoff mentioned the Center for American Progress as an example of an issue-oriented progressive think tank. John Podesta, former White House Chief of Staff to Bill Clinton, is the President and CEO of the center. This organization does not deal with systemic causes but with individual issues. In contrast, Republican think tanks have conservative scholars who define every issue in the

- *The Political Mind* by George Lakoff, page 3.

context of their conservative ideology. Conservative think tanks have generous donors who fund them year after year. They have booking agencies that arrange for their experts to appear on radio and TV shows. Their success is reflected in the percentage of talk show hosts who are conservative --- 80 percent!

Lakoff used the Ford Foundation as an example of the funding model that limits what progressive organizations can accomplish. One of the program officers told him that they are evaluated by how good their portfolio is. The formula is issue-by-issue, support for no more than three years, and every penny needs to be accounted for. There is also little interest in supporting administration costs. This funding model is problematic in building an infrastructure, Lakoff noted.

In spite of all the business talk by conservatives, progressives actually have more money than conservatives. But, conservatives fund their think tanks (usually multi-year and without requiring detailed accounting) and know how to market their message. Progressive funders tend to give out money for a limited number of years and in smaller amounts. The Conservatives give out larger amounts of money. They even pay interns, help them find jobs, and some even provide housing during their internships. So, while liberal money is there, the understanding of what it takes to build an infrastructure is not. Lakoff noted another problem on the Left: Everyone wants to form his or her own organization.

### **The Mystery of Right-Wing Best-Sellers**

How do books by the likes of Ann Coulter, Glenn Beck and others of their ilk get on the New York Times best-seller list? Conservative donors buy up the books by the thousands and give them out both to spread the ideas and to reach best-seller lists.

### **Polling**

George Lakoff created a straight-forward initiative for the 2001 CA ballot, but it didn't manage to get enough signatures to make it on the ballot. Though there were some organizational problems with the campaign, a surprising difficulty surfaced in the way the Attorney General's (Jerry Brown) office re-wrote the initiative. The measure's title, as crafted by Lakoff, contained the following fourteen words:

“All legislative actions on revenue and budget must be determined by majority vote.”

Simple and straight forward, this initiative would have removed the two-thirds majority that is currently required for legislative votes on the budget. The situation now allows the minority (37% of the state legislature) to continually hold the majority hostage.

Here is the rewording of the measure by Brown's office:

“Changes Legislative Vote Requirement to Pass a Budget or Raise Taxes from Two-Thirds to a Simple Majority. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.”

It changes the legislative vote requirement necessary to pass the budget, and to raise taxes from two-thirds to a simple majority. Unknown fiscal impact from lowering the legislative vote requirement for spending and tax increases. In some cases, the content of the annual state budget could change and/or state tax revenues could increase. Fiscal impact would depend on the composition and actions of future legislatures.”

Brown's rewording uses the word taxes four times and changes the focus of the initiative to taxes instead of majority vote.

“In order to determine the effects of language change in the measure, Lakoff consulted pollster, David Binder. Binder created a poll with fifty-three questions and inserted Lakoff's initiative in it in two different places: one with the wording from Lakoff, and the other with the wording from Brown's office. He placed Brown's wording at the beginning of the poll. The results from the first question: 36% were in favor of the measure and 68% were against. Further into the poll, Binder asked the question again using Lakoff's wording. The results: 73% in favor and 22% against.”

Several things were determined by this poll. First, that the wording activates different frames and brings different results. Second, eighteen percent of those polled are bi-conceptuals and are shifting between liberal and conservative positions, depending on how an issue is framed.

This confirms what I have experienced whenever I have been polled. Many polls are constructed to prove a desired outcome rather than accurately reflect public opinion. And, the way a question is framed will always activate the 18% of bi-conceptuals to reflect the bias of the way a question is asked.

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**For audio CD copies of George Lakoff's talk** at Praxis' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, please send \$17 (includes postage) to: Praxis Peace Institute, P.O. Box 523, Sonoma, CA 95476 or order online using the event registration pages.

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Notable quotes from **George Lakoff**:

“The myth is that the deregulation or privatization of a moral mission of government eliminates government. Government is not eliminated. It is just shifted from the public sector..... to the private sector, where there is an ethic of profit and no public accountability. The ‘free market’ doesn’t free us from government; it just gives us unaccountable government without a moral mission.”

From *The Political Mind*, page 63

“Conservative populism is cultural in nature (rather than economic). That’s what the conservatives’ ‘culture war’ is about.

From *Thinking Points*, page 65

Another interesting observation on conservative populism from Slovenian philosopher and critical theorist, **Slavoj Zizek** appears below. Zizek teaches at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and has been a visiting professor at many American universities, including Columbia, Princeton, and the New School.

“The populist conservatives are literally voting themselves into economic ruin. Less taxation and deregulation means more freedom for the big companies who are driving impoverished farmers out of business; less state intervention means less federal help for small businessmen and entrepreneurs..... Although the ‘ruling class’ disagrees with the populists’ moral agenda, it tolerates the ‘moral war’ as a means of keeping the lower classes in check, that is, it enables the latter to articulate their fury without disturbing the economic status quo. What this means is that the culture war is a class war in displaced mode.”

~ Slavoj Zizek, From his book, *First as Tragedy; Then as Farce*

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### Praxis Peace Institute long-term Advisors



Sam Keen, *author, philosopher*



Angeles Arrien, *cultural anthropologist*

## U.S. Representative Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH)

This speech was delivered by Rep. Kucinich at the 2002 Praxis conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The theme: *The Alchemy of Peacebuilding: Integrating Spiritual Vision with Active Citizenship*. This presentation took place prior to Kucinich's campaigns for president and before he was widely known. (edited version)

### *Spirit and Stardust*

As one studies the images of the Eagle Nebula, brought back by the Hubble telescope from that place in deep space where stars are born, one can imagine the interplay of cosmic forces across space and time, of matter and spirit dancing to the music of the spheres, atop an infinite sea of numbers.

Spirit merges with matter to sanctify the universe. Matter transcends to return to spirit. The interchangeability of matter and spirit means the starlit magic of the outermost life of our universe becomes the soul-light magic of the innermost life of our self. The energy of the stars becomes us. We become the energy of the stars. Stardust and spirit unite and we begin: One with the universe. Whole and holy. From one source, endless creative energy, bursting forth, kinetic, elemental. We, the earth, air, water and fire source of nearly fifteen billion years of cosmic spiraling.

We begin as a perfect union of matter and spirit. We receive the blessings of the Eternal from sky and earth. In our outstretched hands we can feel the energy of the universe. We receive the blessings of the Eternal from water, which nourishes and sanctifies life. We receive the blessings of the Eternal from the primal fire, the pulsating heart of creation. We experience the wonder of life multi-dimensional and transcendent. We extend our hands upwards and we are showered with abundance. We ask and we receive. A universe of plenty flows to us, through us. It is in us. We become filled with endless possibilities.

We need to remember where we came from --- to know that we are one To understand that we are of an undivided whole: race, color, nationality, creed, gender are beams of light, refracted through one great prism. We begin as perfect and journey through life to become more perfect in the singularity of "I" and in the multiplicity of "We," a more perfect union of matter and spirit. This is human striving. This is where, in Shelley's words, "... Hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates." This is what Browning spoke of, "Our reach exceeding (our) grasp." This is a search for heaven within, a quest for our eternal home.

In our soul's Magnificat, we become conscious of the cosmos with us. We hear the music of peace, we hear the music of cooperation, we hear music of love. We hear harmony, a celestial symphony. In our soul's forgetting, we become unconscious of our cosmic birthright, plighted with disharmony, disunity, torn asunder from the stars in a disaster well-described by Matthew Arnold in *Dover Beach*, "... the world, which seems to life before us like a land of dreams, so various, so beautiful, so new, hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude nor peace, nor help for pain. And we are here, as on a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night."

Today, *Dover Beach* is upon the shores of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Our leaders think the unthinkable and speak of the unspeakable inevitability of nuclear war; of a nuclear attack on New York City, of terrorist attacks throughout our nation; of war against Iraq using nuclear weapons; of biological and chemical weapon attacks on civilian populations; of catastrophic global climate change; of war in outer space.

When death (not life) becomes inevitable, we are presented with an opportunity for great clarity, for a great awakening, to rescue the human spirit from the arms of Morpheus through love, through



compassion and through integrating spiritual vision and active citizenship to restore peace to our world. The moment that one world is about to end, a new world is about to begin. We need to remember where we came from. Because the path home is also the way to the future.

In the city I represent in the United States Congress, there is a memorial to Peace, named by its sculptor, Marshall A. Fredericks, the "Fountain of Eternal Life." A figure rises from the flames, his gaze fixed to the stars, his hands positioned sextant-like, as if measuring the distance. Though flames of war from the millions of hearts and the dozens of places wherein it rages, may lick at our consciousness, our gaze must be fixed upward to invoke universal principles of unity, of co-operation, of compassion, to infuse our world with peace, to ask for the active presence of peace, to expand our capacity to receive it and to express it in our everyday life. We must do this fearlessly and courageously and not breathe in the poison gas of terror. As we receive, so shall we give.

As citizen-diplomats of the world, we send peace as conscious a expression wherever, whenever and to whomever it is needed: to the Middle East, to the Israelis and the Palestinians, to the Pakistanis, and the Indians, to Americans and Al Qaeda, and to the people of Iraq, and to all those locked in deadly combat. And we fly to be with the bereft, with those on the brink, to listen compassionately, setting aside judgment and malice to become peacemakers, to intervene, to meditate, to bring ourselves back from the abyss, to bind up the world's wounds.

As we aspire to universal brotherhood and sisterhood, we hearken to the cry from the heart of the world and respond affirmatively to address through thought, word and deed conditions which give rise to conflict: economic exploitation, empire building, political oppression, religious intolerance, poverty, disease, famine, homelessness, struggles over control of water, land minerals, and oil.

We realize that what affects anyone anywhere affects everyone everywhere. As we help others to heal, we heal ourselves. Our vision of interconnectedness resonates with new networks of world citizens in non-governmental organizations linking from numberless centers of energy, expressing the emergence of a new organic whole, seeking unity within and across national lines. New transnational web-based e-mail and telecommunications systems transcend governments and carry within them the power of qualitative transformation of social and political structures and a new sense of creative intelligence. If governments and their leaders, bound by hierarchy and patriarchy, wedded to military might for legitimacy, fail to grasp the implications of an emerging world consciousness for cooperation, for peace and for sustainability, they may become irrelevant.

As citizen-activists the world over merge, they can become an irresistible force to create peace and protect the planet. From here will come a new movement to abolish nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. From here will come the demand for sustainable communities, for new systems of energy, transportation and commerce. From here comes the future rushing in on us.

How does one acquire the capacity for active citizenship? The opportunities exist every day. In Cleveland, citizens have developed the ability to intercede when schools are scheduled to be closed, and have kept the schools open; to rally to keep hospitals open; to save industries which provide jobs; to protect neighborhood libraries from curtailment of service, to improve community policing; to meet racial, ethnic and religious intolerance openly and directly.

Active citizenship begins with an envisioning of the desired outcome and a conscious application of spiritual principles. I know. I have worked with the people in my own community. I have seen the dynamic of faith in self, faith in one's ability to change things, faith in one's ability to prevail against the odds through an appeal to the spirit of the world for help, through an appeal to the spirit of community for participation, through an appeal to the spirit of cooperation, which multiplies energy. I have seen citizens

challenge conditions without condemning anyone, while invoking principles of non-opposition and inclusion of those who disagree.

I have seen groups of people overcome incredible odds as they become aware they are participating in a cause beyond self and sense the movement of the inexorable, which comes from unity. When you feel this principle at work, when you see spiritual principles from the basis of active citizenship, when you are reminded once again of the merging of stardust and spirit. There is creativity. There is magic. There is alchemy.

Violence is not inevitable. War is not inevitable. Nonviolence and peace are inevitable. We can make of this world a gift of peace, which will confirm the presence of universal spirit in our lives. We can send into the future the gift, which will protect our children from fear, from harm, from destruction. Carved inside the pediment, which sits atop the marble columns, is a sentinel at the entrance to the United States House of Representatives. Standing resolutely inside this “Apotheosis of Democracy” is a woman, a shield by her left side, with her outstretched right arm protecting a child happily sitting at her feet. The child holds the lamp of knowledge under the protection of this patroness.

This wondrous sculpture by Paul Wayland Bartlett, is entitled “Peace Protecting Genius.” Not with nuclear arms but with a loving maternal arm is the knowing child Genius shielded from harm. This is the promise of hope over fear. This is the promise of love, which overcomes all. This is the promise of faith, which overcomes doubt. This is the promise of light, which overcomes darkness. This is the promise of peace, which overcomes war.

## Getting Organized

Praxis member, **Julie Jones**, offers an excellent organizer for keeping life documents, financial information, and important contacts all in one place for easy access.

Julie Jones, whom Jamie Galbraith introduced as his 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher at the recent Praxis Peace Institute Conference “Economics of Peace,” now lives in Sonoma. They are still in touch – Jamie for macroeconomics and Julie for microeconomics with a new “Estate Documents Organizer.” Julie has created a personal notebook to manage estate information and important documents for families and professionals. Saving time and stress is increasingly critical as three generations now live and have entirely new sets of records to manage. How life has changed with online electronic income and expense management and an ever-growing list of passwords. These days, “online” life is becoming as compelling and in need of record keeping as “offline” life.

Asking the basic questions of Who, What, Where, Why, When, and How, Julie’s A-Z organized and easy-fill forms will create “order and peace of mind” with a central information system that provides samples and locations of original and official documents. A recipe book for your life! Your “afterlife” begins now!

Julie is a UC Berkeley graduate and holds a secondary teaching credential. She has traveled extensively. Before moving to Sonoma three years ago, she worked in San Francisco for the Golden Gateway and Embarcadero Centers and the Fine Arts Museums. For the past 20 years she was in promotion at KGO-TV. She has been an active volunteer in Sonoma and is a parent and grandparent. Her inspiration for the book developed after managing her family’s estate matters.

Julie Jones, Consulting Services

**ESTATE DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER** \* [info@estatedocsorganizer.com](mailto:info@estatedocsorganizer.com) \* 707-343-1252

# Events

## **Friday, July 23 – 4:45 p.m. with John Bloom**

Murphy's Irish Pub backroom, 464 First St. East, Sonoma

**John Bloom** is the author of *The Genius of Money* and the Director of Organizational Culture at RSF Social Finance in San Francisco. After a presentation, Bloom will lead a discussion about money, banking, interest, debt, and investing from a unique perspective that integrates values with action in a practical and inspiring way. Books will be available at the event.

**The event is free, but you will pay for the food you order during the dinner event.**

**Join us for dinner and conversation in a cozy atmosphere!**

**IMPORTANT: RSVP by July 21** in order to reserve a space. The restaurant needs to know our numbers at least 2 days prior to the event.

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## **September 12 – 18, 2010 – Mondragón, Spain**

Details on our website: <http://www.praxispeace.org/conference10>

### **The Seminar**

The seminar will include 4 days of presentations and tours of Mondragon businesses, an incubator for new cooperatives, a youth cooperative, an entrepreneurial division for new products, and a visit to Mondragón University. On the 5th day, Praxis Peace Institute will host a day of discussion and brainstorming about how these ideas can be useful in our communities back home and how we can find support for cooperative business ventures.

### **Excursions**

Included in the program: a dinner in the coastal city of San Sebastian, a visit to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, a trip to the Aranzazu Monastery and Basque Peace Center in the mountains, and visits to other areas of the unique Basque region.

### **Accommodations**

All participants will stay at the Hotel Mondragon. Daily breakfast and lunch will be included in the hotel and seminar prices. Wireless Internet access is available in all hotel and meeting rooms.

### **Prices include the following:**

Seminar, hotel, daily breakfast and lunch (main meal), excursions, and transportation to and from all meeting sites. It does not include airfare. We recommend scheduling your travel through our travel agent, as they are attempting to coordinate arrivals so that we can arrange transportation from the airport for participants.

**Prices:** Shared room: \$2,170      Single Room: \$2,700      Please visit our website for program details  
**A \$500 deposit will secure a space for this seminar.** Balance will be due by July 30, 2010.

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## **October 1 -3, 2010 – Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA**

**Communication and Conflict Resolution Workshop - Facilitator: Georgia Kelly**

### **The Workshop includes**

- \* Practical tools for clear and non-threatening communication
- \* Active listening skills
- \* How to establish effective ground rules for difficult communications
- \* How to deal with challenging people and situations
- \* Practice exercises in communication and conflict situations.
- \* Material for post-workshop study and development of a personal action plan

**For Reservations, contact: [www.esalen.org](http://www.esalen.org) or call 831-667-3000, ext.7321.**