

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall next to the church for food, some music, and a demonstration of Bob and Karen's beloved contra dance.

There will be further opportunities for sharing Bob stories there.



Event recorded by Eric Thiermann
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In Memory of
Robert DeWitt Fitch
1939 - 2016



Memorial Gathering
May 27th, 2016

Peace United Church
Santa Cruz, California

◆ Gathering Song: **“All the Good People”**

Taught and led by Aileen Vance, Director of the Santa Cruz Peace Chorale. See *insert for lyrics*.



- ◆ Introduction by Master of Ceremonies Brian Murtha
- ◆ Family Members
- ◆ Music and Song by Ben Fitch
- ◆ Elected Officials
- ◆ Song - **“Get Up and Go”** by Pete Seeger, performed by us. See *insert for lyrics*.

◆ Community Reflections

◆ Exit Song: **“Step by Step”** —Bob led many groups singing this song.

Step by step, the longest march
 Can be won, can be won
 Many stones can form an arch
 Singly none, singly none
 And by union what we will
 Can be accomplished still
 Drops of water turn a mill
 Singly none, singly none.

(Words from a 19th century Mining Union rulebook. Pete Seeger put the tune to it.)



That which encourages me to write my own obituary is probably vanity, which functionally exposes a known element of my character -- stubborn independence. Fortunately my self absorbed self has retreated in my seniority as I am increasingly required to release control to a team of thoughtful caretakers.

Seventy-six years is pretty good endurance since as a child I thought 50 was old and 60 was certainly the end. Furthermore I have fulfilled an inspiration that occurred at 15 years of age upon hearing Pete Seeger sing:

*How do I know my youth is all spent?
 My get up and go has gone up and went.
 In spite of it all I'm able to grin
 And think of the places my get up has been.*

Two instant & lasting inspirations:

1) The goal of life is neither happiness nor comfort:

The goal is fulfillment.

2) An eschatological (end times) philosophy: When making decisions imagine reflecting back from final days able to say **“I chose the right places to be.”**

In my final days I feel the fullness and I am thankful for the places my get-up has chosen to be.

These “places” have included numerous brother and sister comrades-in-mischief, the caring of several loving partners (Carolyn Runes, Lynne Simcox, Annie Boudreau, Allison Luterman, Karen Mallory, Ester Centers & Karen Shaffer), my loving sister (Shelley Herting), the challenge and inspiration of four children (Kevin Schultz, MaKa-Wa Alexander, Benjamin Fitch, Daniel Robert Jaxon Ravens) and three grandchildren (Lukas Schultz, Simon Fitch, Camellia Alexander).

To these intimates I also apologize. They are aware that I am difficult to live with, certainly eccentric. And some times a cloudy boundary separates my self-serving piety and passionate idealism. Please forgive me for this selfishness and confusion.

My life has been enriched by global travel, and the opportunity to photo document & know leaders and workers of various nonviolent campaigns for social justice. I have been uniquely inspired by engagement with Pete Seeger, the folk musician who walked his song and talk; by Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated leader of the black civil rights movement who reminded all that the scaffold of peace is justice; and by Dorothy Day, journalist, titular parent of the Catholic Worker Movement soon to be canonized by the Roman Catholic Church even though she has vigorously declared, “don’t call me a saint.”

As a folk song writer and sing-along facilitator, I have been especially nourished by labor & political folk music traditions. I’ve had the good fortune to fiscally support myself, family, political activities and photography with a lifetime of employment in various human service occupations including campaign organizing & administration, low income & homeless housing development, military resistance and resistor counseling.

I am surprised yet especially honored that my life concludes with establishment of a physical heritage. Images of many of the fine people and places my “get up has been” are preserved & freely accessible as the Bob Fitch Photo Archive at the Stanford University Libraries: <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/fitch/browse>

Because of it all, I am able to grin! Make mischief!



Bob