

~ PROPOSAL ~
A MODEL FOR PROCEEDING TO NEXT STEPS FOR *CRNMC*

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THE CONTEXT

~ Tammy Davis from email string 12/26 "Another direction in which to go"
"I think we need to connect with each other, face to face, as friends, as neighbors, as communities, who share the same desires to help build a better future. We need to be on the ground and getting systems in place, or at least beginning the processes, now and not some time in the future."

~ Kelly Larson from email string 12/26 "Another direction in which to go"
"I want to be FOR solutions - and ones that everyone can get behind. Unity is my goal. Ideas that can break down the barriers that have formed between political ideals, religion, race, gender, ... When we are united, we will be unstoppable, and our basic needs will very likely be met."

~ Art of Hosting participant - Dr. Lalleen Rector
"Conversation and dialogue are the basis upon which we begin to understand each other, at the heart of which lies something sacred. Such dialogue requires courage and perseverance and it is easier to turn away from than to engage. But perhaps it is the best hope we have for dealing with difference and for finding ways to truly collaborate toward a common good bigger than any of our personal or institutional agendas."

THE NETWORK MODEL

This network model I'm proposing can be used by The People as a means:

- ~ to exercise their right to self governance;
- ~ to practice the skills of dialogue necessary for democracy of, for and by The People.

In this, the first application of the network model, I make use of the World Cafe - a process that has been applied around the world for decades.

Once the network is established, different processes can be "plugged in" to fulfill a variety of purposes:

- ~ providing a forum for broad community dialogues;
- ~ supporting county policy-making with public input;
- ~ raising public awareness of issues inadequately covered by the media;
- ~ adapting the network for specific campaigns.

It could re-engage the thousands of people who:

- ~ signed Measure S petitions;
- ~ attended Road Shows;
- ~ put up lawn signs;
- ~ were the 70% of the voters who passed it.

The network model is:

- ~ regenerative -
 - ~ it creates its own renewal and leadership from within.
- ~ complex -
 - ~ it is self-regulating not controlled;
 - ~ emergent not institutional;
 - ~ a living network not centralized nor hierarchical
 - ~ unpredictable within its boundaries: cause-and-effect anticipation does not apply;
 - ~ patterned not planned.
- ~ systematized -
 - ~ each part of the pattern has multiple functions within the whole;
 - ~ each aspect inter-connects with all others.
- ~ participatory -
 - ~ each person has a variety of choices about when, where and how to participate.
- ~ duplicatable -
 - ~ it is not population-, issue- nor site-specific. It could be used anywhere by CELDF.

Notably, the network:

- ~ establishes a functional infrastructure for a county-wide network;
- ~ distributes power evenly;
- ~ connects people through their passions;
- ~ provides a learning/teaching environment for all participants;
- ~ spreads the work load across the dispersed communities of the county;
- ~ promotes leadership development.

COMMON GROUND FOR CONSENSUS

It is not the intent of this first use of the network model to achieve a clearly focused consensus on what campaign to do next.

The intent is to:

- ~ *narrow the discussion;*
- ~ *find common ground both within CRNMC and with potential new colleagues*
- ~ *establish a firm foundation for determining the next steps toward action planning*

Consensus is emergent and intuitive: it cannot be scheduled or pressured or rushed. It will coalesce given the most appropriate conditions.

The process I outline below uses specific, single projects and issues as springboards into the deeper questions of *purposes and principles* - which is where common ground lies, and from which emerges consensus for direct *action*.

Commonly held principles and purposes frame where action moves next. Most importantly, it is principles and purposes that motivate social change agents, keeping people involved when daunting challenges threaten. When clearly articulated, principles and purposes become the life blood of a group.

With Measure S:

- ~ one *purpose* was to protect ourselves, our loved ones and everyone else from poison;
- ~ one *principle* was that we have the right to act in our own interests.
- ~ the *mission* was the principled and purposeful *action* arising from this common ground: working to pass the Community Bill of Rights Ordinance to ban fracking.

We can decolonize our minds and move beyond single issue activism with this principled, purposeful approach because our hearts, as a collective, are at its center: as Geri Morisky said to me, moving together with one mind, one heart, one breath.

WILLOW'S ROLE

As always, I assume responsibility for facilitating the models and processes I propose. *My intent in choosing the World Cafe is to develop local leadership.* After attending two Cafes, people so inclined will have developed capacity and be experienced enough to lead later Cafes. When the round of Cafes I propose here, is complete, there could be leaders across the county.

By these criteria, I will lead the first two, with assistance from self-selected people who are interested in learning how to lead Word Cafes. This network model also requires commitment from a few people to do the pre-work like contacting invitees and finding locations. Contact me directly at willow707rain@gmail.com and let me know your level of interest. Be sure to let me know where you live. I look forward to your feedback.

On a personal note - I have chosen to live in Arcata, Humboldt County and am here now. During the past months I have built a personal bridge to Mendocino County and I intend to keep alive my connections with people there. By rough calculation of driving time, I think Arcata is about as far from Willits as Elk is from Covelo!

~Blessings~

I wish a happy and brave new year to you all.

Willow

January 7th, 2015

THE WORLD CAFE

from Wikipedia

"The **World Café** is a structured conversational process in which groups of people discuss a topic at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by a "table host". A cafe ambience is created in order to facilitate conversation. In some versions, a degree of formality is retained to make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak.^[1] Alternatively, the cafe concept can be taken more literally with everyone potentially talking at once. As well as speaking and listening, individuals may be encouraged to write or doodle on the tablecloth so that when people change to different tables, they can see what previous members have expressed in their own words as well as hearing the table host's view of what has been happening."

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/principles.html>

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/sofdownload1.pdf>

THE FRAMEWORK

World Cafes would be organized across the county like the Road Shows for Measure S - whose venues would be a great place to start.

Every Cafe would follow the same format and ask the same questions. The output from each local Cafe would be dovetailed with all the others to reflect and reveal the emerging consensus as to the needs of The People in the county, and how they might be met.

This would establish the groundwork for the emergence of a living network whose participants have met each other in meaningful conversations that:

- ~ are close to home;
- ~ are straightforward to organize;
- ~ train participants in the listening and participation skills of dialogue.

People could be invited to the Cafes from a comprehensive list of social change organizations and groups - plus constituencies in the broad public like educators, business people, elected representatives, youth and elder groups.

This would:

- ~ ensure a broad spectrum of perspective on the questions at hand;
- ~ introduce people who could subsequently be working together on campaigns;
- ~ provide a large pool of skills and connections, and may lead to the sharing of resources.

When the living network is established, each location could become a node for action campaigns. Each local group would function as a fractal of the whole, doing fund raising, education and outreach, signature gathering etc., in coordination with the whole network.

This network model would:

- ~ minimize travel;
- ~ maximize person-to-person communication;
- ~ empower more people in more places;
- ~ build resilience into the network: crises occurring on the local scale would be managed with support from the entire network.

This would remove from broad scale social change:

- ~ centralization;
- ~ hierarchy;
- ~ concentration of power;
- ~ the emergence and consequent dependence on charismatic leaders.

When this round of Cafes is complete, the network could host follow up rounds, using a variety of processes, which would:

- ~ explore priorities discernible from the principles and purposes;
- ~ indicate a focus that satisfies the principles, purposes and priorities: economy, environment, etc; or a combination of several fields;
- ~ identify and select options that fulfill the principles, purposes and priorities within the focus range;
- ~ structure comprehensive action planning.

THE PROCESS FOR SERIAL WORLD CAFES
across Mendocino County.
Each one is organized by people who live locally.

Usually 3-5 questions are presented, in rounds of 20 - 30 minutes, at tables in groups of 3-5 people. Each table has a host, who remains in place. Everyone else self-selects to sit at a different table each round. If everyone sits with as many people as possible that they do not know, cross-pollination will be maximum.

OPENING SESSION
Contexting circle
Initial brainstorm: 20 minutes

Everyone makes a list of options for social change projects and issues that CRNMC+other groups could engage with: public bank, county charter, anti-corruption act, community rights, water quality,... etc

(For purposes of this process, "project" is clearly defined - eg:public bank, county charter; "issue" is broad, undefined, but everyone knows what it's about - eg water issues, community rights).

The lists are shared. Everyone makes a copy of the master list of options so they have it to refer to as they progress through the Cafe.

THE CONVERSATIONS
round 1:
20 minutes

Choose from the brainstormed master list your 3 favorite projects/issues and say what they are about.

Everyone at each table records all the favorites. They will keep this list with them as they go to the next rounds.

round 2:
20 minutes

What about your favorites is exciting to you?
What are some of the key words and phrases that capture how people are excited?

Everyone writes down all the key words and phrases from their table. They will keep this list with them as they go to the next rounds.

BREAK 10 minutes

round 3:
20 minutes

What principles are being fulfilled by bringing about the kind of social change your favorite projects/issues provide?

(For example: they deal with baseline problems not symptoms, they provide necessary infrastructure for the society we want.)

Everyone records the list of principles from their table. They will keep this list with them as they go to the next rounds.

round 4:
30 minutes

What about these projects/issues motivates you consistently to work on them?

What is your *personal* purpose, your deepest intention?

Everyone at each table records these purposes and intentions as a list.

round 5:
30 minutes

Conversation with the whole group

The intent here is to review and briefly reflect. Only a few respond to each question. By the last question most people in the room will have contributed.

1. 4 minutes

Review the 4 step process: how did we get to this point?

What stands out for you?

2. 8 minutes

What did you learn?

How has this clarified your own work?

Where do you still have questions or confusions?

3. 18 minutes

What do the people in this room have in common?

What are some of the implications for working together that you have perceived?

What indications are coming clear on how to proceed?

What perceptible consensus do you see forming about *principles* and *purposes*, and where *priorities* lie, for this emergent network?

THE FORMAL CLOSING
10 minutes

Formation of a circle.
Final comments about the experience.

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WHAT IS NEEDED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

- ~ large open room like at the Willits Grange.
 - ~ tables and chairs:
 - 4 to a table
 - or larger tables for 2 or more groups of 4
 - ~ poster paper "tablecloths" + pens to capture images, notes, ideas
 - ~ extra paper/pens
 - ~ appropriate snacks - maybe potluck.
- ~ total time: 155 minutes = 2 hours 35 minutes
- ~ a time frame of 3 hours would provide a relaxed schedule with some breathing room.

~*~