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Style

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Linda Grover's Vision: Peace for One Day

PEACE, From C1

inherent in the first day of the year has always captured her imagination. As a 20-year-old in the mid-1950s during her first stint in Washington, on a dare she water-skied in the Tidal Basin on New Year's Day wearing a leopard-print bikini.

Grover's latest project, a refinement of the vision in her novel: a global holiday of peace. Today.

"We live by the rhythms of our holidays," she says. "The quality of our holidays, or the meaning of our holidays, defines our individual cultures. And having no holiday that everyone shares means we're all out of step. We don't have one time all together, like Thanksgiving."

Let us be the first to wish it: Happy OneDay. Oh, didn't you know? Today is One Day of Peace and Sharing, aka OneDay—a new holiday, sort of. This is the day all 6 billion earthlings are supposed to be peaceful and share a meal with someone from a different background.

After a long, all-volunteer lobbying campaign by Grover, in December 2000 the U.S. Congress unanimously passed a resolution calling for presidents to proclaim the day every Jan. 1. The U.N. General Assembly recently invited all countries to celebrate it.

Last year President Clinton never followed through on the resolution from Congress, though he applauded OneDay advocates when they visited the Oval Office. Last week President Bush issued a statement that fell short of a proclamation. He sent "warm greetings" to all who might be celebrating OneDay, but didn't actually call for establishment of the day. He added, "This celebration represents an opportunity to reflect on our hope for a new year that brings peace, safety, and freedom to all people."

Scattered OneDay celebrations are taking place in Washington, Detroit, Salt Lake City and Portland, Ore., but OneDay so far lacks the cultural heft of Earth Day or Mother's Day. Most Americans are home from work for New Year's—the day is already a holiday—but OneDay doesn't appear poised to be listed on swimsuit calendars along with Kwanzaa and Valentine's Day.

All in good time, says Linda Grover. She foresees nothing less than a global Thanksgiving Day.

"Peace is like Carnegie Hall," she says. "If you want to get there you've got to practice."

She is padding around her Capitol Hill apartment one morning in striped socks with a little cozy for each toe. She lives on her late actor-husband's Social Security and her Writers Guild pension. She rents out the bedroom for extra cash and sleeps in the living room with the laser printer. She borrows a friend's place next door for an office, where files are stacked on an ancient stove with labels like "Dalai Lama," "Embassy of Israel" and "Rainbows."

In one corner is the blue scooter she uses to get around Capitol Hill, keeping tabs on OneDay supporters like Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.), Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) and Sens. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). Three years ago she moved to Washington to work on OneDay full time.

She has researched how long it took for the Mother's Day movement to build to the point in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson de-



BY KEVIN CLARK—THE WASHINGTON POST

"Peace lady" Linda Grover has been working full time for three years toward the adoption of OneDay.

clared it a nationally recognized salute to moms: 42 years. It took Conyers 15 years to push his idea of Martin Luther King Jr. Day to passage by Congress and signing by President Reagan, then another 16 years for every state to adopt it.

OneDay is not necessarily an anti-war day. Many OneDay supporters would like to see the shooting stop in Afghanistan this day, but Grover and others say there can't be peace until terrorism is eliminated. It's a pro-peace day.

The OneDay movement predates the current hostilities. Inspired by the approaching new millennium, people around the country began groping independently toward the idea.

In 1994 at Verde Valley School in Sedona, Ariz., students cast about for a project and came up with world peace. Their mentor, Guy Grand, a veteran of 1960s peace activism, chuckled and said it's been tried and it didn't work. The kids replied, "What about just one day of peace?"

About the same time, freelance writer Steve Diamond in Santa Barbara, Calif., and communications manager Robert Silverstein in Roosevelt, N.J., worked on the concept of "One Day in Peace, January 1, 2000." They published a children's book with that title, eventually printed in 22 languages.

Meanwhile, Grover, then living in Klamath Falls, Ore., organized a pre-millennium conference. It drew many of the people working on proto-OneDay notions who had met over the Internet. She advocated an annual Millennium Meal for people around the world to break bread.

She believes sharing a meal together creates a bond like no other experience. Back on the Upper West Side in 1970 when developers wanted to knock down the seven-story building that was home to her family and about 20 others, she fought back with food. Neighbors, poli-

ticians, developers and reporters gathered for the "Seven-Story Dinner"—one course on each floor. The building was saved. Grover published a book about it called "The House Keepers."

After she moved to Washington to campaign for OneDay, she enlisted children to help, from Hine Junior High, Brent Elementary School in the District and Mount Rainier Elementary in Prince George's County.

"If you can't have peace every day, you'd hope you could at least have it for one day," says Caitlin Follingstad, 10, who lobbied Congress members with Grover. "It's like a really important holiday."

Jan. 1, 2000: The governments of 100 nations and 25 American governors proclaim their support for the first One Day in Peace declared by organizers. The world manages to pull off a smooth Y2K transition—an achievement Grover says should be celebrated annually.

Jan. 1, 2001: Shortly before New Year's, Congress passes the OneDay resolution.

Today: Grover hides any disappointment she may have that Bush did not come out stronger to establish OneDay. "He has blessed the holiday and we're glad for that," she says.

In Washington today, at 3 p.m. at the Institute for Multitrack Diplomacy, 1819 H St. NW, Israeli and Palestinian children and others are scheduled to reenact the first Millennium Meal, which was held on OneDay 2000 at a Palestinian refugee camp on the West Bank.

In Detroit, Conyers plans to join children and religious leaders at a mosque for a OneDay celebration. In Salt Lake City, activists plan a neighborhood peace project.

Grover plans to be in Oregon, where the governor has officially sanctioned OneDay. In Portland there will be music, dance and speeches. OneDay, she says, "is wonderful now, and in 100 years it's going to be magnificent."



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"Peace is like Carnegie Hall," Grover says. "If you want to get there you've got to practice."

OneDay: A Holiday Whose Time Has Come?

D.C. Activist Linda Grover
Wishes All the World
A Peaceful New Year's

By DAVID MONTGOMERY
Washington Post Staff Writer

She's the "peace lady," as kids from Hine Junior High School on Capitol Hill call her, a frighteningly energetic free spirit who has spent her life pursuing improbable projects. Given the odds, Linda Grover's track record is not bad:

She fought to save tenants from eviction on the Upper West Side of New York (success); sought to bring the Winter Olympics to a small town in Oregon (failure); co-wrote a New York Times trade book bestseller advising women how to look "terrific" (success); peddled a TV drama series about a Florida hospital that treats young victims from war zones (still trying); was chief writer for soaps including "General Hospital" (success); lived on a boat and started a magazine about people who live on boats (success); tried to get people around the world to wind-surf to commemorate the 1,000th day before the turn of the millennium (success in San Francisco and Maui at least).

Along the way she raised three children, drove a cab in New York and wrote a novel about the people of Earth uniting on New Year's Day to work on the world's problems. The quality of infinite yet fleeting possibility

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