



# News from the Redwood Empire

## Town Hall Coalition Annual Report -- 2004

Town Hall Coalition's mission is to build a social movement that promotes ecologically and economically healthy communities through responsible land use.

Dear Friends,

2004 was a year of hope. Hope that citizen groups could mobilize to retake control of a country which is moving in the wrong direction in so many ways. Thousands of us took to the streets, knocked on doors, and thousands more became active for the first time. 2004 ended on a low note for many of us who worked so hard all year.

For many in the environmental movement, it is a time of reassessing the strategies we have been using, and reframing the language we use. For example, Town Hall Coalition is a "citizen action group," which explains what we do, instead of a "non-profit," which explains what we aren't. Similarly, when we talk about forest protection, climate protection, voter security, and civil liberties, we are referring to our values, out of which come our programs.

It is not a time to change our values. It is a time to return to our values, and make an even stronger case for protecting the commons and each other from the threats posed by destructive private special interests. It is a time to stand up, and tell truth to power. Backing down, compromising your values, and losing courage will get us nowhere.

A major accomplishment for Town Hall Coalition in 2004 was the formation of the Redwood Empire Environmental Center. We have become a hub for West County activism in our new office in Sebastopol, and we have seen a great response from the community. Please come by the office. Volunteer and intern positions available.

We are reconvening Citizen Action Groups for 2005, and we invite you to become more active. We will identify the issues, expand the number of people and the amount of involvement, and take back the country. Join us in standing strong for progressive moral and community values. Thank you for your support.

--Lynn Hamilton, Mike Sandler, and the Town Hall Coalition Board of Directors



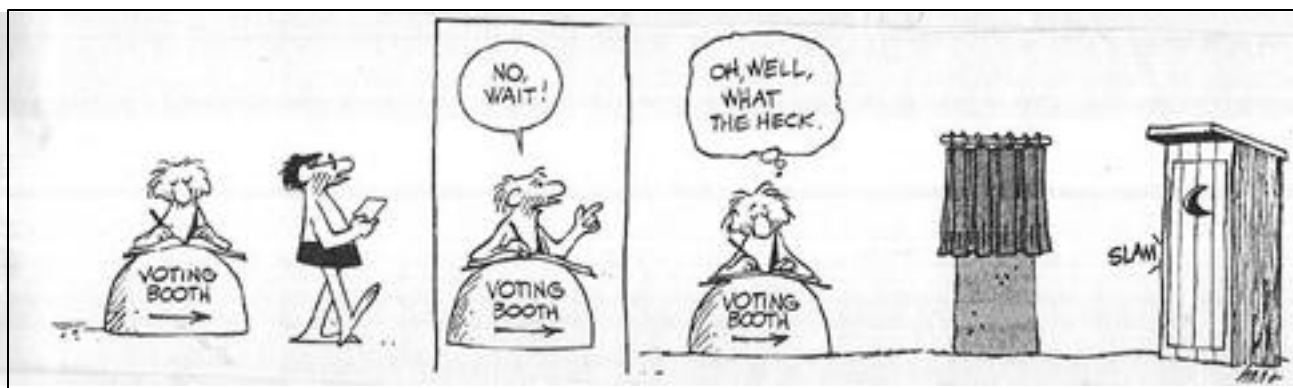
### The Redwood Empire Environmental Center

Town Hall Coalition has joined with other environmental groups to form the Redwood Empire Environmental Center located in Gravenstein Station across from Coffee Katz in Sebastopol. We encourage you to stop by our office, sign a petition and get involved in a Citizen Action Committee at this new hub for activism in Sonoma County.

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## 2004 Projects

### Participatory Democracy



Town Hall Coalition has continually been involved in registering people to vote, educating citizens about public participation, and encouraging electoral reforms such as verifiable paper ballots where every vote counts, and we are assured of fair, accurate, credible, and honest elections. We have encouraged people to apply for openings on local boards and commissions. Several members have successfully been appointed to those positions and are now active in local decision making.

In April 2004, we were proud to bring civil rights attorney Tony Serra to Sebastopol to inform us of the repercussions of the UnPatriot Act and the right-wing attack on civil liberties. Members of the Town Hall Coalition are working to demand a return to the basic American values of civil and human rights: the right to an attorney, the separation of church and state, sentences which are commensurate with the crime, the right to privacy, etc., which the fundamentalist extremist right-wing faction wants to take away.

The Town Hall Coalition has formed the Democracy Citizen Action Group. The Group teaches how to frame Progressive values, communicate them to a wide audience, and win. The lesson of the 2004 election is that we need strong language, and we need to take a stand.

Recent events have included a film night with a DVD from George Lakoff, a famed Professor of Linguistics entitled, "How Democrats and Progressives Can Win" and a guest speaker and video on voter security and the need for verifiable audits of voting machines. The Citizen Action Group meets the 3rd Thursday of every month 6:30PM for film night, discussion, and action at Coffee Catz in Sebastopol. Call office for details.

**Join a Citizen Action Group:** Several groups now forming including Democracy, Forests, and Climate Change.

**Post Election Political Comedy Night** featured hilarious political satire from Amos Glick and Ed Holmes (with guest in middle) of the San Francisco Mime Troupe as Bush and Cheney, raffle, awards to grassroots citizen activist groups- Coffee Lane Alliance, Pocket Canyon Protection Group, Coastal Forest Alliance, Healdsburg Peace Project. Music was by the Sultry Cowgirls.



## Forests and Climate Change

Forests absorb carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas in global warming. Researchers have identified forests with coastal redwoods and Douglas-firs to have the greatest capacity for increased carbon sequestration of any in the world. Forests protected by public parks and through conservation easements on private property can help alleviate the impacts of climate change.

In January of 2004, Town Hall Coalition teamed up with the Coastal Forest Alliance to protest the Wine and Grape Symposium in Sacramento calling attention to the conversion of coastal redwood forests to vineyards. The protest included an eight-foot high wine bottle bearing the label "**Pinot Egregio: Chainsaw Wine**" wielding an over-sized chainsaw.

In 2005, Sonoma County residents have an opportunity to influence the General Plan and Zoning Code amendments providing stronger regulation of timber conversions. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors need your input on proposed "Net Loss" provisions, loopholes which lead to increased forest conversions. Two important public hearings regarding forest conversion are April 21 at the Planning Commission, and June 21, 2005 at the Board of Supervisors. This opportunity to influence the General Plan comes only once every 20 years.

Town Hall Coalition's Gonzo Climate Action Group is looking at extreme, uncompromised, and fun action to combat climate change. In 2005 we will co-sponsor a Conference and Forum on Climate Change.



## Land Use- Wine Factories and Industrial Vineyard Development

Town Hall Coalition has been working closely with grassroots community activist groups such as the Coffee Lane Alliance and the Pocket Canyon Protection Group. Town Hall has provided support for these groups in organizing to protect their neighborhood from encroaching industrial vineyard and wine factory development, and in successfully protecting 80 acres of forests along 116 near Guerneville.

The development of wine factories and industrial vineyards in rural areas where there is no infrastructure has become a threat to the public health and safety of the residents in rural areas. Wine factory developers consistently circumvented the General Plan and the permit process by developing the vineyard in incremental steps to mislead the Planners and the public, making their project look like farming when the intention is to actually construct an industrial-scale factory. Town Hall Coalition assisted with a traffic safety study for a one-lane road where wine factory encroachment could endanger residents and a legal analysis of the rights of residents to protect their private property and water on an equal basis with industrial vineyard developers. This remains a top priority at Town Hall Coalition.



We support responsible and sustainable agriculture. Please stop by our office or call our office for the updated Organic and Biodynamic Wine List or download it online at [www.townhallcoalition.org](http://www.townhallcoalition.org).

## Town Hall Coalition 2004 Financial Report

Income:		Expenses	
Individual Donations	\$26,587	Administration	\$ 1,851
Members	10,327	Fund Raising	5,490
Donations, Other	500	Programs:	
Foundation Grants:		Education and Outreach	598
Community Foundation -		Forest Protection	13,640
Stuppin Fund for Arts	41,200	Land Use	47,513
Tides Foundation	<u>5,000</u>	Participatory Democracy	<u>373</u>
Total Income	\$83,614	Total Programs	\$62,124
		Total Expenses	\$69,465
		Net Income	\$14,149

### 2005 Schedule Upcoming of Events

**3rd Thursday of the month- Citizen Action Groups-  
Film Night and Discussion  
August 2005- San Francisco Mime Troupe  
October 2005- Climate Conference  
December 2005- Political Comedy Night 2**

### **Town Hall Coalition Board of Directors**

Toben Dilworth  
Lori Bazan  
Margaret Howe  
Don Frank  
Chris Stover  
Lynn Hamilton

- Become a Member of the Town Hall Coalition -

Town Hall Coalition needs your support. Your tax deductible donation benefits forests, wild lands, environmental protection, public health, sustainability, and participatory democracy. As a member, you can receive action alerts, and are invited to join a citizen action group and attend Town Hall events. Be part of the solution.

### **I want to contribute to the Town Hall Coalition:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\_ \$15   \_ \$25   \_ \$50   \_ \$100   \_ \$500   \_ \$ Other**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone, E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes, I'm interested in joining a Citizen Action Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other interests, comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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