



The Peace Letter

Washington Peace Center

Spring/Summer 2009

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When I was in Iraq

by Laurel Elmer

Although I did not support the U.S. invasion in 2003, and have mourned our squandered international reputation since, I was asked to consider an assignment in Iraq soon after the formation of Iraq's new government in May 2006, as a Senior Policy Advisor for a government rehabilitation and training program administered through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). At that time, there was a glimmer of hope that the new government would be able to stem the tide of a growing insurgency and possible civil war. I was personally heartened that USAID was being given a chance to weigh in on the development challenges facing the new Iraqi government, since reconstruction efforts until then were primarily carried out by the coalition forces, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and highly paid contractors with management oversight from the State Department's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO). Thanks to one journalist's searing expose of the first year of the occupation (*Imperial Life in the Emerald City* by Rajiv Chandrasekaran), we now know that the only qualifications needed for joining IRMO's workforce were support for Bush policy and the guts to work in Iraq. I

imagined my recent work in Vietnam on a public sector reform program would have some interesting parallels to the challenges of overhauling Saddam's bureaucratic legacy. Given my presence at numerous anti-war demonstrations over the years and a few youthful indiscretions, I was surprised to get a security clearance and I decided to accept the assignment...to see for myself.

After a two-week anti-terrorist training program and assurances of safe harbor in the Green Zone, I headed to Baghdad hoping to help build the peace. With two other team members, our goal was to establish working relations with a government training center as a potential host country partner for USAID's National Capacity Development Program. A secondary objective was to assess the center's current capacities to deliver in-service training in modern management practices for senior government officials. Little did I know that "establishing working relations" with Iraqi counterparts would be nearly impossible given the rapidly escalating violence in Baghdad, a total collapse of public services, and a broken bureaucracy and 1.9 million civil servants who were on the payroll but nowhere to be found.

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ONE D.C. Puts Power Back in Community

by Ryan Olander



ONE D.C.'s office is filled with posters celebrating people's struggles around the world, from Spain to the U.S. There, I met Rosemary Ndubizu and Dominic T. Moulden, two organizers with impressive community empowerment credentials. Here are some highlights from our conversation:



WPC hit the streets on Inauguration!
Read all about it on page 2!

Dominic Moulden on the effects of the new Obama administration on the work of ONE DC:

"We're not sure how much organizing strength we have, right now... In our dream world we would want a new economic system, that's not called capitalism, that focuses on economic democracy. If we keep working with the residents that ONE D.C. staff are organizing and if the members keep pushing themselves

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Barack Hussein Obama

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All You Need
To Know
About Peak Oil

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The Washington Peace Center is a non-profit, anti-racist, multi-issue peace and justice organization committed to nonviolent social change. The Peace Center serves as a clearinghouse and resource center and has provided peace education and action in the Metropolitan area since 1963. We are supported by the generous contributions of our readers and members.

The *Washington Peace Letter* (ISSN 1050-2823) is published for the social justice community of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. Its purpose is to support local, national, and international struggles against oppression. It seeks to present radical analysis of current events, covering information not readily available in the corporate media.

The *Peace Letter* welcomes submissions of articles, announcements, letters to the editor and artwork from the progressive community. Articles may be from 300 to 1,200 words, but may be edited for space considerations. Preference is given to coverage of actions or campaigns being organized in the D.C. area. We reserve the right to select or reject all submissions.

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From the Coordinators

Hello Peace Letter readers!!

So much news: for starters, a new campaign is in the air! You know and love the Peace Center for being involved in innumerable local and national issues. We've got our hands in just about everything we can manage to support, and while this is a continuing asset, we have used the winter to look for focus, something out of which we can build clear, concrete change. New board members and new partnerships have inspired us here on the ground to take on a new campaign, hopefully with your help!

This year, the Peace Center will pour our energy into GI Resistance work in D.C. We are working with the D.C. chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War on a campaign to do outreach to active duty soldiers, an effort going on in cities across the country. We will be doing trainings, educational events and traditional outreach to grow the GI resistance movement in this area, and provide civilians with a tangible and essential way to be involved. Along with D.C. IVAW, we will be working with the another group called DCOI (Directly Confronting the Occupation of Iraq), who has done really impressive work over the past few years as civilian allies of IVAW and can provide training and expertise to Peace Center members wishing to get involved.

This campaign is a major opportunity to build the GI Resistance movement in D.C. We need you, your time, your communities, and your money to make this happen! Check our website for updates on the campaign and how YOU can get involved and help create the world in which we want to be living.

Help the Peace Center survive the economic collapse! For this important campaign to succeed we need to increase our fundraising in a year where everyone is feeling a pinch. We remain independent of foundations and rely on the generosity of individual members like you - please use the enclosed envelope to donate today and help us sustain this great work!

-Virginia Leavell and Sonia Silbert

**Thank you to Paul, Ryan, and Maggie,
our dedicated, unfailing volunteers!**

What We've Been Up To:

The Peace Center has been a busy force for peace in the last few months! After a wonderful Activist Awards Gala in December, we dove right into leading the actions of the Activist Coalition of D.C. for Inauguration Day. We led a coalition of peace and justice groups to create a progressive presence at the Inauguration.

We printed up thousands of signs that read "Mr. President, I hope for ____" and invited the crowds to fill them in with their own wishes for the Obama administration. We handed out flyers and directed sign-holders to a website full of resources to get involved in and build the peace and justice movement and turn all that hope into action.

People loved our signs - they were a huge success. We literally heard the conversations we were hoping there would be - a mother saying to her kid "I don't know, honey, what do YOU want the President to do?" Everyone was thrilled for an opportunity to really think about the future and what they would do to create it.

We got some great media, including a mention in Maureen Dowd's column in the NY Times. You can see the inspiring signs here: www.WeHopeforChange.org. And, most of all, get involved with the Peace Center or another great group to turn our hopes into action!



photo by Ryan Olander

Your coordinators, Virginia and Sonia, bid a not-so-fond farewell to *W* on 1/20/09



What it Means to be Strong

An interview with Stephen
Glaude of Men Can Stop Rape

by Paul Blasenheim

As a new era in politics is ushered in with President Obama, Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR), an international non-profit group based in D.C., is feeling hopeful. Dedicated to creating cultures free from violence, MCSR has a national conference coming up in April, along with many campus trainings and benefit concerts. MCSR also hopes to take its message to a larger international audience as well as men of more diverse ages.

Recently, I spoke with Stephen Glaude, President and CEO of MCSR, about plans for the coming year.

Paul Blasenheim: What main goals and strategies has MCSR developed over the years?

Stephen Glaude: In general, the goal of MCSR is to create global cultures free from violence. We get young men to understand that true strength comes from care, truth, and justice, not the classic "machismo" image. We engage with them directly to allow them to see what real strength is.

PB: President Obama has lifted the Global Gag Rule, which banned all international funding to groups who endorse abortions, and also agreed to fund Planned Parenthood organizations at a greater capacity. In general, how do you think the new administration will affect MCSR?

SG: I truly believe this new president understands the connection between healthy education and healthy adolescents. Obama has made it clear he intends to rebuild our education systems, and our schools. When a school's roof is leaking, and half the kids don't show up every day, it's hard to think about having a group come in to talk about violence against women.

ONE DC, continued from page 1

harder we might be able to get something out of their urban policy program, particularly long-term affordable housing..."

"Let's listen to the communities and have them identify the systemic issues and then let's apply resources to alleviate those problems."

Dominic Moulden on the media:

The myth that is bred in media is "the working class and ethnic minority are not working hard and the solution is to take their money away and remove the people because 'they don't work.' ... Gentrification is deemed necessary, through the vilification of the poor in the media."

"In our dream world we would want a new economic system... that focuses on economic democracy,"

Rosemary Ndubuizu on the difficulties of working to combat gentrification:

"Instead of a systemic analysis of the problems facing the working class, [poor people's] communities are demonized and members of these communities internalize this hatred."

"This not only affects people's sense of self-worth, but is also very isolating. The aim of ONE D.C. is to let people know they have comrades and to push their solidarity past empathy towards something substantive, deep and organic."

The mission of ONE D.C. is to exercise political strength to create and preserve racial and economic equity in Shaw and the District.
www.onedconline.org

PB: You have been involved in community organizing on many different levels for many years. Has your time with MCSR changed your own thoughts about male strength?

SG: I can say that this is the best work I have ever done. I see the nearly limitless potential for MCSR to truly engage the youth of this country, and I see the necessity for work like ours in creating social justice. This work has absolutely changed me. I had to rewind 53 years worth of knowledge of what it meant for me to be manly. When I was young, my favorite cartoon was 'Popeye.' They would have the scene where Popeye and Brutus would be fighting over Olive Oil, and they would each grab one of her arms, and she would stretch way out as they fought over her. When you're a six year-old kid, that's funny. But I see now what that really says is that women are objects, and can't make their own choices. These days, I wonder if Olive Oil even wanted either one of them.

If you would like to get involved with the work of Men Can Stop Rape, attend or request an event, or donate to the cause, visit www.mencanstoprape.org. Newcomers and volunteers are always welcome!

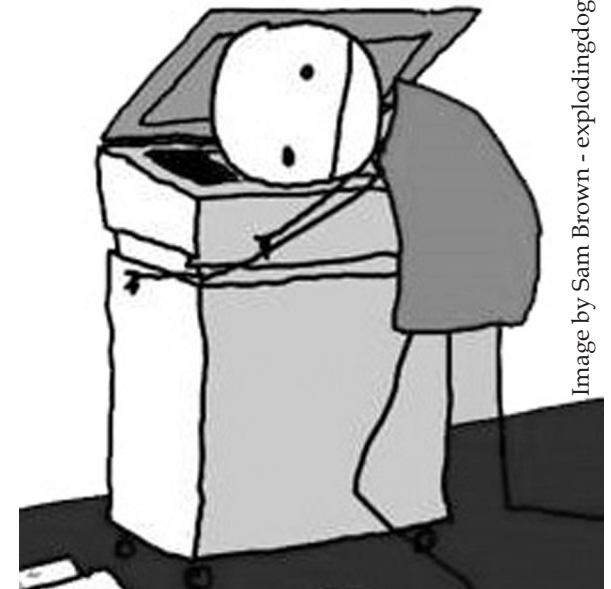


Image by Sam Brown - explodingdog.com

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Drawing by Jane Claire

Dear President-Elect Barack Hussein Obama

Last night, when Bent and I emerged from the Columbia Heights Metro elevator to head home to pick up records for our election show, it hit me that the fact of you becoming the President of the United States was inevitable. And that broke me down. I never thought I'd ever live to see our country led by anybody that didn't look like those that have been minions to this power structure that has time and time again suppressed us. When Bent and I started hearing the exuberant yelling, it became clear that this was going to happen.

I couldn't do anything but scream your name at the top of my lungs with the dozens of other people outside that were also making the same realization. I was so overwhelmed with tears that I couldn't hold myself up at one point because I couldn't wrap my head around the idea of not only a black president but a black

president that could possibly inspire agency amongst people. Someone that had the background that could shape our lives for the better despite the hard road this country is set to follow. I didn't realize how much the Bush administration had strangled a part of my soul until my wounded yelling of your name would not cease. I didn't realize how your election to this seat of power meant something, something that I needed to restore my belief in people. Because everywhere we went people took to the streets: dancing, crying, smiling ear to ear, screaming, setting off fireworks, hugging strangers, shaking hands with strangers, showing the best sides of themselves.

Usually the idea of unity seems corny if not naive. And usually the idea of unity comes after something tragic and it often signifies that to be unified, you can't question. But I didn't feel any of that last night. I just felt a lot of hope. Don't

get me wrong, I was never one of your great supporters. I didn't door knock for you. I didn't vote for you [because of citizenship issues, but I probably would've voted for Cynthia McKinney]. I never contributed money to your campaign. My deep critiques of the state apparatus, the electoral process, and the U.S. as a irresponsible global mega power shaped my attitude towards the election. And over the next four years, I'm going to make some critiques--hopefully constructive--concerning your presidential actions. But with all of that said and done, you really inspired me, you gave me more uplift man than any person in higher office has ever done and I thank you for that. I look forward to seeing what you do in the next 4 years. It's going to be so hard for you but if you can continue to find ways to maintain the spirit that I saw the night of November 4, 2008--I will keep the faith that the people in this country can stop surviving and start building communities that rely on each other out of respect of differences and love for each other.

Peace from your Kenyan Compatriot,
Metro Secrets

D.C. Medical Clinic of the Spanish Catholic Center Accepting D.C. Health Care Alliance

The Spanish Catholic Center (Centro Católico Hispano) at 1618 Monroe St. NW has served the Hispanic population since 1997. Since its opening, the center has served 7,000 patients. It has recently begun to accept a greater percentage of patients insured with D.C.'s public health insurance, D.C. Health Care Alliance.

In addition to dental and medical health services primarily for uninsured Spanish-speakers, the community center also offers a wide range of social services. From legal and immigration consultations to job training courses in construction apprenticeship, resume building, computer and English classes, the center strives to provide comprehensive human services.

To better serve its Maryland residents, SCC has a medical clinic in Langley Park, and an additional dental clinic Montgomery County.

For more information,
call 202-939-2400



William Thomas at his vigil, Photo by Emma Thomas

Remembering William "Doubting" Thomas

March 20, 1947 - January 23, 2009

by Paul Blasenheim

William ("Doubting") Thomas, 61, a self-educated pacifist and dogged practitioner of the First Amendment whose Peace Park Anti-Nuclear Vigil was a continued presence for nearly 28 years in front of the White House, died January 23. He had pulmonary disease.

Starting on June 3, 1981, the stout believer in nonviolent solutions to international disputes endured blizzards, downpours, heat waves, rats, dozens of arrests, a prosecution by Kenneth Starr, jailings, surveillance by ready-to-shoot Secret Service agents, beratings by a judge who wanted to "deter others from adopting your lifestyle," verbal assaults by tourists who saw his anti-nuke signs as an eyesore detracting from the majesty of the White House, and writers who dismissed him as a First Amendment zealot.

Still he stayed.

Thomas's vigil is the longest uninterrupted anti-war protest in U.S. history.

When students in my peace studies classes at School Without Walls needed an airing out, which was just about every week, I walked them five blocks to the vigil for a living lesson in purebred dissent. The students revered Thomas, savoring his conversational stories of dropping out of high school so he could read self-chosen, not teacher-imposed, books in the reading room of the New York public library, the

time he walked 2,500 miles across North Africa to learn Muslim culture experientially, his accounts of being arrested but seldom convicted of breaking laws against camping in Lafayette Park.

Politically canny, Mr. Thomas was one of the driving forces in the early 1990's of Proposition One, a ballot initiative calling for nuclear disarmament that was approved by 57% of District of Columbia voters. Eight times since, Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton has introduced similar legislation in Congress, "The Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act." The bill has yet to move out of committee, more a commentary on Congress than Thomas.

In a moment of introspection, Mr. Thomas

wrote in May 1996 that he occasionally "questioned the practicality of my vigil. Figuring that it is more realistic for me to try to keep the world from changing me than for me to try changing the world...I've decided to continue my vigil until I'm shown something better to do."

He was never shown.

Join us for the William Thomas Commemoration and Anti-Nuclear Peace Demonstration Friday, March 20 (Thomas's birthday): 12-8pm: ceremony, memories, music. Sunday, March 22: 11am-2pm, Lafayette (Peace) Park, in front of the White House

Looking Forward in a New Administration

A talk with Mackenzie Baris, Lead

by Ryan Olander

Jobs with Justice (JwJ) is a coalition of labor organizations, community groups, religious organizations and student groups dedicated to protecting the rights of working people and supporting community struggles to build a more just society. Nationally there are now 40 active chapters across the country. The D.C. chapter was founded in 2001. With a new administration in the White House promising, I discussed what Mackenzie with JwJ predicted:

RO: What does D.C. Jobs with Justice want from the new Obama Administration?

MB: Oh, so many things. I really want to see a strengthening of workers' rights and immigrants' rights, and comprehensive immigration reform. I also want to see the government stop pumping money into Wall Street institutions and instead put it into building infrastructure at a grassroots level, and to support programs that will help people get back to work rebuilding our local communities and cutting back our energy dependence.

RO: Could you discuss the Obama administration stance and influence on right-to-work through the Employee Free Choice Act?

MB: I actually don't think right-to-work will

be a big priority for Obama as the states set this policy, but what I do see him being able to do is encouraging the passage of the Free Choice Act and signing that, which he has promised he would do. That would make it a lot easier for workers to form unions and have real penalties for employer. who violate workers' rights when they do.

RO: What do you expect from the Obama administration?

MB: I don't expect he'll do anything unless there is a popular movement behind it. We talk about the New Deal and all the wonderful things FDR did, but he did that with the labor movement pushing an eight-hour day and child labor standards and poor peoples' movements making it possible for him to make all the big changes he did. Already, Obama is hearing from the Chamber of Commerce and others who are pushing in the opposite direction of our interests, and he's going to try to balance those interests like anyone in his position would do. And so we need to do our organizing well and create a broad popular movement for the things we want and make it possible for him.

RO: What strategies does the left need to employ to bring about these changes?

MB: We need to work with communities around the nation to coordinate actions. It is promising that in the wake of the financial crisis there has been coordination on how to have an impact as to how the bail-out works and opposing certain kinds of handouts. We need to build our movement at a local level and advocate for change not just nationally, but also on state and local levels. Then we need to coordinate around some of the big things we want at a national level and push for them together.



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The Madness of King Fenty

Everyone seems to be facing hard times. Housing foreclosures are on the rise, wages have fallen, jobs are disappearing, health care is unaffordable, and food prices continue to rise. It's hard to know what the future holds for residents of the nation's capital. We need more than slogans and empty promises of change from the city's leadership to feed our children and keep the creditors away. Since taking office, Mayor Adrian Fenty has yet to fulfill any of his campaign promises for better schools, increased public services, safer streets, and affordable housing for our senior, low income, and homeless populations.

The compassionate, responsible leadership we thought we found in Mayor Fenty has succumbed to opportunistic pressures from wealthy developers, leading to the dismantling of public institutions and the auctioning off of public

property. As is to be expected, the City Council has acquiesced to the strategy of meeting budgetary shortfalls through lucrative real estate deals with the private sector. However, public demonstrations of outrage over the recent closing of Franklin Homeless Shelter suggest that Fenty's honeymoon may be over.

A recent lavish birthday party for Fenty was graciously paid for by some of his wealthier friends. One can only wonder how Fenty might repay such generosity, if not through favors in the bidding process on empty school buildings, firehouses, and libraries that the District needs to sell to compensate for budgetary shortfalls. Moreover, millions of dollars promised for rebuilding the Eastern Market and the Georgetown Library appear to have walked out of the Tax and Revenue Office under the watchful eyes of Jack Evans, Chairman of the Finance Committee, who simultaneously took more than 700 million dollars of public money for a baseball stadium

that was empty most of the season. These examples underscore the need for greater accountability from the city's leadership. While hard fiscal choices will have to be made to balance Fenty's proposed budget, his planned budget cuts will negatively impact the livelihoods of some of the most disadvantaged members of the population, including first-time home buyers, mental health patients, and children with special needs.

This is not the leadership or change in direction we voted for. On the contrary, Fenty's agenda is actively contributing to growing inequalities in our city. Yet, in the face of this adversity, teachers, parents, tenants, and other activists have decided to take a stand, and send a message to Mr. Fenty that our public property is NOT FOR SALE. We are a witness to your behavior. District residents are fed up, sick of the back room deals being made with wealthy property owners. This caving in to corporate masters has to stop! We hope to put an end to the unethical behavior of our elected officials and put the decision on the use of public property back in the hands of the people.

Get involved with the People's Property Campaign with Empower DC at www.empowerdc.org



Borrow our bullhorns and sound systems for your actions! Call to reserve! 202-234-2000



Who's in the President's Cabinet, Anyway?

by Alexis Baden-Mayer

publicly governed school system.

We couldn't help dancing in the streets when regime change finally came to Washington, but we need to balance our celebrations with constructive criticism. Below is a quick review of some of the new cabinet members and nominees, as well as some of the issues they face.

For the full, updated article on appointments, check out the online version of the Peace Letter at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org!

LABOR - HILDA SOLIS - Hilda Solis should be a great Labor Secretary, but she'll need everyone who supports labor rights to mobilize around the Employee Free Choice Act. Since that bill and current labor laws don't adequately protect migrant labor or farm workers, we're going to have to work hard to win those groups basic rights.

ENERGY - STEVEN CHU - Steven Chu is talented and skilled, but his expertise in nuclear power isn't likely to reform an Energy Department that spends 67% of its budget on nuclear weapons. He's also hedged his opposition to coal, caving to "clean coal" propaganda. The positive is that Chu is speaking up for conservation measures like weatherization. The Renewable Resource Program (RRP) would double the production of renewable energy in the next three years, modernize more than 75% of federal buildings and improve the energy efficiency of two million American homes.

EDUCATION - ARNE DUNCAN - Arne Duncan was CEO of Chicago public schools and that's valuable experience, but some of the reforms he implemented were more radical than successful. These included a harsh zero tolerance policy that sends thousands of kids to the criminal justice system each year, and the Renaissance 2010 program, a plan to close "failing" schools and replace them with charter schools managed by for-profit businesses. We cannot allow a school to fail or let a child's education be lost in a "service gap." We need to recommit the country to public education, a tuition-free, publicly funded system that guarantees an education to each child in a neighborhood school within a

EPA - LISA JACKSON - Lisa Jackson led New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, but under her leadership, DEP failed to warn parents of children in a daycare center in a former thermometer factory about mercury exposure, mismanaged hazardous waste sites that had to be picked up by the Bush Administration's EPA, and let water pollution get worse. Obama and the Congress must ensure that Jackson does better at EPA than she did at DEP. The EPA needs to take on climate change with a carbon tax and caps on emissions.

HOMELAND SECURITY - JANET NAPOLITANO - Janet Napolitano is unlikely to change DHS where top concerns (including immigration and drug trafficking) parallel those of Arizona, where she was governor. She vetoed anti-immigrant bills passed by the Arizona legislature, but supported workplace raids on immigrants and deployed National Guard troops to secure Arizona's border. She supported efforts to track weapons smuggling from the U.S. to Mexico (Mexico's drug cartels get more than 90% of their guns from the U.S.) and vetoed extreme pro-gun bills, but she generally opposes new gun restrictions. Napolitano is likely to join Obama in ignoring calls from border-state officials to legalize marijuana as a way to deprive drug cartels of resources.

Read complete article at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org/



Image by Sam Brown

Wanna be a better activist? Contact the Peace Center for all kinds of trainings!!!



1802 Adams Mill Rd. Washington D.C. 20009
CAPITOL HEMP

Would like to thank everyone for their support in our first year!
We are now the largest supplier of Dr. Bronner's in D.C.!

WHY HEMP? Surely no member of the vegetable kingdom has ever been more misunderstood than hemp. For too many years, emotion-not reason has guided our policy toward this crop. And nowhere have emotions run hotter than in the debate over the distinction between industrial hemp and marijuana. From the very first plantings in Jamestown, when it was illegal not to grow hemp, to our founding fathers' hemp plantations, to the hemp sails and rigging of the clipper ships that sailed the 19th century seas, to the hemp canvas-covered wagons of the pioneers headed west, to the sturdy hemp Levi's pants of the original 49ers seeking their fortunes in the California hills, to the massive "Hemp for Victory" government program of WWII, hemp has developed a long and illustrious history in America. In fact, hemp has been used extensively for millennia in cultures around the world and belongs to humanity's common agricultural and commercial heritage.

WHY Dr. BRONNER'S? Because it's unlike any other soap you've ever used! Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps are a combination of coconut, olive, jojoba and hemp oils, that together with pure essential oils, creates a unique soap that cleans effectively without being aggressive and produce a velvety-lather that leaves the skin silky-smooth and refreshed, no really! The over 30,000 words spread across all the soap labels were Dr. Bronner's life work of searching every religion and philosophy for "Full Truths" that can be summed up in two beautiful sentences:
1. CONSTRUCTIVE CAPITALISM IS WHERE YOU SHARE THE PROFIT WITH THE WORKERS AND THE EARTH FROM WHICH YOU MADE IT!
2. WE ARE ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND WE SHOULD TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER AND SPACESHIP EARTH!
Dr. Bronner's is a certified organic fair trade company. They also support Palestinian farmers in the West Bank. They are also huge hemp supporters!

CLIP THIS FLYER
CAPITOL HEMP
OFF ANY DR.
BRONNER'S ITEM
AND GET 20%



Justice for Workers? No Sweat!

by Briana Connors, ILRF

The "sweatfree" movement is growing all across the country, as consumers decide they want to take a stand against corporations that support factories where workers are not allowed to unionize and are working in unsafe conditions. An impressive number of people across the country have come together to demand that their municipalities and state legislatures adopt a sweat-free purchasing policy.

Last year, the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) began the Sweatfree D.C. Schools campaign, which was designed to help students realize how consumerism plays a role in the global economy and affects workers' rights abroad. The Sweatfree D.C. Schools Campaign consists of lessons designed to teach students about international labor conditions

and the uniform supply chain. Ideally, students will work together to educate others and build community support for a sweatfree purchasing policy.

In 1997, New Olmstead, Ohio, became the first city to officially adopt a sweatfree procurement policy, and in 2001 Maine led the way as the first state. Other cities and states such as Albany, Los Angeles, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have followed suit, and now, according to Sweatfree Communities, over 180 school districts, cities, counties, and states have adopted sweat-free procurement policies.

Together, we can work to ensure that the city of D.C. passes a Sweatfree procurement policy. For more information or to get involved in this campaign, please contact Trina Tocco at trina.tocco@ilrf.org.



Photo courtesy of Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network

Further information about city and state sweat-free campaigns can be found at www.sweatfree.org.

PEAK OIL: What does it really mean?

by Maggie Cummings and Matthew Schreiner

Given that world population is growing exponentially, and the planet's resources are finite, we must obviously confront limits to how much we can extract from the environment as well as how much waste we can discard into our ecosystem. Even if we could significantly reduce population growth, industrial development around the world is causing exponential growth in our material needs. Much of the world has historically consumed a tiny fraction of the oil used by the U.S. -- in 2006, India and China used on average less than 10% per capita what we do -- but that inequality has now begun to diminish significantly.

"Peak oil" refers to the moment when world oil production reaches

its highest level.

1970 saw the greatest oil production in the U.S., and production has been tapering off ever since. Current production levels total about five million barrels a day, slightly more than half the 1970 level. Most other countries with oil resources have also passed their peaks and their oil production is declining. There have been efforts to open up more of our coastline to drilling, but, according to the U.S. Geological Service, estimates of what's left to be found suggest we might get two years of U.S. consumption out of it.

Many energy experts and organizations think we have reached peak oil or it is imminent, among them the Association for the Study of Peak Oil; Sadad Al Hussein, former head of Saudi Aramco; Texas oilman T. Boone

Pickens, German research group Energy Watch Group; Matthew Simmons, well-known investment advisor to the oil industry; French oil company Total S.A. But there are also some who argue we're a long way from peak oil. Cambridge Energy Research Associates says oil won't fall off for many decades because there is still much more oil in the ground than has been reported. One big chunk they include in their calculations is shale oil, found in Colorado, but we don't have viable technology to get a net energy return on that yet.

You'll probably soon start to hear a lot of the term "energy returned on energy invested" (ERoEI). There is no point in mining for energy resources if the energy used to mine them is greater than the energy recovered. It has been estimated that when crude was first discovered in Texas and Oklahoma, the ERoEI was 100:1. Today it's closer to 15:1. At some point, as we get closer to 1:1, extracting the oil won't be worth doing. When we talk about Canadian Tar Sands, or

Orinoco (Venezuela) heavy oil, or deep sea Arctic Circle wells, we're heading in the direction of 1:1.

Assuming we're more or less at peak production now, an important question becomes, "Are there other sources of energy available?" As Robert Hirsch wrote in the report "Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, and Risk Management," written at the request of the U.S. Department of Energy in 2005, 20 years would be required to transition to alternative energy sources and a faster transition would only be possible with extraordinary efforts in all sectors.

Efficiency improvements have the lowest cost for energy returned today. But can we, on average, make our transportation 5% more efficient every year over the long term, to track the expected fall-off in oil use? One thing we can all do is improve the insulation in our homes, paying

continued on page 11



IRAQ, continued from page 1

The last leg of the journey was a helicopter ride from Camp Victory near the airport to the Green Zone, where I would be based for three months. The perimeters of this fortified zone are marked by several heavily guarded gates, inside of which lies a network of palaces amidst palm groves and interconnected by meandering canals, fishing ponds, and once grand gardens. The presidential palace served as headquarters for the US government-led Operation Iraqi Freedom from the first days of the invasion until just a few months ago when the most expensive U.S. Embassy in the world opened for business. Other buildings in the Zone provided refuge for coalition partners and most of the new Iraqi Government. The USAID compound is small and quaint, well-fortified, and convenient. From my seat in a barricaded trailer, I had a view of the pilazza garden, centered on a small palm grove and framed by a row of USAID VIP houses on one side and by the Palm Tree Café on the other—a happy and lively social space. When not in the office across the road, I could be found at my laptop ducking in and out of the café for cool drinks and delicious meals prepared by a French chef and delivered by a team of South Asians. Excuse me, but where were we?

Travel within the Zone was limited to the Palace recreation facilities, the Post Exchange and several souvenir markets, a masseuse, the Liberty Pool adjacent to the USAID compound, and the El Rasheed hotel for a coffee or chat with one of the few remaining shop owners. All were managed by KBR, a Halliburton subsidiary, which did its best to entertain and comfort the troops with such poolside attractions as salsa, karaoke,

belly dancing lessons, yoga, and a Baghdad Idol competition that drew people out of all corners of the coalition community. Mostly we traveled by car, although we could make it to the palace on foot in 20 minutes. On those occasions, we walked along the mostly deserted, rubble-filled dusty streets past bombed out buildings others fortified with concrete barricades, sand bags, and all kinds of electronic surveillance devices. Stepping over downed electrical wires, I never stopped looking over my shoulder or relaxed my pace until safely passing through USAID's well-protected portal.

Travel outside the Zone was a different story. Official visits to offices in the Red Zone took days of preparation. After an extensive review of documentation, we planned a series of meetings with the senior staff of a civil service training center to explore what kind of support they might need to scale up their training services for government ministries. It took us a month to actually meet our Iraqi counterparts at the training center, which was located near Sadr City by the Baghdad University of Technology. This was a notorious section of town that was difficult to navigate from most security angles. On the day of the visit, we passed through our gates and barreled down the streets of Baghdad, swerving around corners amidst the morning market traffic, in a convoy of armored SUVs flanked by tanks, with two helicopters hovering above. As we made wide swerves, plastic water bottles were tossed onto oncoming traffic to clear our way—how is that for winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people?

We arrived for our meeting just in time for the news of Zarkawi's demise, and the room was filled with cheers and jubilation. After a warm welcome

and several hours of work planning with the mostly female staff, one of the senior managers took me aside to express her concerns about our proposed collaboration: "We want your help, we need your help...but we don't want our staff to know as a matter of pride." I later realized they were terrified of being targeted for working with the Americans. The only male manager was more direct: "You shouldn't be here; it is too dangerous for us." We managed to meet several more times before the security risks became difficult to overcome from both sides. In fact, our last meeting was aborted by a series of explosions along our route; we were fifteen minutes late that day. We returned home a week later.

That month of June proved to be the bloodiest in Baghdad since the invasion of Iraq, with body counts up to 150 a day. What I was able to observe over the course of several months there left no question in my mind about what lay outside the gates: a failing state and a failed U.S. policy. The Iraqi civilians I met with talked of better days under Saddam Hussein, despite his human rights violations, when electricity flowed, food was cheap, people went to work and Shia and Sunni lived side by side. While the surge seems to have worked in stabilizing the city, and authority in the Green Zone has recently been transferred to the Iraqi government, several colleagues still working in Iraq are not optimistic. Whether the troops stay or come home in the coming year, the remnants of Bush's folly will remain for generations, as the children of war cannot escape their history or their likely need for retribution.

Activist Horoscopes— by madam reva lushon

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 19

It's been hard to shake your skepticism of late. An opportunity is on the horizon that will challenge your disposition. Be vigilant in following local news and advice columns.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 20

The time is now! Where you normally would have skipped a meeting, speaking event, or action, now you will benefit significantly by being engaged in the world around you!

Gemini May 21 - Jun 21

You deliberate well! You are surrounded by loyal friends who will support you in an imminent major decision. With such a safety net, you would do well to jump!

Cancer Jun 22 - Jul 22

Relish the potential of parties. Entertain and be entertained - you will find new inspiration from the people you meet and the likely inebriated conversation to follow.

Leo Jul 23 - Aug 2

Forget about it already! You dwell too much on the unfixable. Spring is the moment for concrete accomplishments. Get to it. Reread the writings of your mentors and heroes.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sep 22

Others will benefit from the thoughts you've been keeping to yourself. Embrace the spirit of collaboration. You would do well to write or create something, and better yet - publish.

Libra Sep 23 - Oct 23

Friends and coworkers need your advice. Step back, survey the scene, and be judicious.

Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 21

You are a sensitive one, Scorpio! This spring, take the time you need to get over old wounds and brace yourself - new, important allies are rough around the edges.

Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21

You have accepted last season's renewal. You would do well now to act on the opportunities for love and personal satisfaction you've otherwise neglected.

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19

Be conscious of the space you occupy. It is either too much or too little. Now is the season to find your best fit in work, love, and the rest of life. Seek feedback.

Aquarius Jan 20 - Feb 18

Who knew?! Revel in what's around you. Watch stupid movies. Read your favorite novel from childhood, and visit old friends! They're thinking of you, too!

Pisces Feb 19 - Mar 20

Oh, Pisces. You have been overwhelmed! Take the space you need. Once you're more stable, get on top of personal commitments and your new year's resolutions already!!!



The Saga of Anti-Rape Man

Anti-Rape Man, Henry, has locked himself in the bathroom after his superpowers interfere with a walk outside. Read more Anti-Rape Man at www.mencanstoprape.org/



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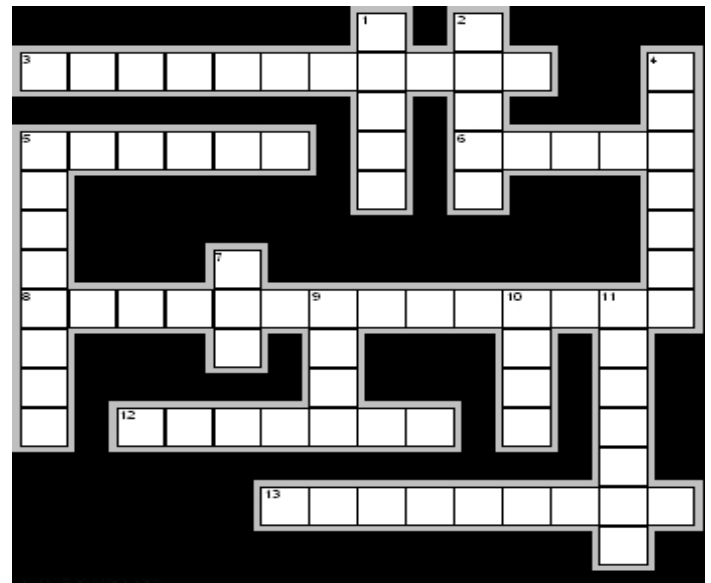
Crossword - The First 100 days

Across

3. Possible first puppy pick
5. New executive glass ceiling
6. One tortuous yr. to go
8. FDR puts society at ease
12. Latest New Yorkers on the dole
13. D.C. civil rights on the table at last?

Down

1. Marvelous Malia and Sweet Sasha fiasco
2. Nickname of Chicago's disgraced
4. Obama thinks D.C. schools are wimps because of ____
5. Bombed with drones
7. Global _ rule repealed
9. Monument to unique Iraqi protest
10. White house staffer with a profanity problem
11. UDC tries to pull a 100% increase



Anthem

by Holly LeMay

i'm gonna have my own religion
where theres no guilt
and theres no mission
just exist from day to day
no judgements
no judgement day

i'm gonna have my own communion
where theres no blood and theres no union
just exist from night to night
no rituals no holy rites

i'm gonna have my own ressurection
where theres no truth and theres no lesson
just exist from life to life
not trying to be holy
just trying to do right



Picture by Rini Templeton



PEAK OIL, continued from page 8

Given that world population is growing exponentially, and the planet's resources are finite, we must obviously confront limits to how much we can extract from the environment as well as how much waste we can discard into our ecosystem. Even if we could significantly reduce population growth, industrial development around the world is causing exponential growth in our material needs. Much of the world has historically consumed a tiny fraction of the oil used by the U.S. -- in 2006, India and China used on average less than 10% per capita what we do - but that inequality has now begun to diminish significantly.

"Peak oil" refers to the moment when world oil production reaches its highest level.

1970 saw the greatest oil production in the U.S., and production has been tapering off ever since. Current production levels total about five million barrels a day, slightly more than half the 1970 level. Most other countries with oil resources have also passed their peaks and their oil production is declining. There have been efforts to open up more of our coastline to drilling, but, according to the U.S. Geological Service, estimates of what's left to be found suggest we might get two years of U.S. consumption out of it.

Many energy experts and organizations think we have reached peak oil or it is imminent, among them the Association for the Study of Peak Oil; Sadad Al Hussein, former head of Saudi Aramco; Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens, German research group Energy Watch Group; Matthew

Read the complete article at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org

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Simmons, well-known investment advisor to the oil industry; French oil company Total S.A. But there are also some who argue we're a long way from peak oil. Cambridge Energy Research Associates says oil won't fall off for many decades because there is still much more oil in the ground than has been reported. One big chunk they include in their calculations is shale oil, found in Colorado, but we don't have viable technology to get a net energy return on that yet.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

by Sonia Silbert

Q: Do cops lie?

A: YES.

- If a cop asks for your name or other info, ask if you are being detained. Say: "Am I free to go?" If you're not, you can ALWAYS leave.

- If you're being detained, you still don't have to say anything. Invoke your rights by saying: "I have the right to remain silent. I want to speak to a lawyer"

If you or someone you see is being treated poorly by a cop, get his or her name and badge number and name. The cop can see you have this information - it might help!

Check it out:

A copy of the much redacted and abbreviated police report received by an activist spied on by the Maryland State Police after an ACLU investigation forced them to open their files. Activists are working on legislation in MD State Senate to prevent this from happening again. There are reports that this spying was ordered by the Homeland Security Office in Atlanta, GA, making this a national, not just a state, issue.

For updates and more info, see www.aclu-md.org.

Q: Do you ever have to talk to cops?

A: NO.

- If a cop searches you or your bag, say "I do not consent to a search". Interfering physically with a police search may result in very serious charges.

- You should always remember what witnesses were present during a confrontation with cops - get their contact info if you can.

For more legal resources, check out:

- washingtonpeacecenter.net/civic/legal
- www.justiceandsolidarity.org
- www.nlg.org

Narrative

Narrative : _____

Created By: _____ 1:55:02 PM

Modified By: _____ 8/11/2008 2:46:53 PM

On June 12, 2006, _____ the Pledge of Resistance Baltimore announced they would demonstrate at NSA on July 6, 2006.

Pete Perry, a DC area activist, has worked on anti-war and recruitment efforts in conjunction with a DC anti-war group, DC Down. Perry describes himself as a political progressive and member of the D.C. Statehood/Green Party. In early 2006, Perry and two other activists, _____, received four months of unsupervised probation for their activities during demonstrations against US torture and the confirmation of Alberto Gonzales for US attorney general on the lower steps of the Supreme Court.

CVISION TECHNOLOGIES

Page 13



Members of Mexicanos sin Fronteras protest police brutality
February 16th in Manassas, VA. Photo by Hector Alas.
See www.mexicanossinfronteras.org

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www.washingtonpeacecenter.org

see website for complete and additional articles:
Howard Zinn, interviews, more cabinet appointment info
and upcoming events!

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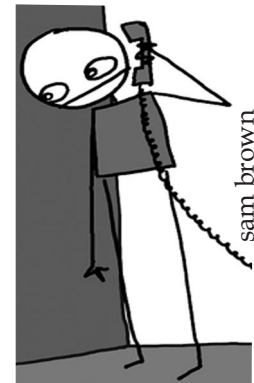


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- .Activist Horoscopes
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Calendar!

Sat, March 21: **March on the Pentagon** to commemorate the 6th Anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Gather at 12 noon at 23rd St. & Constitution Ave. NW in Washington, D.C. www.pentagonmarch.org

March 8-22: **Our Spring Break.** High school and college students mobilizing on their spring break to come to D.C. to bring an end to war and occupation. Actions every day! www.ourspringbreak.org

Sat, April 4: **National Mobilization in NYC.** Commemorate the anniversary of MLK's "Beyond Vietnam" speech by supporting UFPJ's campaign "Beyond War, A New Economy Is Possible: Yes We Can!" www.unitedforpeace.org.

Fri, April 24-26: **Protest the IMF and World Bank** at their spring meetings! As neoliberalism comes crashing down, institutions that caused the mess should go with it! www.globaljusticeaction.org