

# Marin Independent Journal

## Sausalito woman drawn to helping people of Bali

*By Beth Ashley  
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**Sunday, November 14, 2004** - Marcia Jaffe of Sausalito, a community organizer and events planner, fell in love with Bali and its people on a visit in October 2003.

She wanted to do something to help that flower- and temple-strewn island in Southeast Asia, deserted by the world after a nightclub bombing in 2002.

"The tourist industry on that gorgeous island had been devastated," Jaffe says. "Every restaurant was empty."

To give Bali a voice in the world - and to spread the word about how Balinese people reacted to the bombing, a terrorist act that killed 200 and injured many more - Jaffe and two friends have organized a conference in Ubud from Nov. 30 through Dec. 9 titled "Quest for Global Healing: A Conference for the 21st Century."

Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu of South Africa, author of "No Future Without Forgiveness," will give the keynote speech.

"I thought we needed a world leader to draw people to Bali in spite of their fear," Jaffe says.

Also speaking will be James O'Dea, president of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in Petaluma, visionary author Terry Tempest Williams and Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell.

Discussing Bali's response to the Oct. 12, 2002, bombing will be Dr. Luh Ketuk Suryani, a TV and newspaper commentator, head of the department of psychiatry at Udayana University, and a leading spokesperson on Balinese cultural issues.

"She is a Balinese treasure," Jaffe says.

"I felt that what we needed to do most was to look at what we might have done in the world to cause this to happen to our people," says Suryani, a stately, sari-clad woman who visited Marin last month to help finalize conference plans. "What kind of karma did we have as an island? Maybe we needed to do some cultural introspection."

Jaffe compared this attitude to that of the West, which immediately sought to place blame elsewhere for 9/11 and "not to look at what we have done in the world."

Suryani believes that Bali, in its pursuit of the tourist dollar, has compromised some of its spiritual values. Hotels are being built on holy places. Golf courses and swimming pools have sprung up on sacred sites.

The bombing might well have been the gods' reminder that the easy money of tourism is not everything, Suryani says. "We have land, we have people. We can find other ways to get income," she says.

She wants people to visit Bali for its beauty and culture and spirituality, and to bypass the pollution that commercial tourism has brought - "prostitutes, gigolos and casinos."

"Please don't play golf in Bali," she says. "Don't swim in pools but swim in our ocean. Don't stay in five-star hotels but try to learn about Bali."

Helped by her prodding, the Balinese government apologized to the world for the bombings, flew the national flag at half staff for six weeks and helped pay for plane flights home when frightened tourists began to flee.

As a psychiatrist, Suryani took to the streets and tried to help the traumatized. She continues to hold weekly public meditations, attended by 200 to 300 people of all ages, with soul-searching as the primary purpose.

"We ask the Balinese people to change themselves before they ask other people to change," Suryani says.

On her 2003 trip to Bali, Jaffe was touched by Suryani's voice and began planning the conference as a way to bring Bali and the West together in deep dialogue and discussion.

"Both Bali and the U.S. had endured major attacks on their homelands," she says. "What a unique opportunity to come together and learn from each other about how to move forward from these events."

She teamed with two friends, Carole Angermeier, founder and CEO of Cross Cultural Journeys, a travel company based in Sausalito, and her husband Wilford Welch, a former U.S. diplomat in Asia and founder of the Emerging Young Global Leaders program.

"This is a wonderful use of my skills and talents as well as those of my two partners," Jaffe says.

She found several sponsors, including the World Affairs Council and the Noetic Sciences Institute, and inviegled grants from several sources, including herself: "I refinanced my house to put money into this."

In addition to the internationally known speakers, the conference will include Balinese academics, artists and musicians, cultural programs and tours. "Bali has much to share about how to heal, forgive and to live harmoniously with other people and the earth," Jaffe says.

The organizers have invited emerging young global leaders to come as guests of the conference, as well as women activists from Indonesia who are grantees of the Global Fund for Women, based in San Francisco. They will provide 100 scholarships for Balinese to attend and have signed 17 westerners and 17 Balinese to co-lead small dialogue groups.

Jaffe and Suryani are talking now about founding a permanent institute in Bali, and plan to hold three Global Healing conferences in the next few years.

"We're trying to generate a new energy for empowering people to change the world," says Jaffe. She laughs and adds "Something small like that."

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