

Peace Project: Many Hands Make Light Work

The idea for the banner grew out of several conversations, Jack Manno and I had this past fall. We talked about how 380,000,000 people, world wide, protesting against the first Iraq war 15 years ago seemed to make no difference in the outcome at all. This was astonishing to both of us having experienced the Vietnam era protests that ended that war. Also, we had both participated in the anti-nuclear movement which we felt had been somewhat effective in pushing back that evil, if only for a time.

We began to wonder if 380,000,000 people had been "pro-peace" instead of "anti-war" would the effect have been different. After all, protest is collective action. We wondered if modern technology aided in collective action. Several positive things were cited such as flash mob actions, protest gatherings and crowd funding projects. It occurred to us that social media was very useful when it comes to informing us, but contributes little in itself to any collective energy. In fact most collective activity is absorbed in the virtual and disappears into a sea of digital information fairly quickly and its energy flow diluted.

Examples of the phenomena would be the Orange Revolution, the so called Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement. All were organized through social media and after the initial collective energy boom through body gatherings and media sensation, dissolved and were dispersed violently and fairly quickly.

We wondered if perhaps it's because the depth of material investment and singularity of control that establishment far exceeds the "anti" establishment energy of the people, which tend to be fragmented and not very focused, that gives the establishment such overwhelming power.

Jack and I began to think that when we are anti-war or anti-Wall Street, we actually lend our energy to that which we do not want. We validate their singular control which is domination.

Perhaps we could build our power by narrowing our many activities into a singular demand that would connect the many. Perhaps we should be "PRO-PEACE". If we could gather our many activities into a singular collective action and we succeeded, many other problems might also be solved. From this conversation came the conception of "PEACE ACTUALLY".

The conception is to build collective energy actually (not virtually) by doing something positive, productive, and collective.

What if we solicited hand tracings (remember turkey hand tracing from childhood) by calling people and voice to voice and begin to connect the . . . The personal communication and effort of each participant tracing their hands on sheets of white paper, signing them, then placing the tracings in an envelope, addressing and stamping the envelope then mailing the envelope would direct that person's energy to a single goal. If that person then called one or two other people, voice to voice, etc., and the process spread and continued, we could actually concentrate energy into a powerful expression of peace.

Our original plan was to gather the hand tracings into actual books (literal artifacts) that would be delivered to the Congress by a representative to be entered into the Congressional record and sent on to the Library of Congress for sage keeping. The books of hands would be titled "PEACE ACTUALLY". On the first page we would simply request the end of wars and immediate National Investment in Peace and Prosperity through Justice and Equality. Many hands make light work.

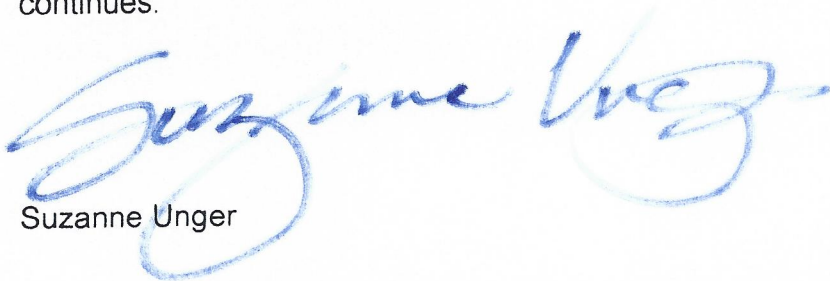
It was our hope to start an action that could spread from community to community until the Congress was inundated with "PEACE ACTUALLY" books of hands that would continually arrive for induction into the record, perhaps for years. With a "Pro-Peace" message perhaps we, collectively could change the minds in Congress and the direction of the Nation.

When Jack died suddenly, I knew I must begin the process and keep the promise of his vision. I have managed to collect about 90 hand tracings from all over Fort Collins as well as from friends in Walla Walla, Seattle, Boston, San Fransisco, and from my family in Idaho. I've encouraged the out of town participants to begin their own "Peace Actually" books of hands.

I have made a banner by making patterns from the hand tracings and hand painting them onto a canvas that is 5'X7'. The image forms a sun in sky that emanates from small peace sign in the middle. Above the sun, the words "Many hands make light work" and below a memorial to Jack Manno whose ideal sparked the entire process.

I wish to have the banner displayed at the Hour of Peace event on New Years Eve and then at Jack's memorial in January. Custody of the banner will be given to Luke Manno to give back to the Hour of Peace organization.

Many thanks to all who have participated in this project. I hope the concept catches on and continues.



Suzanne Unger