

I feel that we have failed locally to adequately defend the Constitution, and particularly the First Amendment, both as officials and as common citizens.

Every elected official, every appointed official, and every law enforcement agent, upon assuming their duties, swears first of all to defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, and secondly the Constitution of the State of California. I think they would do well to reassess their commitment to those principles.

On our side, as citizens, organizers, and activists, it is our task to speak truth to power — hopefully with a certain grace and understanding, which is not always easy, but also with a commitment to the transformational level of societal change that we must create in the years to come.

Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk, has said that we cannot create peace until we are peaceful within. I believe the same about justice. We cannot create a lasting justice far away until we have created it right here at home. We must think globally *and* locally, and act with equal conscience and intention in both arenas.

*\*The City of Santa Cruz recently lost in litigation with a local nightclub, the Blue Lagoon. The Blue Lagoon filed suit because of repeated police harassment and surveillance of their business, and won a large settlement. Estimates of the total cost of the case to the city are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. At the time of the police activity, many people in the community objected and said it was unwarranted and illegal. It is sad to see our precious funds being spent in these ways.*

Sherry Conable has been an activist in Santa Cruz for 20 years, working on a broad spectrum of peace and social justice issues.