

Can Speech Be Free?

On March 24th, 2007 *the People's Press* will be four years old. About the same time when people around the world are remembering and protesting the American invasion of Iraq, *the People's Press* is celebrating a birthday. We celebrate by honoring free speech; by keeping alive this authentic, original, local, independent and free publication, which I am fond of calling: *The Paper of the People*.

When another year of publication rolls around I wax thoughtful about this ongoing work. At the heart of this reflection is the remembrance and understanding that *the People's Press* is founded on an insistent and urgent desire to speak freely..... *mine*.

I started writing for and publishing this newsmagazine four years ago because I was angry, frustrated and fed up with always having a male editor from the local corporate media, deciding whether or not what I wrote would be published. (This could also be a woman editor or publisher that had internalized male values and was working successfully and profitably within the male ordered system).

Personally experiencing the feeling of being marginalized, silenced and controlled within the prevailing culture of corporate media was the true impetus for *the People's Press*. I wanted to speak out and be heard; it's that simple. Giving this opportunity to others who felt marginalized and silenced was also a big motivation for publishing, and still is. Some call this vanity publishing, but it wasn't vanity that motivated me to act. It was a burning desire to have the privilege of free speech, which I felt was denied me because of my gender. My woman's "issues" were

not considered important by those in control, the men who owned the media turf and were framing every possible issue and debate, in fact, framing the entire culture according to what they valued and deemed important. Even today, publishing articles on women's rights, abortion rights, gay and lesbian rights, or other sensitive "wedge" issues can close the door to big time funding from liberal conservative (predominately male) wealthy donors who desire a more "mainstream" publication. It's a big loss of potential funding for a non-mainstream publication like *the People's Press*, and it answers the question, "Can speech be free?".... Yes, if you have the cash. Finding the right source of funding for a publication willing to tackle volatile issues, has always been a challenge.

As a woman, I am glad to be writing for, editing and publishing *the People's Press*. I do it from a deep conviction that it is women's time to step forward and speak out; to break the longtime silencing and marginalization by male controlled media, and to lead the way in the huge work ahead; the work of counteracting global warming, of resisting war and Bush's so-called War on Terror, of changing the dominant human consciousness from one that values and worships invasion, war, killing and domination, to a mindset that prizes above all else, unity, wholeness and connection. I am convinced that women must lead the way in the ongoing work of creating a safe, viable, healthy and sustainable world and planet for our children, and their children, and their children's, children's children. I want to think that this is possible.

As Planet Earth gets hotter and hotter, humanity is immediately faced with the biggest challenge of all time. Today's human race will decide if life on earth continues, or not. Contemplating death can be a heavy thing, especially when you're

not ready or willing to go there. These are radical times; now and ahead of us. They call for radical actions; radical meaning, "to the root".

How can we muster the kind of earth justice needed to reverse the current trend of environmental destruction, while justice is still being denied to so many human beings? Can we fight global warming to the exclusion of all else; or must humans also move forward in the time we have available to insure that when the end time comes, every human being will arrive at that day, equal and free? This is a human trial; specific to us, which offers extraordinary opportunity to rise to our biggest and greatest human selves, so that everyone, together, and not one person, not even one simple blade of grass can be discounted, unconsidered or left behind.

Yes, we must fight global warming, but we must also uncover and fight the thinking that has gotten us there in the first place. Even if we die, and I don't think we will if we band together now, we can finally, finally, finally, at least be proud that humanity rose to its highest spiritual trial and task; that of coming or perhaps *returning to* the full knowledge of love, which is life's inevitable connection. And maybe, that is what this whole thing is really all about. And maybe, that is the only thing that in the end, can ever save us.



Suzy Coffee

"The only free press is the one you own"

Mike Boylson

The Illusion of Truth

by Doug Craig

As a clinical psychologist in private practice for nearly 20 years, I have had the frequent honor of struggling with individuals, couples and families in the pursuit of the near-impossible: helping them understand and be understood by people they deeply love but cannot get along with. Why is this so difficult?

The core issue we cannot escape is the fundamental fact of our limited perspective. We can only know what we know. We cannot know it all and there is much we do not know. And yet we are all prone to the seductive delusion and conceit that our particular point-of-view is somehow more true. We are "right" because our brains say so and the other person is "wrong" because they disagree with us.

We love our spouses, children, and friends but deep down we all share a secret: we too often love "our truth" even more. And when people's truths conflict, many of them end up in a counselor's office where the fight for their truth or point-of-view continues.

The ones who make it are those who realize their truth is not always their friend and is often their enemy. The couples and families which achieve healing are the ones who embrace humility and realize that winning arguments comes with a cost: making someone you love lose. Competition is healthy on the playing field but it can do great harm to relationships.

The "winners" it turns out, are those who realize they don't have to win and instead open themselves up to another's perspective. Instead of the usual intense focus on blaming and defensive responding, we can instead take responsibility for the unique gifts we possess which our loved ones need and can only obtain through us: attention, understanding and acceptance. When we set our truth to the side we can more easily step with grace and empathy into another's world. By giving to another what we most need, both are blessed. As we seek deeper understanding of another, our tendency to judge and blame them decreases. If however, we give in to the self-righteous satisfaction of judging and blaming another, our level of empathy and understanding diminishes and both are harmed.

At a time when many families and communities, our nation and the world seems racked with conflict and disunity, when powerful opposing forces see no other option but endless hatred and war and when even religious leaders seem to have abandoned their primary roles as peacemakers, the need for reconciliation has never been greater. As we face another day in a culture that celebrates greed, encourages self above other and elevates commercial values above life values, we would be wise to consider who it is that sees us from our mirrors. As individuals we will never know it all. At best we carry but a small piece of The Great Truth. But working together, listening carefully, seeing past the labels and judgments

of a mind addicted to illusions, we may yet rediscover our common path. It is not too late to speak the one truth that unites us all. We are each responsible for what happens next.

Want to Submit to *the People's Press*?

Here are some submission guidelines:

- * Send articles anytime, preferably through email.
- * Read *the People's Press*' Mission Statement to see what we like to publish. Reading *the People's Press* will also give you a good idea of what we are looking for.
- * Word count: Up to 1,000 words; 750 is best. Occasionally arrangements can be made for lengthier articles.
- * All submissions are appreciated and carefully considered.
- * We edit for clarity, length and libel, and reserve the right not to publish.
- * Three complimentary copies are sent to contributors.
- * Send articles and letters to:
peoplespress@jett.net