

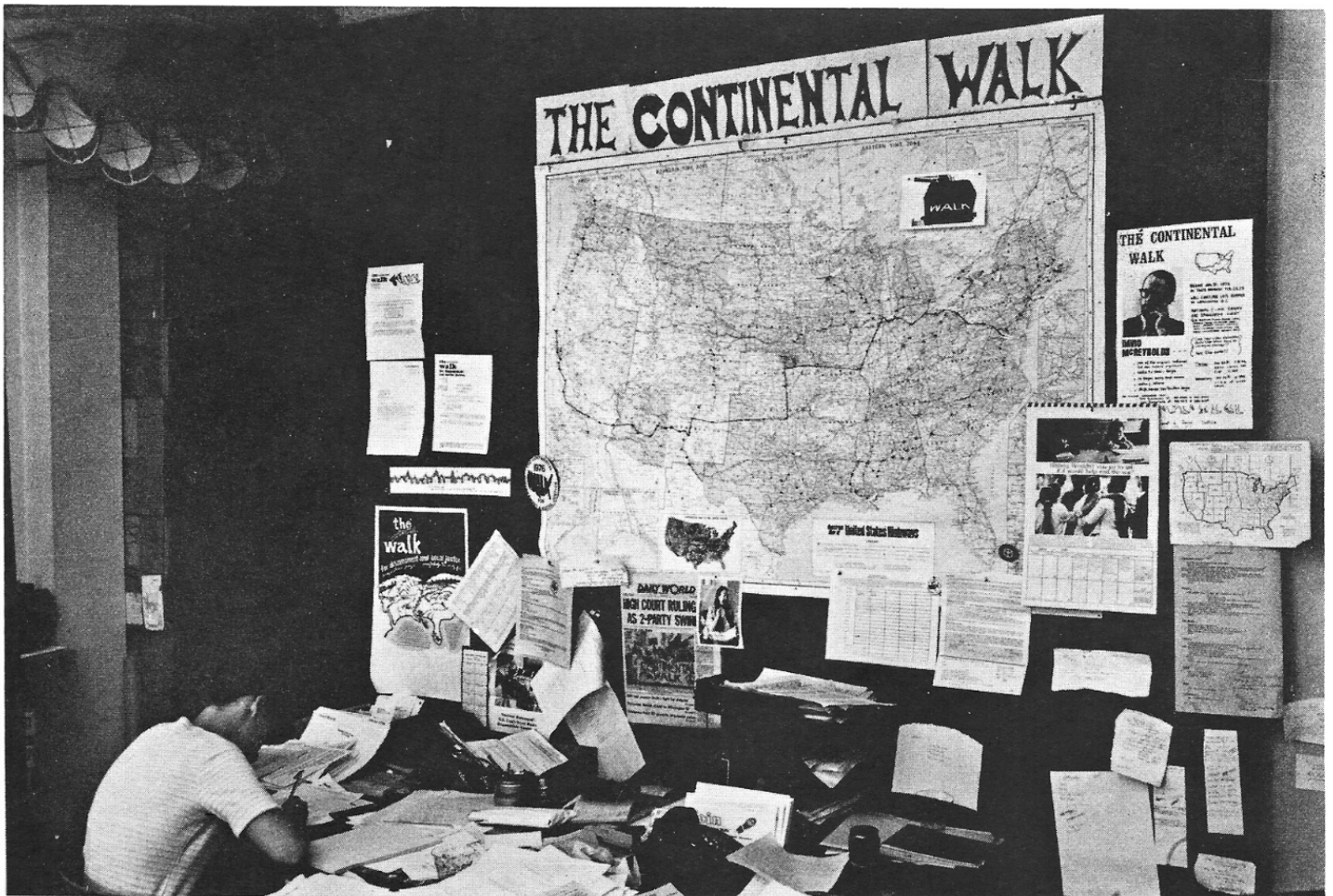
Organizing

Eighteen months and more spent organizing for the Continental Walk: months of moments that were alternately exhilarating, frustrating, hilarious, painful and satisfying. There were times when, peering out of the grey windows of 339 Lafayette Street to the muddy assemblage of factory buildings, local alcoholics, Jesus freaks, and streaking traffic, the Walk seemed a phantom thing. Many of the smiling faces in this book belong to Walk organizers from all over the country who finally got out of the office and onto the road. For it was in walking that one finally realized that one's energies were really coming to something; that the outreach the Walk was effecting in rural communities, especially, was amazing and important. For all of us on the national office staff, walking was the best part and no one ever wanted to come home from the road. But it was necessary to do that work, we knew, and we always did come back. Organizing was the behind-the-scenes backbone of the Walk. Sometimes that was hard for us to remember as we sat swamped with T-shirt orders,

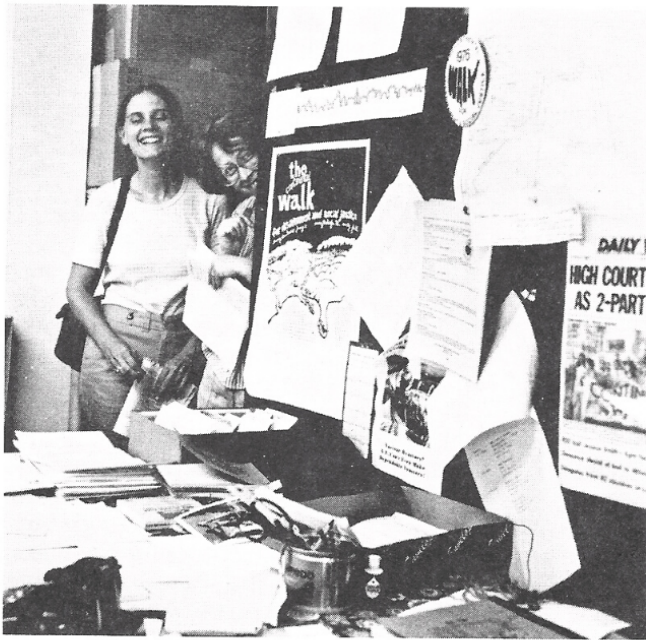
press releases, and bills. But the small notes of support and appreciation from people in places as far away as Hawaii and South America and the never ending flow of local media coverage helped us to maintain the energy necessary to keep things going.

Throughout the fall and into January, as Walk organizers in New York scrambled to ready Organizer's Manuals, Walk Calls, and background papers, The War Resisters League West office in San Francisco struggled to get the Walk off to a good start, getting out pounds of literature, contacting speakers, arranging routes, permits and rally sites, and working with the long distance walkers. As California organizers ushered the Western route of the Walk out of their state, national Walk office organizers were only beginning their second long year of organizing. Coordinating all of the routes, producing and printing thousands of leaflets, background papers, posters and bumperstickers, as well as the more or less bi-weekly *Walk News*, answering phones and correspondence, raising the necessary funds to keep the

The Continental Walk national office. The map indicated all of the Walk routes and dates when walkers would arrive in key cities.



Ed Hedemann



Vickie Leonard and Grace Hedemann amid the clutter.

Ed Hedemann

Walk going, trying to drum up some national media coverage, keeping *WIN* Magazine up to date on Walk events, and preparing for Washington, D.C. events was nothing less than a monumental task for a staff that averaged four and included at various times during the year: Larry Erickson, Rick Gaumer, Ed Hedemann, Paul Hopkins, Joe LaPenne, Vickie Leonard, Tom MacLean, Blaine Metcalf, Maureen O'Donnell, Joanne Sheehan, Jim Tindall and George Worthington. And the help of WRL staff Ralph DiGia, Grace Hedemann, Dave McReynolds, and Jim Peck.

One of the first big organizing events to occur after the Walk started was a meeting of New England folk interested in feeder routes from their area. Hartford, Connecticut was the site for the New England Continental Walk Conference on January 31, the day the Walk left San Francisco. The conference featured a day full of workshops and panel discussions, a keynote address by Seymour Melman, music, a film on "The San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace," an evening rally, and a telephone hook-up with the San Francisco rally. This conference, attended by 200 people, provided a great stimulus to New England Walk activities.

Two major training sessions for long distance walkers occurred; one in California before the Western route started for long distance walkers on that route, and another for east coast long distance walkers that took place in July at the Committee for Non-Violent Action in Connecticut.

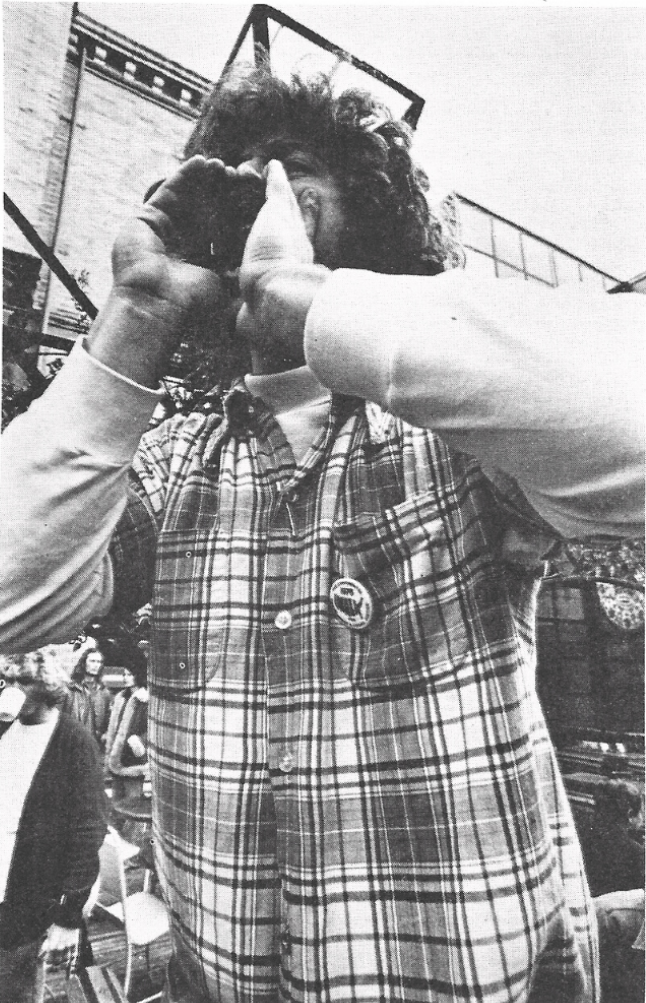
In June, organizers from all over the country and some long distance walkers from the Western route came together for a meeting in Chicago to discuss fundraising, organizing in the eastern half of the country, follow-up for areas of the country that the Walk had already passed through, Washington, D.C. events and effective tools and skills for community outreach. The meeting was an opportunity for organizers from around the country to be in touch with each other as well as with the national office. Organizers who had made contact with each other over long distances concerning Walk connections enjoyed the chance to get to know each other better. The national office learned what local organizers needed from them and also received important input on Washington, D.C. events.

In August, national Walk office staff planned a Walk benefit at the Village Gate in New York and were hoping to raise much needed funds for the Walk. Unfortunately, the weather refused to cooperate, and New York had its first hurricane in decades. It was a warm intimate evening for the 25 or so staunch Walk supporters who showed.

In early September, national office staff helped organize a street fair in New York's Greenwich Village. It was a resounding success and raised \$3,000 for the local New York Walk Committee and for the national office.

Also in September, Pat Lacefield, one of the main Walk organizers in Missouri, went to Washington to begin to organize the final days of the Walk in D.C. Gradually the New York office, except for a core staff of Joanne, Rick, Maureen and George, moved down to Washington to work on publicity, buses, outreach to the local Washington community (including col-

Joe Bradley



John Cohn, Santa Cruz organizer.

leges and churches), permits, speakers, props and the general logistics of getting the three entering routes to the Lincoln Memorial at the same time. Grace Hedemann of WRL joined the Washington staff to work on the media and Sandy Spieler from the Powderhorn Puppet Theater in Minneapolis joined the staff to work on props, banners and puppets. Pat and New York folks were joined by walkers Debbie Brown, Chuck Pierson, Tom MacLean, and H. Beyne Pietrusiewicz. Local Washington folk John Cort, John Cohn, Mark Looney, Nancy Williams and Dave Fleischmann joined the staff and along with innumerable volunteers were an invaluable help in maintaining the high level of activity necessary to prepare for the Walk's arrival in Washington. Without them we would have been, undoubtedly, lost. Their good humor and fresh energy were in large part responsible for the success of the Walk's end in Washington. For the last week of organizing there was a final influx of supporters from several sponsoring organizations: David McReynolds, Ralph DiGia, William Douthard, Carol Patti, all of WRL; Mike Jendrzeczyk of FOR; and Gail Pressberg of the AFSC. Priscilla Lippincott and Bill Moyer from MNS also came down to coordinate the marshals. As the Walk arrived at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, all that work suddenly seemed very worthwhile!

Organizing also meant cleaning up loose ends such as the Walk debt and the Walk office. The office continued to maintain a staff until January, 1977, when, finally, the work was over. It was time for new things.



J. C. Stockwell

Long distance walker training session, San Francisco.



Grace Hedemann

The Continental Walk contingent of the July 4th Coalition's Parade.



Ed Hedemann

Organizers at June meeting in Chicago.



J. C. Stockwell

WRL West organizers Ann Gonski, Scott Ullman, and Steve Ladd, with walker Tom MacLean (second from left).