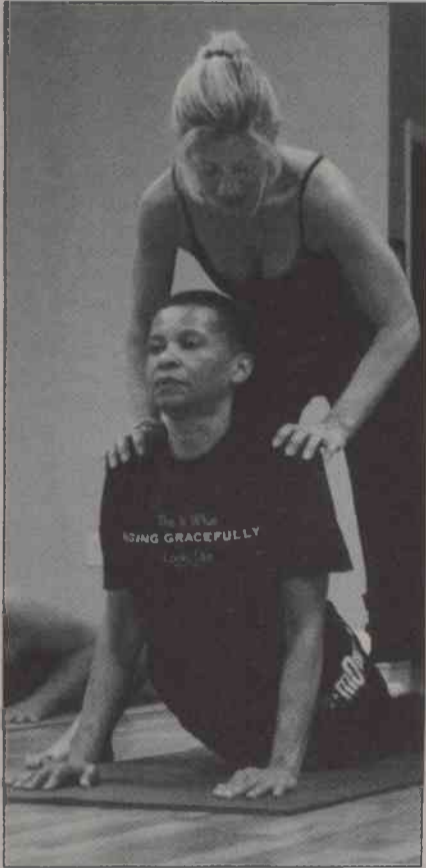


# Om Shanti offers students peace and discounts



Lauren Townsend  
Reporter

Susan Hearn is a mom, registered nurse, chef and has her M.B.A. But owning Om Shanti yoga studio and teaching yoga there is what grounds her and keeps her calm.

Hearn said she has always had an interest in health and fitness. She originally went to school to become a nurse and taught exercise classes while in college. After obtaining her



HEATHER CASSANO | Staff Photographer

Om Shanti yoga instructor and owner Susan Hearn helps students with their poses.

M.B.A., she started managing a gym and continued teaching.

While teaching classes she was in great shape because she spent so much time exercising. People asked her how they could look the same way and she grew tired of them looking for quick answers.

"They asked what pill they could take," she said. "They weren't willing to make a change in their lifestyle."

She started doing yoga and said she had an amazing experience in her first teaching class. Eventually, she opened a yoga studio in Ohio where she lived at the time. When Hearn moved to Burlington, she met her current business partner, Mary Faucette, who works for Burlington Parks and Recreation. They opened Om Shanti in Holly Center on Huffman Mill Road in May 2009.

Hearn highly recommends yoga for Elon University students. In addition to her classes being a great workout that focuses on strength, endurance, balance and flexibility, she said yoga also works to improve focus. Yoga is about being in the present moment, which helps relieve stress.

Om Shanti has a class for every student's experience level in yoga, according to Hearn.

"There are modifications to every pose," Hearn said. "If you're not comfortable, you do something else."

Hearn recommends that students come willing to be uncomfortable at first. Eventually, the body will figure it out and all of Om Shanti's instructors are certified to help their students figure out what they can do.

"Once you build a yoga practice you can find more peace in your life," she said.

Om Shanti regular Mark T. Murray makes the effort to come to Burlington from Greensboro on Saturdays. Murray has been doing yoga for two years. He has practiced yoga in many different parts of the world, but Om Shanti remains his favorite.

"This is the best one in the whole world, so it's worth the trek," he said.

Hearn takes a yoga class once a week at other studios in the Triad area to bring new techniques back to her own studio, and see what other studios are doing.

Om Shanti sees several Elon students and Elon faculty. The first class is always free and Elon students receive a 25 percent discount for the rest of their classes. The studio's schedule can be found on omshanti.org.

The studio offers a "gratitude class" each quarter as its way of giving back to the community. The gratitude class is free at 4 p.m. on Oct. 17, and there will be a snack included. They also offer a cooking class and a meditation class quarterly.

# North American tour raises awareness of successful social justice organizations:

## Community and Resistance tour stops in Greensboro

Marlena Chertock  
Design Editor

On the night of Sept. 30, students from Elon University, Guilford College and UNC Greensboro and local social justice activists gathered in a community center in Greensboro to hear two traveling social justice organizers speak.

The discussion by two participants of the Community and Resistance Tour, which works to raise awareness of social justice organizations' successes, was held in the Hive, which serves as an office and event space for several Greensboro social justice organizers.

The tour started in August and has visited 65 cities in 80 days. It will continue through mid-December, according to Vikki Law, one of the tour's main speakers.

"We've been doing a city a day," Law said. "In the past week we've gone from Milwaukee to Atlanta and up to the Durham/Greensboro area."

The other speaker, Jordan Flaherty, explained the tour's goal.

"The idea is we want to spread stories of people coming together, the ways in which people have actually been successful," Flaherty said. "We know the problems, but there is not a lot of talk of what solutions are."

Law agreed with Flaherty.

"We're trying to share stories of social justice struggles and also the victories," she said. "We don't, as a movement, savor our victories."

The mission is to spread and multiply the success, according to Flaherty.

"Hopefully we'll inspire people to document and share these stories of resistance," Law said. "It shouldn't just be a handful of people. It should be spontaneity, people rising up together, solidarity."

Law got involved in social justice work while researching women's prisons. She said most of the information she found was about what male prisoners were doing to resist.

"I started asking around, 'What are women doing?'" Law said. "The answer flabbergasted me. People told me women in prison aren't resisting, aren't organizing. I said this can't be true."

She said she researched more and found that women prisoners actually do organize, but there are efforts to silence them. The women prisoners organized most strongly against sexual abuse in prisons, according to Law.

Law gave several examples of women prisoners driving their guards out and demanding better living and working conditions, demanding to be treated as humans. Many women prisoners would scream at the guards to leave a fellow inmate's cell, Law said.

Law described one extreme circumstance where Jordan Little, 18, stabbed a guard to death when he

demanding she perform oral sex on him and threatened her with an ice pick. According to Law, many of these events happened in North Carolina women's prisons.

"These women prisoner stories connect people on the outside," Law said. "People start to see what was going on on the outside was exacerbated inside (the prison). Prisons are these exaggerated mirrors of what we're fighting on the outside."

Flaherty got involved in this kind of work when he lived in New Orleans.

"If you look at New Orleans in the last five years, it faced all these bigger issues on hyperspeed," he said, referring to the area post-Katrina.

Flaherty explained how the infrastructure collapsed. Teachers were fired overnight, the public hospital closed, the housing and health care system weren't functioning and the first city function to restart was a prison.

"Every single check and balance in the city failed us," he said.

Police brutality became extreme and the police officers would plant evidence and hold secret meetings to rewrite stories, Flaherty said. The media, coroner and government failed to investigate crimes and lawyers weren't representing their clients, he said.

Katie Yow, a community organizer in Greensboro, is one of the local organizers for the tour. She helped bring Flaherty and Law to Greensboro.

"Creating spaces to share work, history, stories and ideas between movements and between communities is a vital part of building our own communities' work, and building strength with each other on a national level," Yow said.

Elon's chapter of Students for Peace and Justice attended the Greensboro stop of the tour. SFPJ president junior Claire Healy explained why the group attended.

"The tour will educate SFPJ members on social issues and the tools of activism, allowing us to build upon our methods of making change at Elon," Healy said. "I also expect it will provide inspiration and momentum for our campaigns this semester."

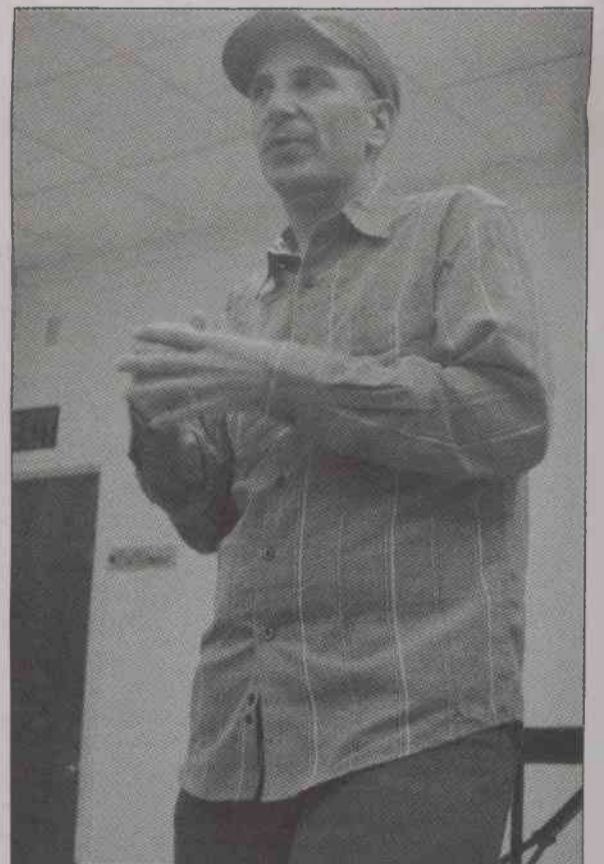
Healy said she believes it is crucial for SFPJ to make connections to communities and organizations like those in Greensboro because they are actively promoting peace and justice.

Law gave a helpful way to look at social justice work. She said there are intersections between different issues that should be looked at.

"Don't have to take on whole other social justice issues," she said. "These struggles aren't all these separate things in a vacuum. They are all larger struggles."

Flaherty suggested bringing local social justice organizations together once a month to eat. He proposed an organizer's roundtable, a place and chance for people to share what they're doing, he said.

Law said it has to be seen as a process.



MARLENA CHERTOCK | Photographer  
Jordan Flaherty, one of the tour's speakers, discussed police brutality he witnessed in New Orleans in the months after Katrina. He spoke of people in the city resisting.

"You're not going to build these ties overnight," she said.

Law also talked about having children grow up learning about social justice as a way to build a nationwide movement.

Law explained how the Zapatistas in Mexico inspired her. The Zapatistas are a revolutionary group, formed in 1994, who work nonviolently for equality and solutions to poverty. She said they would hold discussions while their children would run in and out of the meetings.

"So the children would grow up in the movement, with dialogues and conversations about social justice," she said.

She called this learning by osmosis.

Law said Greensboro has so many families involved in social justice. The social justice community should support the families, so both kids and parents can be involved, she said.