

Sonoma Civil Liberties

WINTER, 2003 #43

Tanya Brannan to Receive 2003 Jack Green Civil Liberties Award

Tanya Brannan, founder of the women's rights group, Purple Berets will receive 2003 Jack Green Civil Liberties Award.

Tanya Brannan has been an activist since the 1970s when she began working in the women's movement, community organizing in the Haight-Ashbury, and fighting to end U.S. intervention in Central America. After traveling with a number of delegations to El Salvador, Tanya then moved to Central America for four years, where she worked as an organizer, bodyguard and women's rights activist in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Tanya returned to Sonoma County in 1990 when her best friend and environmental activist, Judi Bari, was car bombed. Within minutes of the bombing, the FBI attempted to frame Judi

for transporting the bomb that was clearly meant to kill her.

For the next twelve years, Tanya directed the Redwood Summer Justice Project, which conducted Judi Bari's lawsuit against the FBI and Oakland Police for federal civil rights violations. In June 2002, after a six-week trial, the jury awarded the plaintiffs \$4.4 million, the largest-ever civil rights award against the FBI.

In 1991, Tanya founded the Purple Berets, a grassroots women's rights group dedicated to standing with women who are standing up to sexist violence and discrimination. "If I learned only one thing in Guatemala it was this," Tanya states: "if we're serious about changing the world, we have to change women's

world. It was with that goal in mind that the Purple Berets was formed."

Committed to working locally but with an international consciousness, the group was very quickly drawn into what has become its signature work: targeting the criminal justice system. With one in three U.S. women victims of domestic violence or sexual assault in their lifetimes, the group quickly saw why.

During 1992 in Sonoma County, only 11 of 181 forcible rapes reported to police ended in rape convictions. 1,998 domestic violence calls resulted in only 30 cases charged as felonies. In light of that, the Purple Berets set out to change a criminal justice system they felt was not just a failure, but an active collaborator in maintaining the epidemic

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ACLU of Sonoma County
- Winner of 2002 Dick Criley Activism Award

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Action Alert: Protest the Suspensions of Students at Petaluma High School

On November 20th over 50 students at Petaluma High School joined a national peace demonstration by quietly walking out of their classrooms less than a half hour before the lunch hour. They met and discussed their feelings about the threat of war

with Iraq and how it would affect themselves, the people they knew, their country and the world. After the lunch hour ended they returned to their classes.

Earlier that day Principal Michael Simpson warned the student body that there

would be unspecified "serious consequences" if they walked out. The next day each student who participated in the walkout was given a one-day suspension. Petaluma High's rules state that the punishment for skipping a class is a Saturday detention.

Action Alert: Help Cities of Petaluma and Healdsburg Pass Resolutions Opposing USA-Patriot Act

The USA-Patriot Act was passed five weeks after the events of 9-11. This 342-page law was so quickly pushed through Congress to "fight terrorism" (there were no public debates, conferences or reports) that a large number of legislators later admitted that they did not have enough time to read or fully comprehend its contents before voting on it.

Written to appear as though it would only affect foreign nationals or terrorists, it also targets American citizens. USA-Patriot Act is a devastating attack on our civil liberties that has little to do with the "war on terror" or in preventing terrorist activities. USA-Patriot Act vastly expands the government's surveillance power to scrutinize your pri-

vate life without first demonstrating to a court that there is probable cause of wrongdoing. USA-Patriot Act allows for "sneak and peak" searches, where the government can break into your house, search and read your most personal papers and take items without informing you they were there and what they took until much later. It permits government surveillance of e-mails, internet use, religious meetings; and requires financial institutions, health and insurance organizations, schools, bookstores, and libraries to gather personal information about you and provide it to federal law authorities.

You do not have to be a terrorist or a supporter of terrorism to be affected by USA-Patriot Act.

Twenty-one cities, including Oakland, Santa Cruz, Berkeley and Sebastopol, California; Denver, Colorado; Detroit, Michigan; Santa Fe, New Mexico and Cambridge, Massachusetts have passed resolutions opposing it. On Monday, February 10, 2003 at 7:00 p.m., the Petaluma City Council will vote on such a resolution. Ask the City Council to pass it. Come to City Hall at 211 English Street and show your support of civil rights. If you can't attend, write the City Council.

For more information, send email to: PetalumaCRDG@attbi.com

The Healdsburg Bill of Rights Defense Committee has formed to pass a similar resolution in Healdsburg (HBORDC@hotmail.com). If you want to help pass a similar

Tanya Brannan

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level of violence against women.

With the recent victory in the domestic violence homicide case of Maria Teresa Macias, that's exactly what the group has accomplished - changing federal civil rights law that has historically denied equal protection to women.

"The Purple Berets are living proof that a small number of people willing to take audacious action can have a huge impact"

They also changed local domestic violence policies, helped to get more women and Spanish-speaking police officers, new leadership and a new medical services provider in the local jail, and organizing against police brutality.

"The Purple Berets are living proof that a small number of says Tanya. "At a time when the media constantly tells us that activism doesn't work, we're here to show you that's a lie."

The award will be presented at our Awards Ceremony and Annual Dinner February 6th. Keynote speaker for the ceremony is James Brosnahan, who represented Marin youth John Walker Lindh, who was captured with the Taliban Army. Brosnahan also served as a special prosecutor during the Iran-Contra scandal and prosecuted former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. He is a terrific speaker and his address: "Civil Liberties & Attorney General Ashcroft" will be great.

For information, call out hotline at 707-765-5005.

Petaluma High

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It is well settled law

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that students do not lose their right to freedom of speech when at school. Schools cannot single out the political view expressed by a student as a basis to increase punishment. The Educational Code requires that suspension be used only if other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct.

Principal Simpson maintains that

that since he told the students not to leave, by skipping class they were "defying the valid authority of the principal." Of course the students were told at the beginning of the school year by the administration that they had to follow all of the school rules. Under this reasoning, every violation of the school rules becomes an act of "defiance".

Although walkouts occurred in other Sonoma County high schools, Petaluma High was the only school that suspended their students.

The ACLU of Sonoma County

and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights have contacted the school and have demanded that the school to remove the suspensions from the students' records.

What You Can Do: Attend the School Board Meeting: Tuesday, January 28th at 6:00 p.m. and speak out at the Public Comment time.

Write: 1. Dr. Greta Vigue, Superintendent of Schools **2. Petaluma City High School Board** (both are at 200 Douglas St., Petaluma, 94952) **3. Michael Simpson**, Principal, (Petaluma High School, 201

ACLU OF SONOMA COUNTY'S
2003 AWARDS CEREMONY & ANNUAL DINNER
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JAMES BROSNAHAN

DEFENSE ATTORNEY FOR JOHN WALKER LINDH, THE AMERICAN YOUTH CAPTURED WHILE SERVING IN THE TALIBAN ARMY, AND FORMER IRAN-CONTRA PROSECUTOR

*"CIVIL LIBERTIES AND
ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHCROFT"*

2003 JACK GREEN AWARD WINNER

TANYA BRANNAN

FOUNDER OF PURPLE BERETS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

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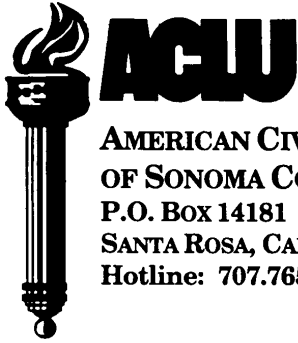
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TIME VALUE

WINTER, 2003 #43

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Joey Crottogini 2003 Mario Savio Award Winner

Joey Crottogini, a student at Sonoma State University, will receive the 2003 Mario Savio Student Activist Award. Joey is a dedicated and effective organizer who works non-stop to improve the lives of those most at risk among us. Joey's passionate concern extends to our community's homeless, at-risk youth, and HIV positive. His associations include Food Not Bombs,

Social Advocates for Youth, Face to Face, and Sonoma State's Student Activist League. His emphasis on tolerance and understanding has crossed racial, gender, and age lines within Sonoma County and the greater bay area.

The Mario Savio Student Activist Award was established in 1997 to honor Sonoma County students whose leadership has made a difference in

their school or community.

The student activist award is named after Mario Savio, who led the Free Speech Movement while a student at University of California at Berkeley. He later moved to Sonoma County, teaching at Sonoma State University and worked with the ACLU of Sonoma County in the fight for diversity on campus and students rights.

Student Essay Contest Winners

The Student Essay Contest subject was: *Since September 11, 2001, the government has taken certain steps in response to the attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon. Discuss whether these steps have violated or restricted our constitutional rights and to what extent, if any, it is appropriate*

for the government to violate or limit our constitutional rights in the fight against terrorism.

The top three prize winners all came from Mrs. Battenfeld's classes at Montgomery High School (there was a tie for 2nd place: The winners: **1st prize** (\$100): Brad Walters - *Freedom...In the Bal-*

ance? **2nd prize** (\$50): Katie Elliot - *A Nation's Security at the Cost of Freedom* and Kara Breithaupt - *Our Liberties*. **3rd prize**: Chana-Rivka Foster (teacher: Lynette Williamson, Analy High) - No Title. Congratulations to all the winners and thanks for all who entered.

Want an ACLU Speaker to Talk to Your Class or Group?

The Sonoma Chapter has speakers available to discuss with students and community groups civil liberties is-

sues, including student rights, the effect the War on Terrorism on civil liberties, the criminal justice system.

If you would like a speaker to come to your class or meeting, call our Hotline at 765-5005.