

Whole Life Times
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Practical Acts of Peace

The **27th** International Day of Peace invites us once again to give peace a chance

Two years ago, Melvin Weiner, director of sales and marketing for a calendar publisher in Maine, received a newsletter with information about September 21, the International Day of Peace. He'd never heard of the fast-approaching day, but was inspired. As Weiner tells it, "A few days later I woke up, realized it was the Day of Peace, and asked myself, 'What can I do today to make the world a better place?'" His answer came like an aha moment. I can get the International Day of Peace onto calendars.

Fueled by what he describes as a "random act of inspiration," Weiner started contacting people he knew in his industry, and simply asking if they would include the day on their upcoming calendars. Year 2008 calendars had already gone to press, so this would be for 2009. By the end of the first day, he had confirmation from 20 of the largest calendar publishers in the U.S. He then connected with the nonprofits Pathways to Peace and the Culture of Peace

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Initiative and started dialing for days. As a result, "There are now hundreds of (worldwide) calendar publishers participating in this initiative and we will reach a billion people this year, and more in 2010," Weiner says. One overseas executive's response to his request was particularly noteworthy: "We feel it is our duty to have this [on our calendars]," said the publisher. "We are proud of this and hope that it will make a difference in the world."

Although it's new to calendars, the International Day of Peace was officially established in 1981 by the United Nations Assembly in a unanimous resolution that

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read, "The International Day of Peace will serve as a reminder to all peoples . . . that our permanent commitment, above all interests or differences of any kind, is to peace. May this Peace Day indeed be a day of peace." It was celebrated for the first time in 1982, which makes this year the 27th annual opportunity "to create practical acts of peace on a shared date," the Peace Day website reminds us.

On June 13, U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon initiated a 100-day countdown to the 2009 International Day of Peace, highlighting the need for nuclear disarmament and launching the WeMustDisarm! (WMD) Campaign. Stated in a message by Ki-moon on the U.N. website, "Between now and 21 September, we will issue 100 reasons to disarm, via Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, email, text message, radio and from friend to friend. Celebrities will also help us spread the message."

Speaking of celebrities, plenty were in attendance at last year's local Day of Peace celebration put on by Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots organization. Pierce Brosnan, Darryl Hannah, and couple Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale were a few who lent their star power to boost the message. This year's free, family- and eco-friendly event will be at Santa Monica Pier on Sunday, September 20, from 11 a.m.—4 p.m., hosted again by Roots and Shoots. Look for live entertainment, kid activities, eco-friendly vendors, and a parade of giant, handmade peace doves. In a letter about the event, Goodall writes, "I can still remember just six short years ago, when we flew our first Giant Peace Dove in Los Angeles. I am so proud of the growth and success of this volunteer-led event. This year we expect more than 5,000 participants."

Southern California is also home to the Global Mala Yoga for Peace event, wherein 1,008 yogis will perform 108 sun salutations at the HAX hangar near LAX September 20, as part of the Yoga Month Festival. According to their website, "The purpose of the Global Mala is to unite the global yoga community from every continent, school or approach to form a 'mala around the earth' through collective practices based upon the sacred cycle of 108 . . . as the yoga world's offering to further the U.N. International Peace Day." The Global Mala Project was an inspiration of So Cal yoga teacher Shiva Rea, and events are scheduled all over the world for Peace Day. This event is free, though donations are accepted.

If you can't make it to a live event, check out Peace Day online. An interactive, 24-Hour World Peace Celebration and Global Broadcast sponsored by Unity Foundation and Pathways to Peace will start webcasting at 9 a.m. on Sunday, September 20, on www.cultureofpeaceinitiative.com and www.internationaldayofpeace.org, and will be broadcast in segments on some satellite and cable stations.

The secretary-general is asking people from all over the world, including in the U.N., to participate in the "peace wave"—a minute of silence to take place at 12 noon in all times zones. Pathways to Peace president Avon Mattison, who has been involved with the International Day of Peace since its inception, suggests that we carry that peaceful minute into the community by following it with an act of peace that benefits all, even something as (seemingly) simple as picking up litter or lighting a candle with others in the name of peace.

Last year Melvin Weiner and his wife joined friends at the beach for a simple peace offering, then gathered for a meal and a "peace party," and collected donations from the group for a local animal shelter. This year, if we all heed our calendars, the Weiners will be joined in spirit by about a billion more people.

Join the Peace Party

Peace is an individual, every day choice, but the International Day of Peace is a unique opportunity to support worldwide awareness.

● 24-hour webcast and info:

www.cultureofpeaceinitiative.org and
www.internationaldayofpeace.org

● Peace Day Celebration at Santa Monica Pier:

www.rootsandshoots.org/regional_offices/california/events/day_of_peace

● The Global Mala Project: globalmala.org



Mom and freelance writer Kristy Lund, who volunteers at Pathways to Peace, counts meeting Jane Goodall years ago as a personal highlight. Say hello to her at kristylund.com.