burning book zine

a poem
good words to know

an essay on community, the global economy much more.

completely free and independent

what is the burning book? www.burning-book.org
A General Update of What is Happening with the Burning Book:

A small but committed and energetic group of people here in Blacksburg VA, are trying to create something called the Burning Book. What it is and what we hope it will be is an actual, physical, downtown space; with a lending library of alternative, radical books, zines, films and other media (an info-shop, if you will). It will host community events to bring us all together in a creative, enriching manner: film screenings, poetry readings, parties, artwork, open mic nights, dances, and more. It will actively promote a social consciousness. The grand dream is also to have the Bike Coop sharing the space. But what it is right now is still a dream in the works, and we need your help.

Our Mission Statement: The Burning Book Resource Center is an autonomous collective of community members in Blacksburg, VA sharing ideas and working together to inspire, educate, and unite the town. By providing alternative media and literature, the Burning Book aims to cultivate a responsible environmental and social consciousness in Blacksburg as well as a support system for groups combating all types of oppression. It also serves to facilitate participatory and egalitarian communication open to all community members on a regular basis. The space is open to everyone as a place to teach, learn, and celebrate life in Blacksburg. The Burning Book strives to strengthen compassion among all community members by helping them establish a meaningful relationship to life, their community, and the world they live in.

We are also currently working on some fundraising ideas, possibly making this a 501c3 non-profit, various technologies (website, wiki, forum) and most of all what we need help on is getting a downtown space. For more information, or to sign up on our listserv, go to www.burning-book.org

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Some Good Words to Know, and their mostly 'socially accepted' definitions.

Anarchy - 'without a ruler' - absence and denial of authority. It is a political theory, and does NOT just mean 'chaos' or 'without order'. For example, Burning Book is organized in a non-hierarchical structure that conforms to anarchist ideals. But it is not just disordered chaos. A good way to think of this is: people working for the Burning Book have individual roles; but nobody is more powerful than anyone else. For more information go to: http://www.infoshop.org/faq/secA1.html

Autonomy - (Greek Auto-Nomos - nomos meaning "law": one who gives oneself his/her own law) the right to self-government. Autonomy is a concept found in moral and political philosophy. Refers to the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, uncoerced decision.

Capitalism - economic system where means of production are all or mostly privately owned and operated for profit.

Civil Disobedience - active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government or of an occupying power without resorting to physical violence.

Civilization - a culture - that is, a complex of stories, institutions, and artifacts - that both leads to and emerges from the growth of cities (civilization, see civil: from civis, meaning citizen, from latin civitatis, meaning state or city), with cities being defined - so as to distinguish them from camps, villages, and so on - as people living more or less permanently in one place in densities high enough to require the routine importation of food and other necessities of life.
Collective - a group of people who share or are motivated by at least one common issue or interest, or work together on a specific project to achieve a common objective. Differ from cooperatives in that they are not necessarily focused upon an economic benefit.

Cooperative (Co-op) - an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Critical Mass - Critical Mass is not an organization, it's an unorganized coincidence. It's a movement... of bicycles, in the streets.

Distro - short for independent 'distribution' service - usually things like records, shirts, books, patches, zines, etc.

Direct Action - a form of political activism which seeks immediate remedy for perceived ills; done directly without asking permission or for assistance from the government. Central principle to autonomism and anarchist theory.

D.I.Y. - Do-It-Yourself - term to focus on people creating things for themselves without the aid of paid professionals. Criticizes the idea that the solution to our needs is to purchase things instead of taking the technologies into our own hands.

Egalitarianism - political doctrine that holds that all people should be treated as equals from birth.

Fair Trade - refers to movement that promotes international labour, environmental, economic, and social standards for the production of labelelled and unlabelled goods.

Free Trade - a market model in which trade in goods and services between or within countries flow unhindered by government-imposed restrictions.

Food Not Bombs - an all-volunteer organization dedicated to nonviolent social change. FNB recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and makes fresh vegetarian meals that are served outside in public spaces to anyone without restriction. www.foodnotbombs.net

Infoshop - An infoshop is a storefront or community space that serves as a node for the distribution of anarchist information, typically in the form of books, zines, stickers and posters. Infoshops often serve as a meeting space and resource hub for local activist groups.

Non-profit - an organization whose primary objective is to support an issue or matter of private interest or public concern for non-commercial purposes, without concern for monetary profit. 501(c)(3) is the tax law provision granting exemption from federal income tax to non-profit organizations.

Solidarity - 'community of responsibilities and interests'

Zines - what you are holding in your hands right now. A completely independent publication, non-commercial, with a small circulation. Part of the DIY culture.
An Essay by Lucy Adams:

For me, and for most others, college was the only thing we considered after high school. Young people, especially those that go to college, are passionate and determined to do something important. And so they apply to college. Without a college education, it is next to impossible to get a high paying job, and truly impossible to get a job that will allow an idealistic young person to realize those ideals. It has become the bar in our society that separates the competitive, independent citizens from their dependents.

The division between the college educated and the others has become such an impermeable divide that it is almost reminiscent of the old barrier between the nobility and the surf in medieval Europe. An argument likely to arise here is that the division back then was random—you were either born into a good family, or you weren’t, and it had nothing to do with your personal motivation and talent. But how much motivation and talent does it take to get into college, and are the people with that motivation actually doing it? As a matter of fact, a majority of the people that attend college are upper class, so higher education is merely accentuating the class divide. Universities charge the tuition they do because they can. A college is education is the only way to be successful in society. The cost of higher education assures that the divide between the independent, contributing citizen and those less fortunate falls, as it has always fallen, on the economic division.

These educational methods have become accepted as what is normal by the majority of society. Anything different is seen as inferior. I believe that no only does higher education needs to become something in which everyone can participate at no cost, but we also need to change high school education to motivate people to continue. In this way, I think we could go a long way toward enabling people to break through the economic division in our society.

If education at the high school level became self-directed and began to move out of the classroom and into the field, the hospital, or the theatre, I think the high school drop out rate would suddenly plummet. Rather than a strict regimen of core classes, students would be given the tools to tailor their own schooling. The few required classes could take place outside of a regular classroom setting. For example, service projects and field studies could serve as sociology and environmental science. Given ample resources and classes to choose from, students could begin to learn what they were interested in, and much fewer would leave school because of boredom. A high school diploma would be gained by presenting what you had done to a committee, with a thesis or project, and they would determine whether you could graduate. In this way, colleges would have something to look at other than how accurately you could bubble in the answers to multiple choice questions in an hour. They would look at your schooling and see you, because you created it for yourself.

If high school education was made self-directed and engaging, and college remained competitive and rigorous, but available to all who thought they could handle it, not just those who thought they could pay for it, our education system would no longer fortify the wall of our economic division. And perhaps, after a while, that wall would start to crumble.
To every family seriously thinking of buying COLOR TV"

think twice
readers be aware
please be awake
be alive
be ready

the story of a space
[you know space is the place]
is unfolding
is happening
being molded by so many

grass root space may be waiting
and we are already here
because there is no there
just growing, telling, making, doing
being
An Essay about Our Global Economy, and Community
By Sally Morgan

Economic globalization is an important subject. An informed, conscious community (like this one is striving to be) should be aware of it in order to reach even a vague understanding of the world we live on, because capital controls the world. And understanding how the world works (or at least how the human world works), is fundamental in reaching any sort of self-awareness, and in even thinking about change. I have never taken an economics class, nor have I ever been interested in the subject. I can barely even stand the thought of keeping track of my own money—I'm horrible at it, and it's a good thing I don't have much of it to worry about. But attempting to understand the global economy means attempting to understand how the world of money, profit, exploitation and greed works, and how fucked up it is. Disclaimer: this comes from personal research, but I am by no means qualified at economics. A lot of people know way more than I do. But please go do your own research. This is the briefest of summaries. Just make sure your sources aren’t funded from the same machinery that perpetuates the system you are trying to arm yourself against (only with knowledge, of course).

Let’s assume some sort of linearity. The basic history of the global economy goes like this. Pre 1492, most economic activity in the world was localized, with minor trade and travel occurring. People for the most part used and ate things close to home. Columbus introduced the ‘old world’ to things like sugar, oranges, chocolate and coffee; and began a transformation of the global economy. Rich European countries financed explorations and conquest, leading to Colonialism. Rich countries manufactured technology. Industry flourished in Europe, as did demand for foreign products. This twisted those economies into dependence on products over whose price and marketing they had no control. World War II caused another transformation. The richer nations of Europe, its American offshoots, along with Japan, Australia and New Zealand, still largely export industrial products. Six groups emerged in the poorer nations: Big Emerging Markets (BEMs), Would be BEMs, OPEC Nations, Former Communist Economies, Raw Material Exporters and Light Manufactures, and Least Developed Countries (there are about 60 of these).

Today, most countries in the world have mostly lifted barriers to trade—this is know as ‘liberalization’. This has made trade increasingly important to the economy, and money has started to change hands at an incredibly rapid pace. It is also known as ‘free trade’, a very misleading misnomer. Free trade is not good for anybody, except maybe the richest 1% of the richest countries. Trade liberalization has led to a flood of imported manufactured goods, leading to less American jobs making those goods. Global companies have more motivation to shift production in search of lower labor costs—always overseas. Virtually all new American jobs being created are in the low-paying service sector. And American wages are not rising nearly as much as corporate profits.

Developing country exports are based on resource plunder. Rapid, uncontrolled development of export industries has vastly increased pollution around the world. Most global companies deliberately choose production locations where environmental enforcement is lax. The top four exporters in the developing world—China, Mexico, Malaysia, and Brazil—all have significant environmental problems linked to export-oriented policies. That is what happens when you put short term economic growth above absolutely everything else. Even in developed countries, globalization threatens the Earth, and people’s lives.

Trade and investment liberalization are NOT good for the poor. This is a vicious, deceiving myth perpetuated by those in power. The number of people living on less than 2$ a day has increased over the past twenty years of reform in all regions except East Asia. Current globalization policies hurt the poor in many ways. It increases the power of corporations to bargain down wages. It pits workers against one another, and puts pressure on governments to slash spending for the poor. And it contributes to the destruction of natural resources on which many of the poor depend. Import
competition restricts government’s control on imports, which opens the door to cheaper foreign commodities that undercut local farmers. In the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, 2,000 to 3,000 farmers committed suicide between 1998 and 2004. Their economic distress was caused, in part, by trade liberalization that led to a flood of palm oil imports from Southeast Asia.

Globalization is widening the gap between the rich and poor. The gap in per capita income between the thirty richest and the thirty poorest countries grew from 17 to 1 in 1980 to 27 to 1 in 2002. In 2003, the wealth of the world’s 587 billionaires (1.98 trillion) was greater than the combined incomes of the poorest half of humanity.

Globalization leads to apathy and violence. U.S. officials have argued for decades that trade liberalization promotes global security by reducing poverty and strengthening democracy. But, trade negotiations are conducted in secret, with little opportunity for citizen input. Additionally, the U.S. government has used globalization as an excuse to loosen restrictions on arms exports, arguing that U.S. weapon makers need to export more to stay globally competitive. As a result, U.S. arms exports have increased dramatically. After September 11, restrictions melted away even faster in order to reward allies in the war against terrorism, including human rights abusers like Uzbekistan and Kenya. Rather than promoting security, pro-globalization policies have sparked massive protests that have often led to violent police crackdowns. Free markets and free trade are part of the U.S.’s national security strategy. Maintaining maximum profits from these systems comes at any cost, including war. Terrorism doesn’t come from nothing—it comes from anger directed at the U.S.’s trade policies (at least in part). Globalization does not lead to peace.

The global economy is driven by giant firms and corporations. Their decisions shape the lives of most of the world’s people and the direction of every national economy. They produce most of the world’s goods and services, finance that production, and trade more and more of it across borders. They steer the agendas of most governments at every level, and they have twisted the operations of the global institutions set up to govern the global economy to meet their interests. The top 200 corporations have grown faster and faster than the world economy has. Of the top 100 entities (countries or corporations) with highest GDP, 52 are corporations, only 48 countries. As of 2002, the biggest corporations are (in order): Wal-Mart, General Motors, Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch/Shell, Ford Motor, Daimler Chrysler, Toyota Motor, General Electric, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Allianz, Citigroup, Total, ChevronTexaco, Nippon Tel & Tel, Ing Group, Itochu, IMB, Siemens, Sumitomo. There is no international body that exists to break up global monopolies. Agro-monopolies are particularly disgusting, from seed producers to the grocers. Globally, the top ten firms control one-third of the total seed market, more than one half of the biotech market, and 80 percent of the agrochemical market. In the United States, three to four firms control more than 80% of the country’s beef-packing, corn-trading, and soybean-crushing market; more than 60% of grain facilities, flour mills and soybean trading; and more than 50% of broiler chickens and pork packing. Big Pharma is also stunningly terrible. Look it up.

How have these corporations become so powerful? Let’s take a look. In 1993, corporate America carried out one of the most expensive and expensive lobbying efforts in history to win passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement. A business coalition called USA*NAFTA, enlisted 35 of the top 500 Fortune Companies as ‘captains’, with more than 2000 other corporations and business associates as members, and literally swarmed Congress. The agreement eliminated the majority of tariffs between products traded among the United States, Canada and Mexico, and gradually phased out other tariffs over a 15-year period. Many restrictions that previously existed were removed. Business Associations are also responsible for promoting globalization to Congress. The U.S. Chamber of Congress is the biggest of these, but there are several others. Some of the most powerful Corporate Think Tanks are pro-globalization. Corporate contributions comprise a substantial portion of their funding. The Heritage
enormous and growing rates of incarceration—where does that leave us, the few members of this small, info-shop community still in its infantile stages? Because there is such a large amount of greed, selfishness, and really evil people who don't give a fuck about how you suffer for their tiny bit of profit. How can you live in a world like this, where basically everything you do is contributing in some way to these same forces? There is no answer. Or at least no answer, other than to think about and evaluate and rethink about things like this and your relationship to them. You certainly cannot hope to accomplish anything working within the system because the system is so corrupt to begin with. Fostering our little community (or any kind of intimate, small, non-hierarchical community) might be an answer. Human beings are growing up and living lives that are so far removed from any sort of natural, social behavior, it's hurting people in ways not even realized. Going back to a normal, wholesome socialness, living in these small communities or even just being part of one once a week, for basic honest reasons, can only be a good thing. Maybe the answer is in removing ourselves as completely as possible from this society. Or maybe it is in participating in some of it, and actively trying to make some things just a tiny bit better. I am sorry to digress from the subject of the global economy, but I feel it necessary because the economy is just one of so many things, all of them interconnected, that is important to learn about. Because it is important to know what you are up against. And because this new community is, in some ways, a way for us to all fight back.


(also, some ideas come from Derrick Jensen's book A Language Older than Words, 2004, Chelsea Green Publishing)
Rhizome

Free seeds

Oct 3

Wednesday

8:00 pm

McBryde 113

Workshop

Struggle Sustainability

radical

radical