

(CHALKSTAR continued from page 53)

WP: You would like to create some funding to support all that coordination.

JA: Actually, I'd like to take the whole thing on the road for a month long tour... the band, the tour bus, the jackets...with a team of photographers and videographers who could go into 10 selected sites. In Los Angeles, in Colorado, DC, in New York, City, in Kentucky and Florence, Italy, and Capetown, South Africa — so people can see this is real. This is global action for peace. It's important now to have the resources so we can follow through on our promises. C4P is about making great big promises to the world. It's about bringing peace back into global consciousness; not as a peripheral thing, but right where it belongs, as a major focus and priority.

WP: Sounds right to me, John. Best of luck to you and to C4P. Thank you for all your efforts to create more peace, love, and beauty in the world.

YOU MAY SAY I'M A DREAMER,
BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE.
PERHAPS SOME DAY
YOU'LL JOIN US,
AND THE WORLD
WILL LIVE AS ONE.
JOHN LENNON

This interview was conducted and written by Sharon Hall for The Whole Person Calendar.

**Drawing on the Power of Peace, by John Aaron June, 2010. www.peacepeace.org*

***John Ono is a friend of CHALK4PEACE.*

John Aaron is the Global Project Founder of CHALK4PEACE and CEO of CHALK4PEACE, Inc. In an art and music career of four decades, he is internationally recognized for his porcelain sculpture and painting, events organization, and performs as a singer-songwriter throughout Southern California. John believes humor, joy, love, dogs and cats, when combined, to be the probable center of the universe.



PHOTO: JERRY DOWNS

To learn more about CHALK4PEACE and artist/CEO John Aaron, follow the links below. If you want to get involved, donate, and/or create a C4P event in your city, start at the official website:

www.chalk4peace.org
www.chalk4peace.blogspot.com

CHALK4PEACE/John Aaron website:
www.modernarf.smugmug.com

CHALK4PEACE 2010 Photo galleries:
<http://modernarf.smugmug.com/Art/CHALK4PEACE-2010>

Yoko Ono's ImaginePeace.com:
<http://www.imaginepeace.com/archives/10205>

Crane Country Day School
CHALK4PEACE Video 2010:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFidH11Bdek>

Clown and Clown Festival:
<http://www.laprimaweb.it/2010/09/13/clownclown-festival-internazionale-diclownerie-e-volontariato/>

On Facebook:

John Aaron
<http://www.facebook.com/home>

Chalk Peace
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/profile.php?id=100001033063131>

CHALK4PEACE on Facebook
CAUSESh^t<http://www.causes.com/causes/401301/about?m=0c0b0783>

Recent articles about CHALK4PEACE:

"Drawing on the Power of Peace"
PeacePeace.org

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=344313&paper=62&cat=104>

wounds, traumas and interferences by "the dark" can show up as "disease" in your Soul, physical body, chakras and auric field. Call Magi (Mari Angelique Raphael) toll free for information and phone session appts at 800/397-9084 (24-hour voicemail), visit www.reconnectedsoul.com, under my "I Beat Ovarian Cancer" section.

WEIGHT PROBLEMS, DEPRESSION, INSOMNIA? Kim Moise, Naturopath with over 35 years experience, specializes in Applied Kinesiology and NAET allergy elimination. 10801 National Blvd, Suite 607, WLA. Call 323/360-8366 or visit www.KimianMoise.com.

DNA INTUITIVE HEALING WITH SELACIA, accelerate your growth with activation of your DNA and healing deeply-held obstacles to living a joyful life. Move out of emotional/physical pain and fear to clarity and self-empowerment. For people and pets. Private sessions are by phone. Free monthly intro seminars. Call for details, 310/915-2864, www.Selacia.com, email Selacia@Selacia.com.

Intuitive Arts

AKASHIC RECORDS LIFE & SOUL COACHING with Barbara Schiffman, C.Ht. Tune into the wisdom of your own Soul for guidance, healing, creative evolution. Private sessions by phone or in person. Ask about Akashic Practitioner weekend trainings and Readers Circles. Call Barbara at 818/415-3479, www.YourLifeandSoul.com, www.Meetup.com/AkashicLA.

PSYCHIC ANGEL, love readings and effective love spells by Angelica. 98% accurate, past, present and future. Take my services seriously...love is not a game. Angelica: 818/402-2750.

LAURA GERALYN KLINE, Healer, Spiritual Messenger, Twin Flame/Soulmate Reconnection. 773/354-6841, email preciouspain4ever@comcast.net. Visit www.flameworkpartners.com.

ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM ALIEN ABDUCTION & MIND CONTROL IMPLANTS? Attacks and mind control interferences can be stopped. Never be abducted or implanted again! Call Magi (Mari Angelique Raphael) toll free for information and phone session appts at 800/397-9084 (24-hour voicemail), www.reconnected-soul.com. Read my post on Alien Abduction.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET TENDER. Intuitive readings in-store daily at Paradise Found, 17 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara 93101, 805/564-3573, www.paradise-found.net.

COMING IN JANUARY: THE DIVINE FEMININE MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR, taking place Jan. 2, 3-5 pm, at Ahiak Center in Pasadena (277 N. El Molino Ave.). A Channeling of the Divine Feminine, speaking through Mary Hunt, with a performance by Tina Meeks. With all the changes occurring in the world and in your life, come be part of experiencing an uplifting message, direct to your heart. Info: www.lookfortheLight.com. Send Love, 626/789-2978, info3@sendlove.net.

OMNASZTRA (STACEY OSDER) is available for powerful energy healings. Spiritual Counseling, Ear coning, Cleansings/Blessings/Balancing for your personal or business space. 818/503-5896 (24-hour voicemail). Email

CHALKSTAR:

John Aaron and CHALK4PEACE

by Sharon Hall

It's coming to America first; the cradle of the best and of the worst.

It's here they got the range, and machinery for change

and it's here they got the spiritual thirst.

Democracy, by Leonard Cohen

What makes someone a hero? Is it the doctor saving lives in the ER, or a firefighter rescuing a child from a burning building? Does an artist's vision for peace becoming a global phenomenon qualify? When I recently read about the release of Nobel Peace prizewinner and Buddhist activist, Aung San Suu Kyi I found myself wondering: could I stand up for peace in the face of war and violence the way she did? If it comes right down to it, I don't know if I have the right stuff.

When my government made the decision after 9/11/01 to attack Iraq, I felt a combined rush of anger, disbelief, and total impotence. As I watched millions of people around the world take to the streets in protest, I observed our administration ignore and even belittle the global outcry, and felt a sadness that nothing could dissipate. All I felt capable of was writing a few letters and donating to the Democratic Party.

Renaissance artist John Aaron, who earned national recognition for his clay sculptures, was also frustrated. His solution — mounting a group exhibition of political art and artists at his gallery, *The Museum of Modern Art*, in Arlington — took audacious courage. The pieces on display combined skill and technique with black humor, naming names at a time few ventured to criticize Bush's war. After the exhibition, MOMA experienced a mysterious fire. The gallery recovered, and soon, an even more effective response to violence rose from the ashes.

When John Aaron first crossed my radar, it was hard to believe this funny man (John has attended Patch Adams' Gesundheit Institute, among other things) in his self-designed, multi-hued painted coat, was the creative genius behind a global peace and art organization. Could chalk drawings on sidewalks and streets really make a difference in the world? I visited the websites and browsed the photo galleries. Yes: apparently it can.

The universality of the projects is striking. All kinds of folks, many of them children, are found deeply engrossed in creating personal visions of peace through chalk. I browsed the amazing photos from all over the world and became increasingly fascinated by the beauty of the work and quality of the images. Thousands of

A global artistic vision that promotes a cooperative and collaborative effort towards peace.



people — as Aaron puts it, “young artists of all ages” — have participated since the project's inception in 2005. By 2010 the project's events have expanded to cover a global spectrum. As part of the annual Clown and Clown Festival, there was a UNICEF-sponsored project in Monte San Guisto, Italy; another took place in Capetown, South Africa, where Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu spoke for an end to apartheid on the steps of St. George's Cathedral, which hosted the 5th year of C4P. Santa Barbara's prestigious Crane school invited young artists to chalk its pavement, accompanied by video and a song created by John Aaron for C4P; it can be found on Youtube. In Santa Monica, there was chalking at Every Picture Tells a Story and in Westminster, California Simon Kidgets club members and other young artists chalked the Mall. 2010 also marks the first year C4P is in the Dominican Republic. Earlier this year, C4P's 5th anniversary was celebrated in the DC area with coordinated festivities all over Washington, Virginia and Maryland in conjunction with the International Day of Peace. This organization is definitely onto something good.

I had the opportunity to sit down with John Aaron, CEO and founder of C4P, in Ojai where he presently lives. He'd recently returned from Italy where he'd been hired by UNICEF to organize a street art event.

WP: John, it's very cool that you got to go with C4P to Italy. On your website, I noticed some beautiful photos that were taken of kids you spent time with. Can you tell me more about your trip, and about those kids?

JA: We did C4P with around 600 children in the plaza in Monte San Guisto, Italy, as part of their annual Clown and Clown Festival. While I was there, I chanced to meet a group of people through “Taxi Milano 25,” and a woman named Caterina Bellandi who works with kids undergoing chemotherapy. She also works with clown doctors who entertain the kids and bring joy to their lives as they go through these procedures. I ended up making friends with some of the children, and spending time with them in Florence as well. I attended a number of functions, and got to know their families. All countries could learn something from Italy. The medical professions there really embrace the concepts of laughter and clowning as therapeutic. Here we know of Patch Adams...but in Italy, there are whole medical and pediatric programs that focus on this aspect of bringing joy to kids to make them happier and more relaxed while going through these procedures. Italy was a phenom-

(continued on page 52)



(CHALKSTAR continued from page 6)

enal experience for me, and C4P is already invited back next year.

WP: That's great, John: congratulations. You have photos from Italy of a specific child and parent that I found particularly moving...

JA: Yes. Giuseppe is a young man I got to know well. One of the photos is of Giuseppe and his dad drawing in the plaza. I hung out with him and family in both Monte San Guisto, and later on, in Florence. We even ended up going to see the World Cup Soccer Team matches. My friend Caterina had set this up for the kids. She also had events at her house. We were able to do some amazing things with the kids.



PHOTO: VITTORIA TETTAMANTE

WP: Do you have favorite sites where you've worked with kids in California, or other parts of the US?

JA: There's the Crane school in Santa Barbara...they always do a wonderful video for us. You can see it on YouTube. There's also Beach Elementary School in Piedmont, Ca. They have this wonderful after-school program called "Paints" that C4P helps raise money for. What's noteworthy is that some of the parents involved are connected with PIXAR so the level of artistic ability that shows up — in the kids and the parents showing the kids what to do — is something else. Other places include the Boulder Public Library event, which is sponsored by the Boulder Arts Commission. In L.A., we recently did the kick-off event at Every Picture Tells A Story, in Santa Monica. That was fun. I also want to mention a school that's been very supportive of C4P, the Gooden School, in Sierra Madre. They do a wonderful event every year, and the administration is very supportive and donates to us, which is really helpful.

WP: You mentioned C4P first started in 2005. How did it start and who sponsored it?

JA: Although C4P first started officially in 2005, it actually began in 2003. MOMA always sponsored it. We didn't know at the time it was going to be called Chalk for Peace. It went from a Memorial Day weekend, with 3 kids stomping on a bunch of chalk that we had bought, to something the Washington Post got a hold of as something cool to do on a Sunday for kids.

WP: It happened every week?

JA: Every Sunday. We had a salon at the museum — I had another job, but Sundays were fully dedicated to the salon. It was open and people could come visit; they could paint, they could come and draw...it became a historic thing over four years. If folks didn't know what to do on a Sunday, they knew they could stop at the museum.

WP: So, it went from three or four kids to how many by the time the Post got involved and put you in their events calendar?

JA: About a hundred people were involved in the projects when the Post got interested. When we first started, Washington didn't have any chalk festivals...we sort of blew open the chalk-painting doors.

WP: Sounds like it gained some well-deserved attention.

JA: Well, it became a phenomenon pretty quickly as the Sunday-afternoon thing to do. Then simultaneously, the Arlington Arts Commission and the DC Commission for the Humanities approached me about doing projects. The cool guy running the Arts Commission brought me in. He said, "I've heard you do art." "Yes," I said. We've got a project I want to call it Chalk for Peace."

The Arlington Arts Commission then asked me to do chalk festivals in 2003-4; and that led to the DC Arts Commission deciding to do C4P at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library in 2005.

ALL WE ARE SAYING,
IS GIVE PEACE
A CHANCE.

JOHN LENNON

The first C4P event, sponsored by the Arts Commission, the DC Mayor's office, and MOMA, took place in the plaza of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library in 2005. It was here John Aaron had what he's referred to in his blog, *Drawing on the Power of Peace* as his epiphany:

"We all have those moments that change our lives. Some seem to be heralded by trumpets, others quietly smash into us. One such moment realigned my entire outlook on Peace. It revealed the importance of approaching Peace from a positive standpoint, instead of from an anti-war point of view.

As I studied the artwork of the first CHALK4PEACE event I organized in the District of Columbia, I came upon a beautifully eerie cubistic army tank with the Chinese characters for Peace crushing down onto it. It was done by two fifteen-year-old Asian artists. That image, as powerful as any editorial cartoon, made me realize that there were hundreds, if not thousands, of young artists of all ages worldwide who would rise to the occasion to express their visions of peace if given the chance.

That I would have this revelation at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library was not lost on me. CHALK4PEACE was a chance for a global artistic vision that could



PHOTO: JOHN AARON

promote a cooperative and collaborative effort towards peace. Looking across the plaza, taking in the drawings, I made a commitment that CHALK4PEACE would become an intercontinental event. My goal was to encourage 1,000,000 people to draw at the same time."

According to John, it doesn't take that much to pull off an event. "A safe, secure space; a couple buckets of chalk, and some grown-ups to guide the young'uns." Of course, it actually takes much more than that. The planning for such a large-scale project starts a year before; there are schools and organizations to coordinate, publicity to go out to the media, and a lot of chalk to buy and distribute to various



PHOTO: WOODLAWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA BY MARIELLE MARIANO

sites, as well as coordinators for the ever-growing number of participants. All the people helping are volunteers, and John has yet to pay himself a salary; it's one of the things his board of directors keeps insisting on. Running a global non-profit on a shoestring is something that looks easy, but isn't. There are lots of grants to be written and John writes them all. For example, the Arlington Arts Commission grant required 29 copies. Now, there are yearly C4P events happening at many sites in the Washington area. John says, "If you take DC, Northern Virginia and Maryland, there are literally

hundreds of sites." And, next year they could be in the Smithsonian Museums.

I asked about some of the challenges to running C4P on a global level. I knew John did most all of it via the Internet and his phone, with the help of some key coordinators in various sites. How does he keep it all straight?

JA: It's run by volunteers, but I could use about four assistants. One of the goals for C4P is to have someone gathering, following along and organizing every single site that comes in, so if you go to the Internet, you can find out which 25

locations around the world are doing an event on Sept. 19. That is a lot harder to figure out than anyone gives the project credit for.

WP: Sounds like you need to write some more grants.

JA: Yes. One of the funniest things is that, since I've been an artist for 40 years, I take the web presentation very seriously. I try to make a successful presentation. In one sense, that's a lie. C4P limps along and makes this all happen at a grassroots level. We have no famous faces raising money for us, or major funding support. We do receive a grant from the Pasadena Community Foundation, thanks to Peggy Phelps. She has been a champion supporter of C4P ever since we started. I've always said, if every school could donate a bit, even \$5, our budget would be met for a year.

WP: That's a great idea! What an easy way to make a donation!

JA: And it takes the heat off. If everybody who liked what we're doing gave just \$5, we would have close to a million — and that's a lot of chalk.

WP: Do you have a big dream for C4P at this point? Particular projects you'd like to see funding for?

JA: I'd like to see millions of people doing C4P around world; I'd want a team of people involved at various levels, all capable of handling different parts of the organizing; I'd like to make C4P tee-shirts and have them handed out at schools and other locations as a revenue-producing source for the projects. We want to be able to provide chalk to all the unified schools in all the districts of Los Angeles. For example, we want to be able to meet with people in NY, and politely but firmly challenge some of the current graffiti laws — have chalk removed from the guidelines that have it in that category, because it all washes off. We want to be able to show up in DC and talk to the various museums that might want to do an event.

Eventually, I'd like to see teaching programs involved, where kids learn about peacemakers like Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and others, and learn about various human rights issues. You know, when John and Yoko sang "give peace a chance," they were treated like frivolous dreamers. But, they were talking about a truth that is earth-shattering.**

(continued on page 54)