



The Maine Commons

A publication of the
Maine Independent Media Center
www.maineindymedia.org

Reclaiming our country, culture and consciousness from corporate rule since the year '01

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Issue 11 • Mar-Apr 2003

Warren's \$78 Million Warehouse

BY JINX

The following is a typical day in the life of a prisoner at the Maine State Prison in Warren. Although names and dates have been changed to protect the innocent (and the guilty), all of the incidences have happened, and are happening now.

I was awakened by that noise again - that unbearable static, followed by the "bugle," and then the command: "ATTENTION! COUNT TIME! MAJOR COUNT! ALL PRISONERS WILL TURN THEIR CELL LIGHTS ON, AND SIT OR STAND FOR COUNT!!!" They say there's something wrong with the intercom system - that's what the static and ear-piercing volume is all about. They claim to be in the process of fixing it. They've been claiming that for the 10 months we've been here. The volume is so high it literally hurts my ears, and causes me to cringe. In the cell blocks most of the words spoken over the system can't be understood.

My name is Jinx. It's 5:40 a.m. I'm woken up every morning at this time by that racket for the "major count." I still don't know what a minor, or any other count, is. Hang on -here comes the guard. He's staring me down, all the while rattling my door to make sure it's locked. Where was I? Oh yeah, 5:40 a.m., and although the doors won't open for breakfast for at least an hour and a half, they want me to get up. I don't understand any of this. There's a bright light on in my cell 24 hours a day. The guard has seen me all night. Why would I have to turn on the 2'x4' light fixture that has those really bright bulbs you see at the supermarket? None of the administrators want to answer that question.

I normally go back to sleep until it's closer to breakfast, but that wouldn't be smart today. They've told us that sometime today we would be moving to a vacant cell block so the contractors can come in to "do" the floors. Then we'll move back. I don't see anything wrong with the floors, at least not in this block. Besides, they've only been walked on for 10 months. Maybe the warden has a cousin in the floor business. I hear stories like that all of the time.

So here I sit, looking around at my Spartan existence. Not much in here. Some books. A typewriter and a radio are my prized pos-

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Maine's Anti-War Movement Heats Up



Special pull-out section on anti-war organizing in Maine: pages 11-14

Photo taken at Feb. 15 Anti-War Rally, Portland, Maine photo credit: Sky Hall

Life Without Great Northern

BY CATHERINE SCHMITT

MILLINOCKET - On a morning like this, gray and humid with approaching snow, the air should be filled with the odor of soggy pulp and ironed paper. Steam should billow from the smokestacks in a different shade of white than the clouds. But the downtown streets are quiet in Millinocket this morning. Wisps of smoke trickle from the Great Northern Paper mill, last exhalations of the magic city in the wilderness.

Since Great Northern Paper shut down its mills in East Millinocket and

Millinocket and filed for bankruptcy in January, more than 1,100 employees have been laid off. Repercussions are being felt throughout the Katahdin region and across the state. Because this is a story best told by those affected, I met with John Freeman, who worked in Great Northern's Millinocket mill for almost thirty years. John pulled up to the McDonald's in Millinocket in a red Jeep. A bumper sticker on the back reads "This family supported by Maine's working forests."

John's most recent position was as a

GNP: CONTINUED ON PG. 16

Anita

BY HEATHER BLANCHARD

The final bus stopped in front of a small, no-frills bar and store on a dirt road. I shielded my eyes against the bright Brazilian sun and looked up to where the massive encampment of Anita Garibaldi stretched across the hillside. The sheer size of it was overwhelming. Two thousand families had constructed makeshift "houses" out of scrap wood and tarps and even plastic trash bags to keep out Brazil's torrential rains.

A Story About Homelessness and Resistance in Brazil

I have to admit that at first glance, Anita didn't look all that glamorous, but she had a way of growing on me. In contrast to black plastic to keep out the rain, a white rose-bush bloomed in a dooryard. Curtains hung in the windows and children pushed each other on a homemade tree-swing. Vines climbed around rustic garden gates, and Anita Garibaldi was alive and thriving with the spirit of her people.

Anita Garibaldi is an encampment of the MTST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem

Teto), which means "Movement of Workers Without a Roof." The MTST is a 1990's urban offshoot of the Landless Rural Worker's Movement, or MST. The MST is not only the largest grassroots organization in the world, but its land occupations have proved a successful tool in land reform. In the Brazilian constitution, land that isn't being used for a "social function," such as providing food and/or housing, may be legally occupied and the title granted to those who would put it to use.

Our guide, Joao, led us to a large garden plot.

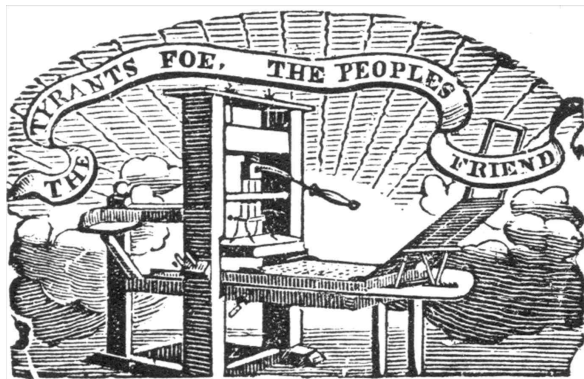
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Please help keep this paper alive -- pass it on when you're done with it.

Also ... If you are a business owner in possession of a large stack you no longer want, please do not dispose of them, but be in touch with us by mail or email so we can arrange retrieval.



The Maine Commons

<http://www.mainecommons.org>

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**None of this would be possible
without the print team and all
contributors and distributors.**

Maine Independent Media Center
PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903

Founded in 2001 as a side project of the Maine Independent Media Center, The Maine Commons was created to be a Maine media "commons" where diverse ideas of diverse people are free to meet and congregate. We especially focus on viewpoints and stories that have been ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream media, and issues of effects of corporate and government control of the media, in order to increase public consciousness and understanding of the events and issues at hand.

Printed by CWA-ITU Local 643

Maine IMC Mission Statement

The Maine Independent Media Center (Maine IMC) is a not-for-profit collective of independent media makers offering grassroots news coverage and media education for the state of Maine, and enjoying yummy food. We are not the mouthpiece of any particular political party or commercial viewpoint - rather, we are the voice of all those individuals and communities who want to get involved and report the news as they experience it. Unlike the corporate media, we do not claim complete objectivity. Subjectivity comes with any human's observation of an event. We believe in open dialogue, and placing the means of communication back in the hands of people and away from the drive of profit.

The Maine Independent Media Center works to demystify media through media literacy education and by fostering the skills and providing equipment necessary for people to be the media. We seek to become a recognized and utilized media source in the state. Maine IMC provides an interactive website at <http://www.maineindymedia.org>, and an interactive Maine events calendar at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>, through which up-to-the-minute information can be posted and made available throughout the world. Acknowledging that a large amount of people in Maine and the world, do not have access to the Internet, in addition to working to make this technology more accessible and available to all interested, we focus on providing and educating people in other mediums of media, including print, in the form of the regular publication The Maine Commons, public access television, and community and low power radio.

The Maine Commons Editorial Policy (short version):

The Maine Commons will accept submissions of articles, photography, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, poetry, and graphics from any person via mail or email. Slides and undeveloped film cannot be accepted. Scanned graphics must be at a resolution of 180 dpi or higher, and should be clear in both color and grayscale. Articles should be no longer than 1400 words and must be submitted as computer files or crisply printed or typed high-contrast text. The editors reserve the right to correct errors and edit down pieces that are too long. Submission does not guarantee publication. Current issues and those relevant to Maine will be given priority; ongoing projects may be held until the next publication if space is an issue. Email to editor@maineindymedia.org or send hardcopy, floppy disks or CDs to **Maine Independent Media Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**. Thanks!

Letters to the Editors

To Maine Commons,

We get newspaper from the Burlington Transfer Station (dump) to aid in making a fire in our wood stove. There we came across one of your papers - it was a refreshing, hopefilled read! We'd like to subscribe... Thank you again for being there!

Margie & Bill Deschesne
Burlington, ME

Editors' note:

We have a warm place in our hearts for people who salvage useful stuff that other people throw away. Society is so wasteful! Also, we say right on the front page that the paper should be passed on when you're done reading it, so we'd hope it never gets thrown out. At least if it has to be removed from human contact forever we'd hope people burn it or mulch it or at the very least recycle it. But the best recycling is done by passing it on to a friend! Anyway, consider your subscription honored, and enjoy this your first issue.

- *Alasdair Post-Quinn, Editorial Team*

Dear Maine Indymedia,

First, feel free to forward this to any associates or members with a legal background. I'm not going to give out every detail here. It is my intent to give your organization a broad overview and to see if you have people on board, or know of any, who would be willing to strike a blow against consolidation of radio. Here's the story:

I am a veteran broadcast sales manager (deejay, account exec, general manager - did it all). I worked in the business for "mom and pop" companies from 1975 through 1991. In 1991 I left to operate my own art gallery business. In 2001 I came back to radio working for Clear Channel in New Mexico. In August of 2002 I was recruited by Cumulus in Bangor to re-establish a full-time office in Ellsworth. On Sept. 30th I moved here and began my job as Territory Manager. On Nov. 1st I moved my wife and children here from New Mexico. On Nov. 25th, I was fired by Cumulus.

The reason I was recruited from out-of-state is that due to consolidation, and moving two Ellsworth-licensed stations into Brewer in 1999, Cumulus "burned" the Hancock County market. It was a cost-saving measure to pull all the licenses under one roof - but it cost them mightily in lost revenue from Hancock County as well. The local pros knew Cumulus screwed up and wouldn't touch the job. I was told I was being brought in for a variety of reasons - particularly because I had extensive community involvement (Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii Visitors Bureau, etc) and Cumulus needed someone to re-connect with the

community. Cumulus painted a picture of a long haul to turn around their own error.

Within weeks of arriving it was clear my mission was not a long haul re-building or relationship - but a short term "search and destroy" mentality. I was to search out immediate revenue, slam dunk as many advertisers as I could, and get revenue back up instantly (as if in the vacuum of Cumulus leaving 37 different ad media options didn't rush in).

The day I was fired - THREE DAYS BEFORE THANKSGIVING AND FIVE DAYS BEFORE HEALTH BENEFITS KICKED IN - the general manager who axed me made a fatal statement "if this was ten years ago, we could be patient, but you know how things are now..." Clearly serving Darth Consolidation as the new Lord and Master means instant results or a Death Star visit to your home planet.

Frankly I can't get a typical Bangor ambulance chaser to take this on. With Maine's "At will" employment law, workers like me can be discarded pretty much for any reason or none at all. The basis of a suit would be on FRAUD and MISREPRESENTATION (I was given an ANNUAL offer of \$3,000 monthly, and told it would be a prolonged turnaround).

There is a good shot at DISCRIMINATION as well. Because I owned an art gallery, and am a member of the Human Rights Commission, a sales staffer spread the rumor I was gay. The working environment then became much more hostile.

My sense is suing for compensation is both modest in expectation and secondary in priority. I've wanted to put CONSOLIDATION itself on trial through this case to educate the public that the airwaves that the Communications Act of 1934 once defined as belonging to the people, are now the sole property of soulless corporations. Their accountability has totally shifted from the public to the stockholder. AND there is a legitimate case for FRAUD and DISCRIMINATION interwoven in this.

David Haberneski

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**Maine Commons
Submissions Deadline**

**April 1st,
2003**

for the Apr-May Issue

If you need an extension, email
editor@maineindymedia.org
or call 649-5980.



Letter from an Editor

Dear Readers:

A number of changes are coming up for Maine Indymedia in general and the Maine Commons in particular. We felt we would be remiss if we did not come forth publicly about the situation.

First, let me introduce myself, for those who don't know me. My name is Alasdair Post-Quinn, and I am one of the editors of the Maine Commons. Specifically, I do the physical layout in Quark Xpress. I am not a professional; I am a self-taught, unpaid volunteer and I have dedicated much of my free time to Maine Indymedia since its formation in 2001. In addition to the layout work, I write an occasional article, manage the static webpages at www.mainecommons.org and media.maineindymedia.org, do some administrative work on the main website, do most of the audio processing and audio CD production, manage Maine Indymedia's bank account, and various other administrative tasks. Aside from all of that, I hold a 30-hour/week paid job. Oh, and I sleep now and then too.

I am one of the few people who has nearly totally dedicated their free time to Maine Indymedia. I am not mentioning this for an ego-boost. The reason I mention it is that I am leaving the state sometime this summer for personal reasons. I have no plans to return, other than to visit. I plan to stay in touch with the organization, but I cannot promise any amount of involvement from a distance. I plan to move to my original home in Vermont, and return to Boston

shortly thereafter to finish school.

Leaving with me will be my media workstation, a high powered computer, scanner, printer, and digital camera.

I know this puts Maine Indymedia in an awkward situation, but this organization has been too long in a vicious circle that puts most of the work on a few people that care so much about the organization that they make sacrifices to get the work done. The problem is that other people do not see the workings of the organization, and because the wheels keep turning and the paper keeps coming out and the website keeps getting updated, etc, they assume that all is well and no help is needed -- despite our encouragement to people to volunteer.

Maine Indymedia needs more people to get involved and take on part of the burden. Without "new blood" -- dependable, motivated, dedicated people -- Maine Indymedia will have a hard time continuing to exist at its current intensity. The job that I do should never have been taken on by a single person. Ideally, we need people who know or are interested in learning Quark Xpress, audio editing, and basic web maintenance, and -- here's the catch -- are willing to dedicate some significant portion of their time to Maine Indymedia, communicate, meet deadlines, and show initiative rather than just wait to be ordered to do something. Ideally, I see a group of people who can collaborate on the Maine Commons in and out of Quark Xpress,

EDITOR: CONTINUED ON PG. 5

Maine Commons Frequently Asked Questions ?

What is the Maine Independent Media Center?

The Maine Independent Media Center formed in Spring of 2001, in order to help provide coverage, and a network between the US and Canada, at the Jackman, Maine border center that was active during the Quebec City Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) protests. Maine IMC is a part of a network of Indymedia Centers around the world. The first Independent Media Center was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists in 1999 for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. There are currently about eighty Independent Media Centers around the world. Each IMC is an autonomous group that has its own mission statement, manages its own finances and makes its own decisions through its own processes. The Maine Independent Media Center formed around similar goals, and aims to cover issues relating to social and environmental justice and corporate control in Maine and beyond, not just at protests. It is a loosely-knit organization of peo-

ple scattered around the state, with one common goal: to release the media from the hands of corporate and government elite and put it back in the hands of the people.

How long has the Maine Commons been printing?

The Maine Commons started in August of 2001 in order to get our first 8-page paper out by Common Ground Fair. At that point, after much deliberation on the name, we called it "The Maine Free Press". We adopted the name "The Maine Commons" for the next issue when it became apparent that there were other papers with a similar names. This is the eleventh issue of the paper.

How often does the paper come out?

We have settled, for the moment, on a "six-weekly" paper, until funding solidifies and people become involved enough that we can consider going monthly.

How do you pay for it?

We pay for the paper through a combination of: inserts from non-commercial groups, advertisements from locally-owned businesses and non-profits, indi-

vidual donations, grants from the Haymarket Foundation (we received a new grant from Haymarket this month), and subscriptions. Future publications will hopefully be funded by more advertisements from locally owned commercial businesses and non-profit groups (see ad form page 23) and inserts from non-profit groups (see page 23 for more information.)

Where is it printed?

The Maine Commons is printed at the Kennebec Journal printing offices in Augusta. We are not, however, affiliated with the Kennebec Journal.

Where is it distributed?

The Maine Commons is distributed in every county of the state of Maine. We distribute hundreds of locations, including libraries, coffee shops, schools, convenience stores, community centers, laundromats, and other businesses and organizations that wish to carry the paper. If you would like to see the paper somewhere in your area, or would like to help with distribution (all distribution is done by volunteers), please contact us.

How many copies are there of each issue?

We currently have a circulation of 10,000 issues. If funding becomes available, we may increase this amount.

Where is it based?

While the Maine Commons is printed in Augusta, and laid out and has a mailing address in Waterville, people involved with putting the paper together live around the state. We try to cover events, distribute, and get people involved with making the paper, in all areas of the state of Maine.

What's this paper made of?

The paper this is printed on is 28# newsprint. Newsprint contains a very small percentage (generally around 10%) of recycled material. Paper with a higher recycled content, while ideal, would cost significantly more. If we get sufficient funding in the future, we will upgrade to a paper with a higher recycled paper content. The ink is 100% soy based ink, therefore this paper is suitable for mulching.

How can I contact the paper?

You can write us at:
Maine Commons
c/o Maine Independent Media Center
PO Box 1444
Waterville, ME 04903

You can email us at:
editor@maineindymedia.org

Why don't you have a phone number?

Due to the fact that Maine Indymedia has no central office, we have no phone line, and have been using one of the members' personal phone lines for Maine Indymedia calls. We are working on helping interested community members set up satellite offices in their towns, as well as seeking out funds for an eventual traveling media center). We

are researching the option of a voice mail box, so that people may get in touch with Maine Indymedia by phone.

How can I get involved?

The Maine Commons is produced by the print team of the Maine Independent Media Center. To get involved with the print team, or other Maine Indymedia teams, use the volunteer form on pg.23.

How can I subscribe?

We have a graduated subscription rate which allows people from any economic background to get this paper mailed to them. See back page for subscription form.

How can I advertise?

Ads are available for any locally-owned business or local non-profit organization. See page 23 for advertising form.

Are you officially affiliated with any group?

The Maine Commons is the print publication of the Maine Independent Media Center. The mission statement of the Maine IMC is printed on page 2. We have no political party affiliation, we are not right wing, left wing, or centrist. We welcome all views and encourage open discussion and debate, and work to give voice to those views and stories that are not adequately or fairly covered in much of the mainstream and corporate media. We work (and exchange resources and media) with other independent media organizations, such as Portland Public Access Television, WERU Community Radio, and Global Indymedia and other local Indymedia Centers (see www.indymedia.org). Many Maine Indymedia participants are members of other groups, and Maine IMC often collaborates with other groups on specific projects, but we do not have any formal allegiance to any other group.

I was at this (event/protest/riot) in the area and Maine Indymedia wasn't there! What gives?

The misconception many people have of Indymedia is that we are an elite band of professional reporters similar to any corporate media news crew. This is not the case. Maine Indymedia participants are all unpaid volunteers, who are all learning and educating each other to be the media. Indymedia is an avenue by which independent reporters (read: anyone who reports a story) are able to get their news out to the public, through this newspaper, our website, and connections with community radio stations and public access TV channels. So our question is: if you were at this (event/protest/riot), why didn't you write an article on it? You become the reporter. You become the media. With your participation, Maine IMC as a group will work to help you learn how to effectively become the media. Your participation will help us build a network of resources interested people across the region. Need resources or training to help be the media? Contact us and help us organize trainings and gather media making equipment. [Be The Media.](#)



Who
Owns
Maine

Plum Creek: Tree Plantations In Maine

Part 2: The Northern Forest Project

BY JOSHUA LAMBERT

"Everything we humans have been doing to the forest is an attempt to push nature to a higher sustainable yield. We fail to recognize, however, that we must have a sustainable forest before we can have a sustainable yield. In other words, we cannot have a sustainable yield until we have a sustainable forest. We must have a sustainable forest to have a sustainable yield; we must have a sustainable yield to have a sustainable industry; we must have a sustainable industry to have a sustainable economy; we must have a sustainable economy to have a sustainable society." - Chris Maser, Clearcuts 1993

The Northern Forest Project is an undertaking that Breanna and myself started 6 months ago. We wanted to know if Maine's woods were being properly managed and that there was job security for forestry related workers. Through our investigation, which has been concentrated around Plum Creek Timber, other large timber companies, and job security; we have found serious deceptions by major timber industries about sustainable forestry and the stability of Maine's wood related jobs. In this article information will be present about Maine's corporate timber companies and the threat they pose to Maine's forests and the forestry related jobs.

The past few months have been a combination of interviewing, photographing, investigating, driving and hiking around to gain information on why the Maine forest is turning into a big tree plantation, why hundreds of forestry related jobs are being wiped out and ways to prevent this from happening. The Northern forest project has documented many clearcuts, plantations of monocrop trees, and old growths that have shown many examples of how major landowners can either choose to destroy or preserve the forest. These choices can be made through every landowner, from conservation to perpetual consumption, which will determine the future of the Maine forest. Through this article I hope to shape an understanding of how Maine's woods are being run and impacted by the logging industry. I hope to stress the importance that not only thousands of forestry related workers around the state are benefiting from the Maine forest but every one is. I also hope to pass on ideas and stories constructively to create ways of networking with the people who have been affected by large timber companies like Plum Creek.

The 17.5 million acres of Maine forest comprises 90 percent of the land in the state. It's an incredible number to think

about; 90 percent of the state and almost all of this forestland has been logged. This land has changed considerably since the seventeenth century and colonization when the first trees were cut to create homes, ship masts, or cargo to be sent overseas. The trees were huge in size compared to the trees of today. They towered 200 feet in the air, were eight to ten feet in diameter and created an ecosystem for animals and plant life. There are still stands of these trees scattered around Maine, though very few. The Maine forest is no longer a natural forest, rather it is a forest that in 300 years has been transformed from beautiful, diverse woods into vast checkerboardings of clearcuts and undiversified tree plantations. Nearly half of this forest land; 8.1 million acres, is owned by 8 Fortune 500 corpora-

forester if they followed sustainable forestry guidelines, they would say with out hesitation, "yes." The fact is that Plum Creek does follow a set of guidelines through their Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). This is meant to be sustainable, but the environments within their cutting areas are no longer forests. What happens is that Plum Creek clears a natural forest, and then creates a plantation in its place. Is a plantation still a natural forest? A plantation can obviously have trees, which can support birds, insects, and flora. Does Plum Creek assume that simple laws, which can be understood by some plantation managers, can govern nature?

The truth is that they are not heading towards sustainable forestry because they

misleading and does not exist to protect jobs, the forest, or to leave it functional after logging. It exists to create a legal alternative to keep profit for large timber companies. The practice of selective cutting in an industrial or scientific forestry setting has created an illusion. It is controlling and forcing ecosystems to produce more timber through several processes, including genetic engineering of seedlings, fertilization of seedlings, and destroying the undesired species of trees. This misapplication of technology has begun to destroy the ecosystems that make up the forests in Maine, and is threatening the lives of trees, plants, animals, and ourselves.

Plum Creek has adopted a Low-Impact Forestry Plan that states the terms in which it practices environmental stewardship. Within these terms are their objectives on how landowners are to manage their land through a Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program (SFI). This program has five principles:

1. Meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations.
2. Promote environmentally and economically responsible practices.
3. Improve forest health and productivity.
4. Manage the forests to protect their special qualities.
5. Continuously improve forest management and measure progress.

These principles sound good, but a look at Plum Creek practices shows how they have been deceiving their own principles. Plum Creek compromises their future stands by following short-term profits, by which they could not sustain themselves environmentally and economically without dramatically changing the way they cut. A forest is a cycle that includes everything within the forest both giving and receiving to create a well-balanced ecosystem.

When the question, "What does SFI do to avoid monoculture forests?" was written in the Plum Creek Sustainable Forestry Initiative booklet, Plum Creek answered "Commitment to SFI objectives that addresses biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and science-based silviculture creates the development of healthy forest conditions." From what I have seen, Plum creek does not have diversity in its forestry agenda. They harvest trees as a crop, not as a natural resource, and without concern for the surrounding forest or job security.

"What we are doing to the forest is but a mirror reflection of the mentality with which we treat ourselves and one another. All we have in this world as humans in one another-here, now, this moment. And when everything is said and done in our frantic drive for short-term economic gains, if we



THE OTHER DESERT OF MAINE

This clearcut outside of Jackman, an estimated 50 acre swath of grey wasteland, is only one of hundreds of unsustainably-forested parcels of land owned by Plum Creek.

photo credit: Joshua Lambert

tions including- J.D. Irving, Plum Creek, and Seven Islands. These companies not only control the future of the forest, but also what kind of forest it becomes; the well being of the forest through growth and silviculture; and as importantly, the availability and security of jobs for their workers. To establish the environment that manages all of these important considerations, landowners must practice logging through responsible forestry management techniques. These techniques produce timber on a continual basis through sustainable yield, which creates job stability, as well as values wildlife, water quality, and biological diversity.

There is a common myth occurring throughout much of Maine's larger timber companies; that they are heading toward sustainable forestry. The definition of "sustainable" for many of these timber companies is not one of responsible forest management. Companies strive for sustainable status for reasons including public aesthetics, and inclusion of their company under a "green certified" category, which places them above companies without this certification. If you were to ask a Plum Creek

are training plantation managers, rather than foresters, who manage the forest. Companies like Plum Creek liquidate the forests and replace them with short-rotation tree plantations. This liquidation is ruining the diversity and stability of the forest in a way that will surely destroy them for future generations. Many of these timber companies show little concern with future stands. Their prime concern is getting the wood out to make a short-term profit. As of 1996 selective cutting replaced clearcutting in Maine. Selective cutting is a variation of clearcutting that leaves 30 square feet of basal area (basal is the stump area coverage) per acre (roughly eleven trees/acre); compared to clear cutting where all available trees are harvested. Is selective cutting really a step towards sustainable forestry? From what I have seen in Maine, I would never say so.

At times selective cutting means selecting the best trees and leaving the rest with little care for a future stand - this is called highgrading. Selective cutting considers only short-term economics, not long-term economics. The selective cutting system is



have lost sight of one another, we will find we have nothing of value after all." -Chris Maser, Clearcuts 1993

Forests can be seen as an investment, which at best can only give low returns. Primarily because forests grow slowly, with a growth rate of only one to two percent a year, thus the return can only be one to two percent. Mitch Lansky stated in his book *Low Impact Forestry* (LIF 2002), "There are five factors that should be considered that point out the justification of LIF compared to traditional forestry. These factors are growth, species mix, product mix, market value change, and risk." When applied correctly these factors combine to create a delicate web of economic and environmental standards that define responsible low impact forestry. If Maine were to adopt these standards of logging there would be a growth of higher quality trees over a long period of time, which would lead to increased timber revenues for landowners, and more opportunities for local saw mills, thus creating more jobs. Low impact forestry is being applied to many wood lots across the state. Sam Brown, a sustainable logger in Cambridge, Maine, is using this system of logging. The tools he uses are environmentally acceptable, and the methods are as well. He selectively cuts to thin out the forest, but not destroy the habitats for wildlife. He uses a logging truck that does not tear up the soil because it is built with tracks instead of tires with chains. These are all examples of logging which are mutually beneficial, both economically for the forester and environmentally for the forest.

On November 5th of 2002 Breanna and I traveled to Plum Creek's Fairfield office to interview with Paul Davis, Plum Creek's Maine representative. Here are some of the questions Breanna asked and his responses.

Breanna- How do you compare Plum Creek to other timber companies?

Paul Davis- "As far as environmental performance ... we've been a good citizen. I think we've been responsible with the way we've gone about our business whether it be with the contractors, or with the publics that live in and around our ownership." In 1998 when Plum Creek bought 905,00 acres in Maine, logging was nearly 40 percent greater than annual timber growth. What does this mean for the Maine forest and for the security of jobs if we loose a percentage of forest each year? Will there be more mill closings like in Millinocket? That doesn't sound responsible to me.

Breanna- How will Mainers benefit from Plum Creek being in Maine?

Paul Davis- "Plum Creek has had an open lands policy where we don't gate or charge for access to our land. So people

have the opportunity to recreate, hunt, fish, and gather berries, fire wood, or what ever they would like to do on our land."

The truth is that this land is not the greatest land to be doing a lot on. I have seen their land and the forest is empty of wildlife, the soil is compacted and grey and the lack of diversity in terrain and flora, create a cold callous environment. While walking on cuts I hardly noticed animal tracks, birds or even insects. The land was silent of all natural sounds.

On September 14th of 2002 I traveled up to Jackman to see for myself what Plum Creek was doing. I traveled for an hour on miles of dry, dusty logging roads then came across a well-traveled road branching off to the right of the main trail. I drove up the tight, rutty road leading up to a new work site. I was expecting to see people at work cutting down trees, but there was no one except the beginnings of a cut. The road ended at the side of a mountain. I stepped out of my vehicle and looked around. The trees on the sides of the road had been freshly cut. I walked into the sparse woods up to the top of the hill and looked over where I had just come up and over, beyond into miles of hills and valleys. At first I thought it was beautiful, but then I started to see patches in the forest I was looking into. The cuts were a strange contrast and it disturbed me. A month later I went back to the same site and it was all cut except for a few trees. It was incredible, that such a huge area, around 50 acres, could be cut so fast and the destruction that came from it could be so great. I climbed up that same hill again and I realized that this cutting was happening all across the state and what I could see was just a small piece of an endless cycle of cutting, harvesting, planting, and so on. I wondered, is this really happening? Is the state of Maine supporting this? How could I help stop this but not affect anyone's jobs? Does any one else ask these questions? I want to find out.

This was written with a goal to bring together the people of Maine, people from all backgrounds, and classes to recognize the destructive and creative realities of the timber industry. I am collecting stories and experiences about people working in the forestry industry. I hope environmentalists, loggers, the state, and timber companies will work together in solidarity towards sustainable forestry that is truly sustainable. Please send your stories about Plum Creek, Irving, Seven Islands, and other stories about working in the Maine woods to:

Josh Lambert: 217 South Mtn. Rd, Greene, ME 04236
E-Mail: jlambert@justice.com

Breanna Norris: 778-3402

EDITOR: CONTINUED FROM PG. 3

whether at a to-be-created office space or at a distance via the internet; a couple of people who know computer-aided audio editing and have computers sophisticated enough to handle it, and a couple of people who are fluent in HTML and can work on static webpages. No "job" should rely on a single person -- the skills must be better distributed.

Unfortunately, Maine Indymedia does not have the money either to pay these people for their time or to buy them computers to do this work on. Thus far we have relied on people who have their own computers. We have some grant money, but buying computers with it will deplete it almost immediately, and asking most of our relatively low-income members to invest in a computer would be insensitive and likely futile.

So, in closing, I will do what I can to help Maine Indymedia and the Maine Commons weather this change and grow to be better for it. But I cannot do it alone -- here is what we need:

- Motivated people interested in dedicating

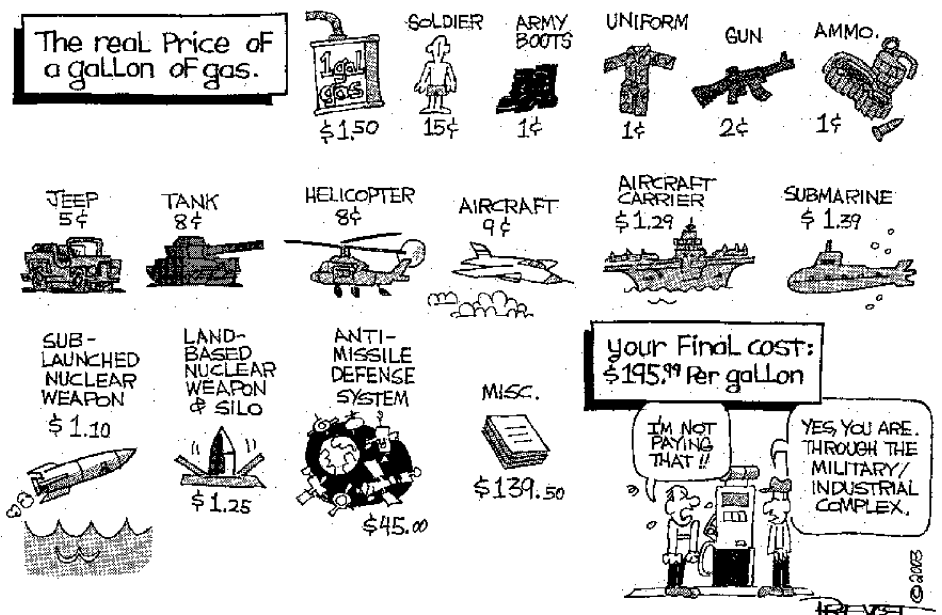
- a portion of their time to Maine Indymedia
- Computers and software or the money to buy them
- Computer hardware such as scanners, printers, digital cameras, zip drives, hard drives, etc.
- Free or shared office spaces, preferably with the option of high-speed internet, in various parts of the state
- Before the summer, space with computers to gather a group and teach classes in Quark Xpress and audio editing

Thanks to all for all you do,
Alasdair Post-Quinn, Waterville, ME

Errata:

In Issue 10, the Economic Human Rights pullout section had a long article by Jesse Year and Briggs Seekins. Unbeknownst to us, a glitch happened between layout and printing that printed the same column twice and lost the last column of the article. To those who wanted to finish the article, we sincerely apologize. You can write us for a full copy of the article, or if you have an Internet connection, the full text of the article is available online at:

www.mainecommons.org/overflow.htm



Announcement: Youth activism gathering April 21-23

The third annual Youth Activism Gathering is right around the corner. The gathering is mainly for teens to come together, share ideas, talk about social change, activism, eat good food and come to some really great workshops.

Workshop and discussion topics include gender roles/patriarchy, racism, sweatshops, homophobia, unschooling, youth oppression, independent media, zine making and much, much more. There will be an open schedule; workshops can be initiated so bring your ideas for workshops and discussions.

During the gathering we will be making a zine, if enough people are interested. Everyone can have her or his own page. So if you plan to come bring ideas, poems, pictures, drawings and art supplies for your page.

At night there will be music and hopefully some dancing. Don't forget your instruments, voices or your dancing shoes.

Food will be vegetarian/vegan. Everyone is welcome to help in the cooking process. Meat dishes can be requested, but please request before the 20th so that we have plenty of time.

Where is this Youth Activism gathering, you may be wondering. At the Evergreen school in Hallowell, near Augusta. There is only room for about 50 people so if you want to guarantee a spot, please register early. If you want to do a workshop or puppet show let us know to add it in.

There are places to sleep inside, but you can sleep outside if you want. Remember to bring sleeping bags, or blankets.

Get in touch if you want to come, have questions, or want to bring your civil rights team or other group. People can come for 1 day or all three.

Don't have a ride? That is ok. Get in touch with one of us and we can help you car-pool with someone. The price for the weekend is very low, \$0 to \$10 a day, depending on what you can pay.

Call Breanna at 778-3402 or e-mail Josh at jlambert@justice.com.



A Summary of Jan. 11 Events in Lewiston

As was reported in Issue 10 of the Maine Commons, in Autumn 2002 Lewiston Mayor Larry Raymond wrote an open letter to the Lewiston Somali community that resulted in white-supremacist groups the National Alliance and the World Church of the Creator (WCOC) feeling racial tensions were high enough in the community to attempt recruiting in Lewiston. The WCOC announced plans to hold a meeting in Lewiston on January 11th, and many groups organized responses, some planning to protest outside the meeting, and others forming a group called the Many & One coalition that organized a diversity rally. On January 11th, people from around Maine and throughout the US and Canada gathered in Lewiston to show their opposition to racist groups such as the National Alliance and the World Church of the Creator, and to show their support for the Somali community, immigrants and people of color in Lewiston. Despite the media repeatedly warning of violence, an extremely heavy police presence (that cost

the town \$60,000), and roadblocks, over 300 people were at the National Guard Armory to protest the WCOC's racist agenda, and 4-5,000 people attended the Many & One diversity rally at Bates college, with over 1,000 of those people standing outside in the cold for the duration of the events due to the gym filling beyond capacity. One person was noticeably missing - Lewiston's Mayor Raymond, who was vacationing in Florida that week. Many stickers and signs were present in the rally, asking "Where's the mayor?" and Lewiston resident Dot Treadwell held a sign saying "This seat reserved for the Mayor." The rally included a wide range of speakers and musicians, and concluded in a lively march with drumming and chanting, that ended at the Lewiston Armory (not the National Guard Armory where the WCOC met).

Meanwhile, at the National Guard Armory, a very diverse group of hundreds of people braved the cold, chanting, dancing, holding signs, and watching the many

dozens of local and state police lined up surrounding the building. A number of local community members had arrived extremely early in the morning at the Armory in an attempt to fill the armory with people with anti-racist views. However, the police controlling entrance asked if they supported or opposed the WCOC - the early attendees had been advised by their lawyers not to lie if asked this question, so they answered honestly that they opposed the WCOC. They were told that only supporters were allowed inside, and thus were turned away.

Early on in the protest, one man, a Vietnam vet, spotted two snipers covered in white blankets poised on the roof of a nearby building, their rifles pointed at the crowd of people protesting the 40-person white-supremacist, and white-supremacist curious group (all but about 10 of whom came in from out of state) inside the Armory. About 45 minutes into the protest a massive water cannon was raised on a fire truck, also aimed at the non-violent crowd. There never was a chance for exchange between

the protestors and the World Church members, who were shuttled in early by van, and then shuttled out the back door and into a van. None of the media-predicted violence occurred, and after being convinced that the WCOC members had left the armory, protestors left.

A number of the anti-racists had parked in a nearby parking lot, and when they arrived they found members of the racist groups photographing the license plates of their cars. A verbal argument ensued, and the members of the racists groups got in their vehicle and sped off, almost running down several of the anti-racists, hitting (but not badly injuring) at least one of them.

After this, many of the protestors headed to the march at the Many & One rally, and about 30 people attended a public call on the City Hall steps for Mayor Raymond's resignation. The articles on these pages discuss some of the issues leading up to the events of January 11th, reflections on the day's events, and thoughts on future organizing.

BoundTogether

Reflections on Anti-Racist Organizing in Maine: The Many and One Coalition

BY KATE BRENNAN

The Many and One Coalition came together in late November 2002 representing interfaith communities, social justice organizations, and concerned community members. In a short period of time, the coalition attempted to bring people from various communities and organizations together to form a collective response in solidarity with the Somali community. The six-week time frame was an added challenge with which the coalition had to work. This made questions of inclusion and a democratic process even more difficult to negotiate. Although the specifics of the situation were unique to Lewiston, the process of planning which resulted in the Many and One rally and anti-racist work continuing after the 11th, brought up a lot of questions common to coalition building.

Some things I learned

The Many and One Coalition is one of the first coalitions that I have ever worked with that was not made up of mostly activist-type folks. The people who came to the table were from varying points along the political spectrum. The coalition was not very diverse in terms of class background and some people from downtown Lewiston who were sympathetic did not feel welcomed into the process. Many others were not aware of the coalition's efforts. From the beginning, there was a group of organizers who really pushed that the coalition hold to two core principles: that the planning process be shaped and led by people of color and people who are targeted by racism, hate and bias, and that January 11th is just one day - our process must be rooted in long-term anti-racist and anti-oppression work in our communities. Although few

people raised any questions about these values, it was clear that not everyone understood them in the same way. The words "racism" and "oppression," for example, mean very different things to different people. We needed to come to a shared analysis and language before we could even hope that the coalition would genuinely enact these values.

That's where the tension around the need for efficiency vs. the need for a democratic process entered. Just a few minutes into one planning meeting someone said "I am frustrated by this kind of touchy feely consensus building - we don't have time for it. We have to make decisions quickly." Some heads shook in agreement to her statement, while some of us squirmed in our seats feeling that discussing, compromising and coming to consensus was even more important than the rally itself. The means determines the end kind of thing. This was a major tension that existed throughout the process. Many voices were not heard and many internal dynamics were not addressed because of it.

With activists and organizers present, people who had experience with community efforts, group decision making etc., we were all challenged to address the tougher issues around internalized racism and structural injustices. It became very clear how important it is for activists to take part in broader community efforts that might seem frustrating or limiting.

In the process I also relearned the lesson of picking battles. Some things that seemed so fundamental to me (like not having the rally at Bates College because many people in Lewiston don't feel welcome or comfortable there) had to be let go of for

the sake of the collective process. On the other hand, this group chose to stand out publicly in solidarity with the GLBT communities. This was incredible coming from a coalition of a couple hundred people in a city that has voted to discriminate based on sexual orientation twice in the last several years. Clearly there was give and take. In the end, no one was 100% satisfied with the outcome on the 11th but the process was powerful for that reason. People put aside some of their differences to aid in moving the collective process forward.

I learned a lot about meetings, workshops and trainings and who these spaces are for, who feels welcomed or included in them, and who has the time to participate. I learned about the importance of creating different spaces for different people to have a voice in a community process. This is one of the various reasons why more folks from downtown Lewiston were not involved. Who has the privilege to go to 5-10 meetings a week, and for that matter, who wants to? We need to create spaces where everyone is comfortable and actively participating. I was also reminded of the importance of meeting people where they are at, trying to collectively move each other to step out of what is comfortable and be challenged together.

In the end, between 4500 and 5000 people turned out for the Many and One Rally and to protest the World Church of the Creator at the National Guard Armory. Lifelong residents of Lewiston called the day's events the most incredible community effort they had seen in 30 years. No one group could have roused that kind of support. Many and One demonstrated the power and popular support that can be gained through coalitions and succeeded in opening up space for positive change in the city.

Lasting Questions about building coalitions

Below are some lasting questions that might be helpful in framing a discussion about organizing and coalition building in Maine.

- Who is at the table from the beginning? Is it the usual suspects - white middle class folks who have the time (privilege) to be there and are used to being the decision-makers?
- How do we do inclusive organizing in a short time frame? And once "everyone" is at the table, how can we create a democratic process that makes sense to everyone's experiences and visions?
- Does it make more sense to work in a broader group that is less radical or in a smaller group that is more radical?
- How do we work towards solidarity among groups with different missions without losing sight of addressing root causes?

I hope that we can create spaces in the near future where we can discuss some of these questions in this state. There is still work going on in Lewiston with Many and One and other groups that have come out of Many and One. If you are interested in remaining involved, please email: katebrennan@riseup.net or call the JED center at 946-4478.

When different kinds of people work together, and all have power, the world changes. How can we get together in all our differences, and do it without repeating the patterns that got us into this mess in the first place? Send your reactions to what you read here. Or send a letter, pictures, ideas, suggestions, cartoons, your thoughts, experiences, crankiness, dreams etc. to BoundTogether, 18 Stone Road, West Paris, ME 04289. Claire at 674-2358 or email rutabaga@megalink.net.

BoundTogether is a joint project of the Maine Commons, Resources for Organizing and Social Change and YOU.



Thoughts on Being Somali In Maine

TRANSCRIBED BY HILLARY LISTER

On February 17th, Fatuma Hussein and Abdiqaziz Hashi Ali (who goes by "Ali") came to Colby College to speak about their experiences and thoughts on recent events as Somali people living and working in Maine. Fatuma Hussein is the Director of the United Somali Women of Maine. Ali came to the United States in 1994 and now works in Lewiston as a caseworker, assisting immigrants with access to resources including shelter and general assistance. I recorded this talk on minidisc and had to edit it significantly for length. If anyone would like an audio copy of this talk (it is not of the greatest quality) please contact Maine Indymedia (contact information on page 2.) I divided the talk into subject sections, and as a result, some of the placement is out of the order it occurred in the talk. I hope in this editing I did not change any intent of the speakers. As with everything in this paper, the views expressed by the people telling their stories are theirs alone - if you experienced situations differently (for example, the controversy over the call for Mayor Raymond's resignation), we welcome your views and stories.

Why Many Somalis Moved To Lewiston

Ali: We was people who had a country, who live a normal life, and who know how to deal with any difficult situation before we get here. [The areas that the Somali refugees had been placed were primarily high crime areas of the city, and the Somali community was especially targeted since they were immigrants and most did not speak English.] So the elders, we have a tradition, the elders sit down and say, "Look, we left civil war over there, we came here to live peacefully, and now, there's a crime, there's prostitution, ...there's drugs in the school system." ...They sent [scouts] to a lot of different states. So when we return, we

sit down, everybody gives his report. So there's a guy ...who came to Lewiston, he went to the Internet, he went to the police department, and he gathered all this information, ...what he needed to present to the community. He said, "I went to a small city called Lewiston in the state of Maine. The last police officer to be killed in the line of duty was 1859." Wow. That was great news, what we hear every minute, officers being killed in the line of duty, every minute. So wow, those people really live really peacefully, the police are not dying, that means no bullets flying around. So, the Somalis decided to move here to the state of Maine. That's what we call in the community, the Somali Exodus.

The Experience of Somali Women in the US

Fatuma: The majority of the [Somali] people who moved here, to Lewiston and Auburn, are ...women and children. ...[In Somali cultures it used to be that] a boy was [considered] more "valuable." But that kind of changed, back in 1977 there was a war that broke out between Somalia and Ethiopia, and because of that war, a lot of men died, so it brought a new role to Somali women. A lot of Somali women [became] head of households, were taking care of the children, serving as dads and moms at the same time, and it brought a lot of Somali women who were business owners, home based business. Then this recent civil war 12 years ago broke out, and that even brought a major role to Somali women, ...most of the men died in the war, still some of them are missing... And because of that, that's why you see so many Somali families that have women as head of households. Now, coming to [the US], it really really had a significant role on Somali women. When I came here back in 1993 I was a child, and I went through high school and college here, and at the same time I had to

work to support my family back home. I have a brother who I just brought [to the US] who is now at MIT, but because I have to work hard for him to get here and pay a lot of money for his college, that's how he actually got to go to college. So we have a lot of role models like that, we have a lot of women who are working so hard, are supporting their families back at home, [and] at the same time their families here. And so it really brought a lot of respect for the Somali women.

Now, that [respect] is within the Somali community. But the Somali woman had a huge challenge to face outside the Somali community, because she was carrying around all her differences, you know, she looks different, different color, she dresses differently, she has all these long clothes, she covers her head, this scarf is a sign of oppression in a lot of people's eyes, and it was a huge challenge for her. How can she come to a country where she has a language barrier to begin with, she has to work and support her children here, and at the same time support families back home? I can tell you that almost every Somali who is in America or other countries is missing somebody back in Africa. ...I send at least \$500 every month, back in Africa. ...Everybody sends money back in Africa to support. I have not seen my mother or my dad for the last 11 years. So, with all the problems going on in Lewiston, it just brings a lot of flashbacks. You know, these are people who have gone through a lot of war. These are people who have seen, you know, your sister being raped in front of you, your dad being killed in front of you, your mother being killed in front of you, but you can't do much about it. ...basically what I'm saying is that if somebody can go through all those challenges, losing a family member, losing your home, everything, leaving behind everything, and then making do, and then working, and then trying to support yourself, I think that person deserves a lot of respect. ...It was difficult. And the Somali culture is a male-dominated culture. The women are trying to be independent, self-sufficient. ...I think basically what I'm trying to say is the Somali woman has a lot more challenges to go through than the Somali guy. And you take a look at every aspect of the Somali woman, and she goes through a lot of challenges every day, and it's so difficult.

Effects of the Patriot Act on Somali Communities

Ali: After Sept 11th, we lost a lot of privileges that we used to have here, the same rights that North American [non-immigrants] have. If you are arrested for any crime, for any suspicious act today, as a US citizen, the government, ...within 48 hours, they have to take you to court and prove a crime you are accused of. If you are an immigrant, they can keep you six months without being brought into a court of law. That's called the Patriot Act.

...We used to send money and we continue to send money to help friends and relatives. We have extended family, family is not

[just] your mother, your father, your sister, your children, your wife, it's all branches of your bloodline are your relatives. Cousins, aunts, their children, their grandchildren, you name it. So we support these people back home. We used to send them money. [The Somali community in Minneapolis] Minnesota sends \$79 million a year. ...That money was tracked by the FBI, [they said] "Oh, this money is going to the terrorists." No.

... If I send money through Western Union today I say, "Oh, I want this money to go to [a person in a rural Somali village]." Now, how can they find that person? Are they going to go over the countryside? How do they know the names? They cannot provide those kind of services. So, what we establish is called Hawala. Hawala the FBI called underground bank systems. ...Hawala was stopped for a couple months for us in Lewiston..., it was published in newspapers, they stopped it, so people fought back, and now it's up again. My point is, when a bad person does bad things, the good people [suffer].

A member of the audience asks if there was fear in the Somali community of the hate groups arriving in Lewiston on January 11th.

Fatuma: Most of us had a lot of fear. You know, prior to the rally, what they did was they used to hand out [racist] pamphlets on the cars and they was scaring people way before the rally. ...People were really so scared prior to the rally, and then when the rally came and the white supremacists ...[members of the Somali community] associated them with a lot of violence, and because of that a lot of people were scared. ...I think probably less than 20 Somalis came out that day [to the rally.]

A member of the audience asks if the hate groups are still active in Lewiston.

Fatuma: We haven't seen that, I guess they came and went.

Reflections on how the media has covered the situation of the Somalis living in Lewiston

Fatuma: There was a lot of negative publicity about the Somalis. The media would come and stand in the streets of Lewiston, ...videotape all the Somalis going to the city hall, and somehow they portrayed Somalis to come to Lewiston to look for welfare and a lot of government assistance. But they didn't portray us Somalis who were working, the working class. All they would put on the news was the Somalis who weren't working, and because of that a lot of Lewistonians thought, "Well, they came here to take our welfare." And you know, a lot of times the city of Lewiston does not talk about how they got over \$400,000 because of the Somalis. They don't talk about that. But yeah, the media had a lot to do with that. ...A lot of times they would stop the Somalis and talk to them, interview them, and all that, and eventually the Somalis were tired of the media and they



photo credit: Tim McLeod

NOBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Attendees of the Many and One Rally at Bates College hold "Where's the Mayor?" signs in a number of languages. This photo is of a section of the back row -- there were several thousand in attendance at this rally.



ANITA: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

"This is our community garden," he said proudly. "A lot of the people here are from agricultural families. Many come here from the north, looking for a better life in the city. Few find it."

Joao went on to tell us how his own family had come from the poor northeastern state of Bahia when he was two. They ended up living in a poor settlement called a *favela*. Joao, however, added that they had been luckier than many.

"Many families from the north ended up living under bridges," he told us sadly. "People lose their connections with the land. They become ashamed of their rural backgrounds. Here our goal is to give them back their pride in their agricultural roots." Indeed the residents of Anita Garibaldi have a reason to be proud. Along with homes and a community garden, they've built streets, a pharmacy, a community center and the office of the secretary of the MTST.

"Despite their differences, we try to bring the homeless of Sao Paulo together, and show them that they are all coming from the same oppression," Joao told us.

I mused over Joao's words. Would it be possible to convince the people back home that now, more than ever, oppressive politics and policies are not only nationally but globally connected? I knew that I had a tough job ahead of me, because the sad truth of it is, the people I see at The Preble Resource Center in Portland, are doing all they can do just to get from day to day.

It was getting dark now, and I gave the warm, hopeful lights of Anita Garibaldi one last wistful look.

"Anita Garibaldi," our Brazilian friend Marcello told me, "is named after a lagoon in Santa Catarina."

"So Anita Garibaldi is a place of refreshment? Like an oasis for the homeless?"

"Yes," he smiled, "like an oasis."

That night a woman named Anita called the homeless radio marathon from Philadelphia. She was desperate. She had recently suffered a stroke, but hadn't received any help from city or state officials. The temperature was below freezing in Philadelphia, and she was out on the street.

"What do you want folks to know?" the radio host, Jeremy, asked her. Perhaps he thought she would want to add her opinion on "free trade," or the World Bank, or American politics.

"I need a home," our Philadelphia Anita replied desperately, "Please. I just need a home."

BY HEATHER BLANCHARD

Global Solidarity Delegation from Maine to Brazil: a Background

From January 17th through February 7th, a 9-person Maine delegation of primarily low-income social justice activists traveled through Southern Brazil, meeting with and learning from people sharing connected struggles in the Southern Hemisphere. This group was made up of Bridgette Bartlett from Lots to Garden of Lewiston the JED (Justice, Ecology, and Democracy) Center in Greene, Carol Dove & Michael Vernon from Victory Gardens Project in Athens, Heather Blanchard and Jim Devine from Preble St. Resource Center Consumer Advocacy Project in Portland, Hillary Lister and Laura Childs from Maine Commons & Maine Indymedia, Jesse Veer from People Organized to Win Economic Rights (POWER) in Portland, and Vanessa Javaux from the JED Center,

who was our translator and the primary coordinator of the trip. We were joined in our second week by Paulino, a really great guy and artist and community activist from Belem, a town in the Northeast of Brazil.

Our journey consisted of many realities, first staying in the port town of Santos east of Sao Paulo, and visiting local organizers and the fishing community of Conceicaoziuha, described in Laura's article, "A Small Story About Brazil". We then stayed at the Independent Media Center space in Porto Alegre and participated in the World Social Forum and surrounding events. Next we traveled 18 hours west to the Santa Catarina, on the border of Argentina and Paraguay, and spent time at the MST (Landless Workers Movement) settlement of Cooperuniao, sharing the house with a group of Argentinians who updated us on the struggles in their country. Finally, traveled to city of Sao Paulo, and visited

Anita Garibaldi, the MTST settlement described in Heather's article, which begins on page 1. Our delegation is planning to do presentations on our amazingly educational and inspiring journey, at schools, granges, community centers, and other locations throughout the state of Maine.

We have posted many more stories and photos to the www.maineindymedia.org website, and are working to make photos, audio, and video recordings of our travels available beyond the Internet. We are also raising money so that some of the community activists we met in Brazil will be able to come to Maine for the summer, so we can have a continuing exchange. If you would like to arrange a presentation in your area, if you are interested reading more stories or getting audio, photos, or videos, or you would like to find out how you can help with this project, please contact Maine Indymedia, contact information on page 2.

A Small Story About Brazil

BY LAURA CHILDS

It seems impossible to report on all of the amazing people we have met and experiences we have had here in Brazil. As a working class Mainer born and raised, I am overwhelmed by the similarities between my upbringing and that of some of the people I have met here. There are of course many cultural differences but still I am surprised at how much we share. I don't speak Portuguese very well so in order to communicate I use a lot of sign language. Mostly I am only learning through what I see. We went to visit a fishing village called Conceicaoziuha established roughly in the late 1800's. There are 3000 inhabitants that live a life of everyday Resistance. The river winds around the town and is as black as black can be. The Local Minister, a well dressed man in his thirties, remembers when the water was clear and he expressed his anger at the government for allowing such devastation. The chemical companies dredged the river right before their eyes and it was not their right to do so. Today, 6 or 7 children waltz around in the stinking black mud and catch tiny crabs for us to see. This place is their playground and they are full of joy when Hillary Lister joins them on the shore to catch crabs and bugs.

One of the more actively political fishermen named Newton invited us into his home and began to give us the history of what they produce. He showed us the fishing nets that the men and boys make and later we got demonstrations of the production. At one point I heard someone saying that Newton has experienced death threats because of his efforts to fight the chemical companies that are trying to swallow up their homes and livelihoods. I wondered if

our presence would cause further trouble and apparently someone had already asked him that question and he responded, "My life is already under threat." He offered to take us out on the boats to see for real just how bad it was.

I have never seen such a clash of culture. From the water, the village itself looks so tiny, there are docks every 20 feet or so with pole buildings lining the shore. On the left DOW Chemical Company with its massive round storage buildings tower over the town like Tyrannosaurus Rex. We were told that in the 1960's Agent Orange was manufactured and shipped out of there and that the residue was just dumped. A little further out in the water we moved to the

right of the town where the Cargill Company dominates both the land and water. Just to get out of the town's personal port we had to go between two massive ships and as we passed, the ships began eliminating some kind of nasty brown water. It felt like they were saying "Piss on you Conceicaoziuha." And our friend driving the boat said it was "A tribute to our Americano visitors." We were literally right underneath the falling water as our driver began to explain to us that in other places the companies continually destroy the land and water encroaching upon the people in hopes that the pollution will cause the government to declare it unfit to live. Many people have been driven out this way and it has become a common method that the companies use to get what they need to do what they do.

The people of Conceicaoziuha are not



photo credit: Hillary Lister

Local children in Conceicaoziuha, Brazil, show off a crab they found on the bank of the river that Dow and Cargill have used as a dumping grounds.

**SOMALIS: CONTINUED FROM PG. 7**

just blocked them off and they don't want to talk to them anymore.

Reflections on the January 11th Many & One Rally

Fatuma: I was one of Many and One [coalition], and I was on the steering committee and, I think for six weeks, we would meet almost every day, and work so hard on the rally to make it possible. But, ...most of the people who attended the rally were not Lewistonians. And the aim of having the rally was to reach your neighbor, you know? The person living next to you. The person who does not know who a Somali person is, that was what we wanted. And it never happened that way. We had a lot of support, we appreciated that, from all over Maine, but we knew most of the people who came to the rally were not Lewistonians. And even to compound on that, ...Mayor Raymond from Florida said, you know, "I appreciate 98% of the Lewistonians stayed at home [from the rally] and listened to [my] words." ...I don't

going anywhere. Every day they struggle to win the battle against further encroachment from the chemical companies. This discussion reminded me of Maine. Recently I was in Presque Isle at the Mic Mac resettlement which appears to be surrounded by industries that pollute the land and water. I didn't need to travel to the Global South to understand this struggle when I could have looked in my own backyard and listened to the stories of the indigenous people of the land we call Maine. When I come home I plan to do that. If anything, this experience has blown apart a lot of misunderstandings that I had about the global structure we live under. I will be forever changed in that it has strengthened my desire to fight the forces that oppress all life.

I want to encourage anyone reading this to please start talking to your neighbors. Especially those of you who have moved into Maine from out of state and are actively committed to making a better world. We may not have the same level of education as you, and we might prefer to spend our time fixing up muscle cars and watching TV but we have seen and felt enforced changes in our history that can help us to fight the forces that oppress us all. We speak in a different language and we might even disagree about issues that seem "core" to you. We cannot win this fight without you and you cannot win this fight without us. This is an issue that I have brought up before and it always invokes a negative reaction. That is not my intention.

My goal is to help you to see a different truth. Our truth. If you are willing to listen to us perhaps then we as a whole will be willing to work on this struggle together. Intellectual Apartheid keeps us separate. We deserve your ears. And in turn you will have ours.

expect the guy to say "I'm sorry" [for writing the letter], because he will never do it, but you know he got talking and talking and talking, but the rally was meant to reach Lewistonians and it never happened that way.

Reflections on the Call for Mayor Raymond's Resignation

Ali: There was a gentleman from Minnesota Somali Justice Advocates Group, who went in front of the city hall steps, and said he demanded resignation of the Mayor. But it was involved in politics. ...It was during the campaign, it was other some people who are seeking to run for office, so they [have a] political agenda, so we've been mixed in the political arena. ...So those people influenced the Somali guy, and they asked him to go over there and demand the resignation of the Mayor. ...After that the place settled down, Mayor Raymond requested meeting [with] the community after he came back from his vacation. I declined personally and the rest of the community declined. So that was the last situation in Lewiston...

A member of the audience asks, "Was there backlash in Lewiston toward the Somali community as a result of the call for the Mayor's resignation?"

Fatuma: Yeah, because most of Lewistonians do support Mayor Raymond

and because there was - see, to me, when ...Mayor Raymond wrote the letter, that was when we was supposed to hold him accountable. ...[Ed. Note: After Raymond wrote his letter, there was a meeting between some members of the Somali community, including Ali, and Mayor Raymond. As a result of the meeting, the Somalis who had been in the meeting issued a public apology that was carried in the media.] I wasn't in that meeting and I was very against that meeting. ...That guy [Raymond] never came out and said he was sorry. So after all these problems, we all agreed upon moving forward and forgetting about the past. But I mean for 3 or 4 months later to ask the Mayor to resign, ...wasn't the right thing to do. And it wasn't making sense. The Somalis are very vulnerable people because they don't understand the American system. And when you don't understand the system, that's when people take advantage of you. ...There was a bunch of people who had their own political agenda, who were using the Somalis to call for the Mayor's resignation. And so there was a lot of backlash. You know, here we were, we had just had the rally, [and it appeared] we were not appreciating the rally, we were not appreciating all this support we had, ...we wanted the Mayor to resign? And the Mayor had a lot of support from the city of Lewiston. There was a

commotion, there was a lot of problems..., they even I think burned the Koran and put it in the toilet at St. Mary's. There was a bunch of things going on.

Ali: The Many and One coalition fell apart after the rally. There was a lot of people involved with the Many and One coalition, they do a tremendous job in such a short time, but they [don't agree on everything] - some people, they feel the mayor is right - some people think the mayor is wrong to have reacted in public and ...they think he should apologize to the community, so in that course the Many and One coalition fell apart. And some of them came out and said...

Fatuma breaks in: That's very wrong. He is very right, there was a lot of tension, there was a lot of things, people had strong feelings about very different things, but - Many and One is still there. We are trying to have a meeting, and I think it's still there... Some of the people who are part of the steering committee of Many and One were some of the people who called for the mayor's resignation. And that was absolutely against what we were trying to preach. And so that was one of the backlashes that we had, but I think Many and One will still continue, and even trying to get a formal organization, so I think it will still survive.

Who Loves You?**a Fable by Herschel Sternlieb (with thanks to William Blake)**

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who asked his mother how he could tell if someone loved him. His mother answered that he could tell if someone loved him if they were willing to sacrifice their own comfort for his welfare. The little boy realized immediately that he was loved by his parents and grandparents but he had doubts about his siblings. He was also positive that his teachers did not love him nor did any of his neighbors.

When he was old enough to leave home, he went out into the great world with one resolve in mind, to dwell among people who loved him. Finding it difficult to get a job other than as a part-timer at Wal-Mart which displayed a propensity neither to respect nor love him, he decided to join the military.

"Will the army love me?" he asked the recruiter.

"What kind of a question is that?" fumed the Sergeant. "I represent the government that demands that you ask not what it can do for you but what you can do for it and there is no greater love that you can show your nation than to sacrifice your life for it?"

"But you haven't done that," replied our hero. "You are still alive and look very well fed."

"Take a hike, kid, before I report you to the Office of Homeland Security."

The disappointed lad commenced wandering aimlessly. Then, noticing a sign that said "Citicorp loves you," applied for a loan to start a small business. After being denied the money, he stated to the loan officer. "I think you are guilty of false advertising. You don't love me one bit."

"Why, son, Citicorp loves every one."

"But you denied me a loan."

"That's because we love you, for by denying you the loan, which you would have squandered, we have saved you from declaring bankruptcy and the probable ruin of your financial future."

The lad was disappointed in his failure to find a person who loved him, but he persisted in his quest. Certainly a religious environment would be teeming with loving people,

so he entered the first church he came upon.

"Do you love me?" he asked the holy man in attendance.

"God loves everyone, my son."

"Not God. You, do you love me? Would you be willing to sacrifice your comfort for my ease?"

"Do you belong to my faith?"

"I would if you loved me."

"A full membership with Sunday School for the kids and golf lessons every other Thursday, costs \$5,000 a year."

"That's too steep for me."

"Then, I suggest you try the church across the street. They don't have our over-head."

Across the street, in front of the church, there was a political candidate standing on a soap box soliciting votes.

"I'll give mine to you," the lad said, "if you love me."

"I'm all for gay and lesbian rights, 100 percent," answered the pol, "but I'm deep into heterosexuality."

"No, love meaning your willingness to sacrifice your ease for my well-being."

"Hey guy, I love this country and I love its people. I am the very fountain of love."

"Would you reduce your 100 grand a year government pension and confine your retirement income just to social security, so there could be more for the rest of us?"

"I earned that pension," replied the pol angrily. "While you were out making millions in our fabulous free enterprise system, I was slaving away in the halls of Congress."

"I work part-time for minimum wage at Wal-Mart."

"Don't blame me for your shortcomings," spat out the pol, picking up his soap box and moving to another location.

Finally, our hero came upon an old, bedraggled hermit, who, when asked the usual question replied, "I am as poor as a man can be. I have nothing of economic value to give you, my lad, however, I would ask you the same question, 'whom do you love?' Perhaps, in the answer to that, your search will be over."



Maine Solidarity Calendar

March 1 - April 26, 2003 (updated and with more info at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>)

Saturday, March 1st

Film: "Tough Guise"

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Phone: 861-8131

Web: www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org
Location: Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville

Info: Part of the Hardy Girls, Healthy Women Film Series: Rethinking Gender: The Effects of Media and Pop Culture on Boys. Discussion follows. \$5

Agenda For Change Conference

Time: 1:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Phone: 753-6574

Email: rodrigue@usm.maine.edu
Location: L-A College, Lewiston
Info: "Agenda for Change: Social Justice, Faith, and Families in the 21st Century"

Sunday, March 2nd

Human Rights Watch Film Festival

Phone: 773-6354

Email: jcourtne@maine.rr.com

Web: www.hrw.org/iff/2002/about.html

Location: SPACE, 538 Congress St., Portland

Info: see page 22. Continues to Sun, Mar 9

Monday, March 3rd

Sustainable Communication Workshop

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Phone: 342-4700

Email: pneumatoad@acadia.net

Location: Rockland Public Library
Info: Free; with Cathy Gilmer

Tuesday, March 4th

Good Jobs for Maine: A Justice Issue

Time: 7:00 PM
Phone: 942-6781

Email: ironan@bts.edu

Location: Bangor Theological Seminary
Info: Panel Discussion with Rep. Sean Faircloth and Lisa Pohlmann of the Maine Center for Economic Policy. Free.

Wednesday, March 5th

Introduction to Organic Agriculture

Phone: 568-4142

Email: mofga@mofga.org

Location: MOFGA/ CGF Site, Unity
Info: Workshop with Eric Sideman.

Student Strike Day & Anti-War Rally

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Email: resist207@riseup.net

Web: <http://www.nyspc.net>

Location: Congress Square, Portland
Info: Against War on Iraq & In Solidarity with the International Student Strike. We call on people of ALL ages who oppose this War. Bring your signs, banners, food, drums, and instruments. Walk out of your classes, leave your job if you can, stop by on your lunch break, just COME!

Friday, March 7th

Amnesty International Benefit Concert

Phone: 832-6863

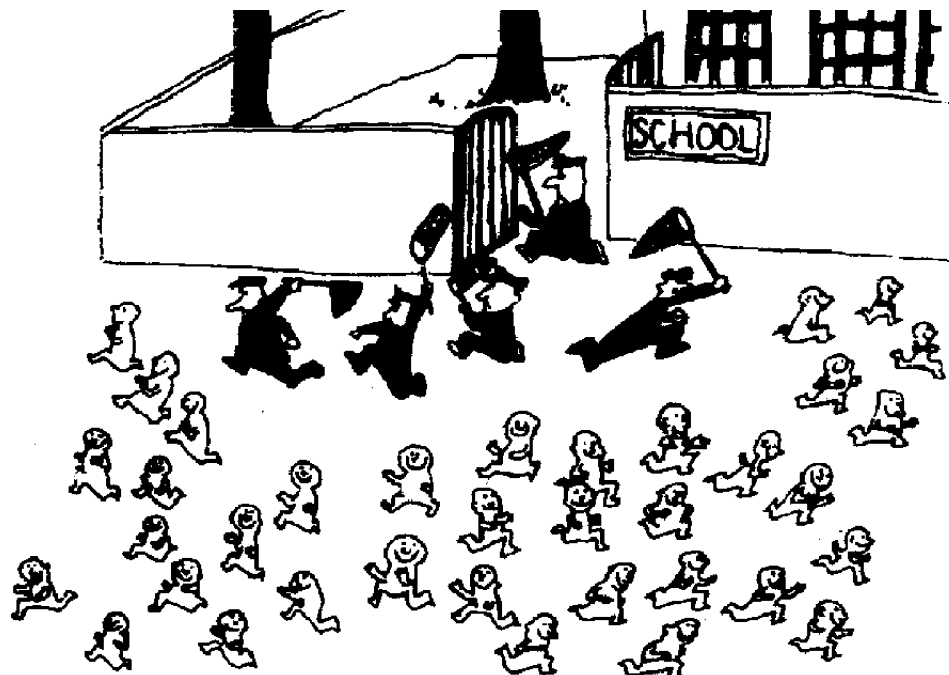
Location: Pickard Theater, Brunswick

"Waking up French"

Phone: 236-1034

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Farnsworth Museum, Rockland
Info: Film on Maine's French Canadian culture. Free.



Featured Events: Student Strike Day, March 5th, and Youth Activism Gathering, April 21st.

Saturday, March 8th

International Women's Day Events

Phone: 871-0618 or 799-0864

Email: karenddl@clinic.net

Location: Chestnut St. Church and Monument Square, Portland
Info: Sponsored by Portland NOW. Banner-making 10 AM ; walk to Monument Square; potluck lunch (1 PM) at Chestnut St. Church.

Maine Jewish Film Festival

Phone: 831-7495

Email: filmfest@mjff.org

Web: <http://www.mjff.org>

Location: Several locations in Portland. Continues to Thursday, March 13.

Solidarity Benefit For GNP Workers

Time: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Phone: 989-4141

Location: GBA-CLC Union Hall, Ayer St., Brewer
Info: Benefit Supper sponsored by the Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council and Food AND Medicine. Music, food and prizes! Tickets: \$0-20.

Wednesday, March 12

"Blood Makes the Grass Grow"

Time: 6:00 PM

Email: awinter@gwi.net

Location: Lithgow Library, Augusta
Info: Free. Film interviews 6 of the 2500 US soldiers who attempted to become conscientious objectors during the Gulf War.

Saturday, March 15

Civil Liberties & the Patriot Act Forum

Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Phone: 548-2749

Email: mmyers@acadia.net

Location: Troy Howard School, Belfast
Info: Sponsored by the Bill of Rights Defense Committee.

Film: "Game Over"

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Phone: 861-8131

Web: www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org

Location: Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville

Info: See Hardy Girls listing March 1st

Wednesday, March 19th

"The New Nuclear Danger"

Time: 6:00 PM

Phone: 338-4920

Location: Belfast Library

Info: Helen Caldicott speech on video.

Tuesday, March 25th

"Anchor of the Soul"

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Phone: 594-1478

Location: Rockland Public Library

Info: Video on history of African-Americans in Maine.

Friday, March 28th

"Take It From Me: Life after Welfare"

Time: 7:00 PM

Phone: 942-9343

Email: info@peacectr.net

Location: Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine, Bangor

Info: Video showing with discussion

Saturday, March 29th

People's Free Space Benefit Show

Time: 7:30 PM

Phone: 829-3512

Email: peoplesfreespace@riseup.net

Location: SPACE 538 Congress St, Portland

Info: Bloodletters: Heavy experimental psychedelic rock. Cerebus Shoal: Avant garde craziness.

Saturday, April 5th

Film: "Wrestling With Manhood"

Info: Same time, place, contact, and info as March 1st "Tough Guise" film listing.

Monday, April 14th

"Take It From Me: Life after Welfare"

Time: 6:00PM

Email: awinter@gwi.net

Location: Lithgow Library, Augusta

Info: Video Showing with discussion. Free.

Monday, April 21st

Youth Activism Gathering

Phone: 778-3402

Email: jlambert@justice.com

Location: Evergreen School, Hallowell

Info: See page 5.

Saturday, April 26th

9th Annual HOPE Festival

Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Phone: 942-9343

Email: info@peacectr.org

Location: Brewer Auditorium

Info: Ninth annual HOPE (Help Organize Peace Earthwide) Festival with 60 social action groups displaying information, entertainment, and a great children's program.

Monthly Repeating Events

Mondays

Maine Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty Meetings

Phone: 884-7407

Location: Canterbury House, Orono

Info: 1st Monday of each month.

Free Space Free School

Time: 5:30 PM

Email: peoplesfreespace@riseup.net

Web: <http://pfs.dod.net>

Location: Portland West, 181 Brackett St., Portland

Info: 1st Mondays. Potluck starts at 5:30, Workshops begin at 6:30. Contact us if you want to offer a workshop.

Clean Clothes Campaign Meetings

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Phone: 947-4203

Location: Peace & Justice Center, Bangor
Info: Working to eliminate sweatshops and to encourage Bangor area businesses to carry clothing made in a socially responsible way. Meets 1st Monday of month.

Greater Bangor NOW Chapter meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Phone: Day 989-3306, Evening 947-5337

Location: Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, 362 Harlow Street, Bangor
Info: Meets 3rd Monday of month.

Peace Action Maine Disarmament Committee Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM

Phone: 772-0680

Location: Peace & Justice Center, 1 Pleasant St, 4th floor, Portland
Info: Meets 1st Monday each month.

Tuesdays

Maine Time Dollar Network Monthly Gathering

Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Phone: 874-9868

Email: robin@mtdn.org

Web: <http://www.mtdn.org>

Location: The Family Workshop, 215 Congress Street, Portland
Info: Potluck. Time Dollars are a community currency in Portland. Share great food and conversation, while building community and having fun. 4th Tuesday each month.

Waldo County Peace and Justice Group

Time: 7:00 PM

Phone: 338-0406

Email: s_lauchlan@hotmail.com

Location: UU Church, 37 Miller St, Belfast
Info: Meets 1st Tuesday each month.

Wednesdays

REEL Men Gathering

Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Phone: 786-4697

Email: acla@gwi.net

Location: Lewiston

Info: Monthly gathering & movie night for gay/bi men men & gay/bi identified trans-men of all ages. 3rd Wednesday of month.



Maine's Anti-War Movement Heats Up

Peace Rally Speech, February 15, 2003 St. Mary's Church, Presque Isle, Maine

BY CHARLOTTE ALDEBRON, AGE 12

When people think about bombing Iraq, they see a picture in their heads of Saddam Hussein in a military uniform, or maybe soldiers with big black mustaches carrying guns, or the mosaic of George Bush Sr. on the lobby floor of the Al-Rashid Hotel with the word "criminal". But guess what? More than half of Iraq's 24 million people are children under the age of 15.

That's 12 million kids. Kids like me. Well, I'm almost 13, so some are a little older, and some a lot younger, some boys instead of girls, some with brown hair, not red. But kids who are pretty much like me just the same.

So take a look at me-- good long look. Because I am what you should see in your head when you think about bombing Iraq. I am what you are going to destroy.

If I am lucky, I will be killed instantly, like the three hundred children murdered by your "smart" bombs in a Baghdad bomb shelter on February 16, 1991. The blast caused a fire so intense that it flash-burned outlines of those children and their mothers on the walls; you can still peel strips of blackened skin--souvenirs of your victory--from the stones.

But maybe I won't be lucky and I'll die slowly, like 14-year-old Ali Faisal, who right now is on the "death ward" of the Baghdad children's hospital. He has malignant lymphoma (cancer) caused by the depleted uranium in your Gulf War missiles.

Or maybe I will die painfully and needlessly like 18-month-old Mustafa, whose vital organs are being devoured by sand fly parasites. I know it's hard to believe, but Mustafa could be totally cured with just \$25 worth of medicine, but there is none of this medicine because of your sanctions.

Or maybe I won't die at all but will live for years with the psychological damage that you can't see from the outside, like Salman Mohammed, who even now can't forget the terror he lived through with his little sisters when you bombed Iraq in 1991.

Salman's father made the whole family sleep in the same room so that they would all survive together, or die together. He still has nightmares about the air raid sirens.

Or maybe I will be orphaned like Ali, who was three when you killed his father in the Gulf War. Ali scraped at the dirt covering

his father's grave every day for three years calling out to him, "It's all right Daddy, you can come out now, the men who put you here have gone away." Well, Ali, you're wrong. It looks like those men are coming back.

Or I maybe I will make it in one piece, like Luay Majed, who remembers that the Gulf War meant he didn't have to go to school

and could stay up as late as he wanted. But today, with no education, he tries to live by selling newspapers on the street.

Imagine that these are your children--or nieces or nephews or neighbors. Imagine your son screaming from the agony of a severed limb, but you can't do anything to ease the pain or comfort him.

Imagine your daughter crying out from under the rubble of a collapsed building, but you can't get to her.

Imagine your children wandering the streets, hungry and alone, after having

watched you die before their eyes.

This is not an adventure movie or a fantasy or a video game. This is reality for children in Iraq.

Recently, an international group of researchers went to Iraq to find out how children there are being affected by the possibility of war. Half the children they talked to said they saw no point in living any more. Even really young kids knew about war and worried about it.

One 5-year-old, Assem, described it as "guns and bombs and the air will be cold and hot and we will burn very much." Ten-year-old Aesar had a message for President Bush: he wanted him to know that "A lot of Iraqi children will die. You will see it on TV and then you will regret."

Back in elementary school I was taught to solve problems with other kids not by hitting or name-calling, but by talking and using "I" messages. The idea of an "I" message was to make the other person understand how bad his or her actions made you feel, so that the person would sympathize with you and stop it.

Now I am going to give you an "I" message.

Only it's going to be a "We" message. "We" as in all the children in Iraq who are waiting helplessly for something bad to happen. "We" as in the children of the world who don't make any of the decisions but have to suffer all the consequences. "We" as in those whose voices are too small and too far away to be heard.

We feel scared when we don't know if we'll live another day.

We feel angry when people want to kill us or injure us or steal our future.

We feel sad because all we want is a mom and a dad who we know will be there the next day.

And, finally, we feel confused because we don't even know what we did wrong.

In Memory of Peter Holmes

1934 - 2003

Longtime Maine Social Justice Activist
(and Maker of Irreverent Signs)

Pictured here at the November 17th, 2001 Anti-War rally in Kennebunk

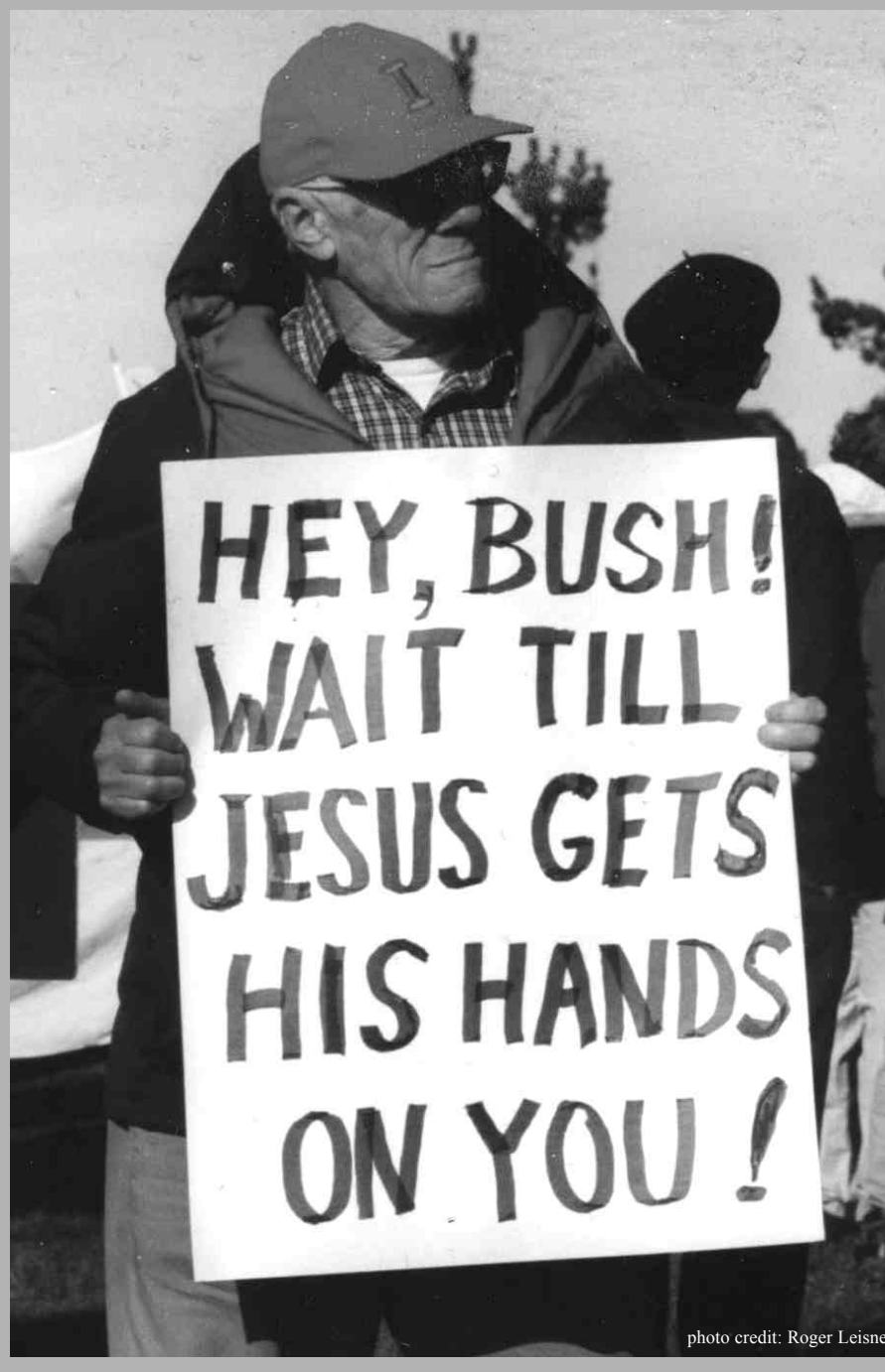


photo credit: Roger Leisner

Charlotte Aldebron, 12, attends Cunningham Middle School in Presque Isle, Maine.

Comments may be sent to Charlotte's mom, Jillian Aldebron: aldebron@ainop.com



Newsire Posts of February 15th events around Maine:

People in over 15 Maine towns organized actions against war in Iraq for February 15th, the international day of action against the war, & turnout was in the thousands for the state. The weekend of February 15th & 16th saw the largest coordinated anti-war actions to ever take place in the world. Between 10 and 30 MILLION people gathered on February 15th and 16th, on every continent of the world (yes, EVERY continent, including over 50 people in Antarctica) to oppose the Bush administration's planned war on Iraq. The thousands of events that took place around the world were locally organized responses to a general call put out by groups around the world. The following is a roundup of reports of events that occurred in Maine on Sunday, February 15th, 2002. These reports were posted on the newsire at www.maineindymedia.org. The newsire is open to all people to post news on. Directions on how to post to the newsire are on the Maine Indymedia website, under "Publish To the Newsire."

Some numbers:

- Over 30 people in Farmington, & spirited crowds in Kezar Falls & Clinton.
- From Barbara: 25 for Lewiston-Auburn bridge today--another small but spirited group.
- From Gretchen: We had only a few in Calais, but we were there!
- From Tim: We had over 40 in Rockland, & about a dozen each in Camden, Lincolnville, Rockport & Thomaston!
- Eastport had 15 people downtown at Overlook Park.
- Lubec had 10 at the Flatiron Corner.

Over 400 Rally in Bangor!

Roxanne 6:36pm Sat Feb 15 '03

The people of Bangor & its neighboring towns took to the streets! We had somewhere around 400 plus in Bangor; I think there were more (like 600) but there are varying counts. Despite a huge wind chill (TV said -35 below this morning), there was an energized crowd that gathered at the Federal Building -- so huge a crowd that we were on both sides of Harlow Street, with police clearing the street for vehicles.

We marched with 'mother drum' leading through downtown Bangor on Main Street, up Harlow Street past City Hall & Bangor Public Library & back to the Federal Building. Quick passionate speeches by Doug Allen & Francine Stark. I led the crowd in megaphone chants & we sung a version of "Study War No More." Afterwards, many people packed into the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine on Park Street for a speak-out, good food, warm drinks, caucusing & strategizing on how to get the resolution through Bangor City Council, & listening to live coverage from NYC.

Bangor had good press coverage -- TV Channel 5's Alan Grover followed us through the march & did a GREAT job covering it on the 6 pm news (I have it taped). TV Channel 7 was there, as well as the Bangor Daily News & their photographer.

Report from Ellsworth

by Hugh Curran 11:54am Sun Feb 16 '03

In Ellsworth, at the Union River Bridge a very surprising turnout of over 90 people of all ages attended the Bridges for Peace Vigil. ...Scarves & heavy parkas, work clothes & thick mittens were the dress of the day. Participants included ministers, doctors, teachers, carpenters, homemakers, farmers, high school & college students. They ranged in age from 6 year old children to 80 year old grandparents. There were drummers & chanters & people who held peace flags & peace banners & peace signs. There were people who traveled from Machias & Milbridge, from Holden, Hancock, Lamoine & Mount Desert Island & from the Blue Hill peninsula. There were Veterans for Peace who took the full brunt of the wind for two hours. There were people whose eyes teared in the bitter cold without complaint & there were others who barely suppressed their tears for the victims of an unneeded & unnecessary & still preventable war.

150 in Presque Isle!

by Jillian Aldebron 11:50am Sun Feb 16 '03

You won't believe this, but there was a real live peace demonstration & prayer vigil in Presque Isle yesterday with 150 people. I know this sounds really paltry, but you can't imagine how spectacular it is for that to happen HERE. Participants crossed all ideological, age, & socio-economic lines. There were speeches and prayers by a Catholic priest, Congregational minister, Episcopalian minister, Methodist minister, someone from Veterans for Peace, someone who was a nurse in Vietnam (!), a couple of Maliseet Indians who welcomed us to their land (!) & sang a ritual song that greets the morning, a local (published) poet/English professor at the university who read a very good ironic poem about duct tape, me (on behalf of MGIP), & my 12-year-old daughter Charlotte. Of course, Charlotte made everyone cry -- including the Methodist minister & the Maliseets, who followed her speech & kept choking up. We made about 50 signs & plonked them upright in the snow around the Catholic Church where we met to proclaim our commitment to peace, for all the world to see, even when we were inside.

And after the speeches we all went outside -- it was -20 without windchill, & an estimated -35 to -50 with -- and "gave witness". It was right on Main Street in Presque Isle so everyone could see us -- we all grabbed the signs out of the snow & held them aloft. Charlotte & I only lasted about 5 minutes outside -- we were crying from the cold. But most people held out for a full 10 minutes while a pastor read a prayer. Several people expressed interest in MGIP & asked how to get more involved. The best part was a filled to overflowing sign-up sheet of people who want to stay informed & active in advocating against an invasion of Iraq.

Over 200 Rally in Waterville

by hillary 12:39pm Sat Feb 15 '03

Over 200 people gathered in 0 degree F weather (windchill -20 degrees) on the bridge on Kennedy Memorial Drive in Waterville from 12-2pm today to stand against the war. They included many locals, at least one city councilor (TJ Tavares), one

district representative (Marilyn Canavan), parents & children, workers, & students. Ralliers were met with overwhelming support from passing motorists.

Frozen Radical reflects on Portland F15

by Treebeard 8:07pm Sat Feb 15 '03

February 15th in Portland, Maine was one of those deceptively sunny winter days. You wake up, look outside the window & think: Spring! But one palm on the glass pane & you know it's colder than Ashcroft's heart out there. 14 degrees was the high for the day, with winds north at 10-15 mph. But it's Maine, & that's the way it is. So you multi-layer yourself, hats, hoods, scarves, gloves & mittens. Lots of water, a fat breakfast of carbs, & you hit the streets.

In Portland, the plan was to have three marches begin from separate ends of town & meet together in Monument Sq. One march would leave from the University of Southern Maine, one from South Portland (crossing the Casco Bay Bridge), & one from Munjoy Hill (East End of Portland). Since I live on 'the hill', I made my way to the intersection of Congress St. & the Eastern Prom where the East End march was supposed to begin. I'll have to admit that I was worried about the numbers. You see this whole day of actions in Portland had been grassroots organized by a loose group of folks with zero budget. And sure there were flyers up all over town (and beyond), & hundreds of e-mails had been sent out, & media contacts informed, BUT I was still worried. Would it just be a hundred of the usual suspects? If you'll allow me to digress further for a second here, I'd like to lash out at the mainstream press while on the topic of 'getting the word out'. No matter what you think of the corporate Seattle owned 'Portland Press Herald', the fact is lots of people read it. And so the organizers contacted the paper through several people, several times. Did they make mention of the actions before hand? No, not at all. And why? Good question. Why don't you call & ask them. Well, anyhow, as I got closer to the Eastern Prom I began to see the people. There were probably a hundred or more of them lined up behind & on the snow banks that bordered the road. They were of all ages, including many young children with home made kid-scrawled signs. My heart rose as I began to realize that this was going to be one hell of a day!

After taking in the scene for a few minutes, I announced to those assembled that I had extra cardboard (saved over the past month from my job) & markers if folks who were without wanted to make signs. There were many takers, especially among the kids. As I wandered around, & people made more signs, others were pouring in by the dozens. Our ranks began to swell & people began to get the marching-itch. People began asking me when & where we were going - I think they thought I was "in charge" or something because I brought extra supplies. I explained that I wasn't a leader & that perhaps when more people arrived (they kept coming & coming) we could all talk about our plans. Eventually, as the cold settled into our stationary bones & the urge to march grew stronger, I stood up on a snow bank to try & spark a discussion on which way to go. Before I could say any-

thing however, the crowd began to spontaneously march down Congress St! So be it! And we were off....

The march filled up both lanes of Congress street as it marched down Munjoy Hill. There were chants, drumming, shouting, lots of grins, talking, & excitement. A few people from houses bordering the street yelled out negative comments to us, but every other person we ran into either joined us or encouraged us with their support. As we reached the base of Munjoy Hill we realized that it was still early & the marches weren't expected to converge on Monument Sq. until 2:00. So, at the base of the hill we turned left at the graveyard, then right on Federal, down to India where we turned right & back up onto Congress. Back on Congress we took both lanes, slowed the march down, & made our way towards the square. Suddenly, as we passed City Hall, we could make out those already gathered at the Square. When the two groups saw each other the drumming, dancing, & screaming rose to a fevered pitch.

The mass of people at Monument Sq. was awe inspiring! A good third of the crowd had taken the street between the public library & the square. Others climbed the war monument & hung signs. The energy built & built as more people arrived from all directions. Within the crowd in front of the library were two Portland Police officers attempting to be "undercover". They wore bjas, & tried to look like a cross between Hippies & Anarchists. Portland is a small town & so many of us recognized them immediately from previous protests. I snapped a few pictures of them, both with their bandanas pulled up & without. Apparently two cops (one that was there) had also shown up at the last organizing meeting as well. Around 2:15-2:30 we all took to the streets again for a unified mass march around Portland. The march wound its way through the Old Port, down Exchange & towards the Oil Rig being build at the old Bath Iron Works. I handed out sidewalk chalk which was used generously by protesters throughout the downtown to add Hearts, Peace Signs, & other messages such as the one on the Portland Press Herald Building: "No More Media Lies" or the one on the Maine State Bank building: "Capitalism Feeds War". The march finally made its way back down Congress to Monument Sq.

While some people began to trickle away, & others made towards the warmth & food of the indoor speak-out at the Maine College of Art, others took to the streets again, finally ending up outside MECA. Here the drumming & dancing continued as we reclaimed the public space. Inside Food Not Bombs & others had hot soup, bread, & other food waiting. People packed the hall there to network, speak at an open mike, & warm up. Eventually the street actions ended - with a final one person die-in (complete with coffin) in the middle of Congress St. - & everyone moved indoors. Inside at the Speak Out we sang songs, told stories, read statements, & talked about the day & the War. Literature was available at several tables.



Respect Your Enemies— The First Rule of Peace:

An Essay Addressed to the U. S. Anti-war Movement. Pt 2: War and the Crisis of Neoliberalism

BY GEORGE CAFFENTZIS, MIDNIGHT NOTES

Many opponents of the war against Iraq have made the slogan of the anti-Gulf War movement of 1990/91, "No Blood for Oil," their own. There is no doubt that the control of oil prices and oil stocks is an important motivation now as it was twelve years ago. But much has changed in this period and the challenges George W. Bush's administration faces are quite different from his father's. One of the problems of seeing these differences has a lot to do with names, for the "Bush" and "Hussein" still seem to dominate the story and a thousand oil derricks form the backdrop of an eternal family drama. In this part of the essay I want to emphasize that the present conjuncture is radically different from the glory days of George Herbert Walker Bush's New World Order. The new dimension is that the neoliberalism, which was only beginning to take over the world in 1990, is now in deep crisis.

We are told that Communism collapsed in 1989, but many have argued that the political economy of post-WWII capitalism, Keynesianism, collapsed a decade before to be replaced by a system that is called neoliberalism and/or globalization. This system claims that the basic institution of modern society ought to be the Market not the State, and that the best form of all social interactions is the commodity form. This conception of social life had a great propaganda triumph with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist bloc. More importantly, it set into motion a remarkable shift in the economic policies of most Third World countries that opened them to foreign investment, lower tariffs, and unrestricted movement of money across their borders. Finally, it undermined the guarantees of subsistence (early retirement, unemployment benefits, health care, free education, etc.) that the working class in Western Europe and North America had won in a century of struggle.

Up until July 1997, the supporters of this political economy seemed invincible. Then, the "Asian Financial Crisis" struck. Ever since, there have been breathtaking reversals that have put neoliberalism into question more rapidly than the rapid pace of its triumphs. The recent stock market bubble burstings, the recessions, the financial system collapses, the dramatic devaluations, and the dot.com fiascoes constitute an international crisis of neoliberalism and globalization -- but not simply because the 1990s globalization boom ended in the "loss" of trillions of dollars.

They signaled a serious ideological defeat. At the very moment of this crisis, an international anti-globalization movement had taken to the streets of the major cities of the planet to contest the institutions of the neoliberal order. This post-Cold War oppositional movement, especially after the anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle at the end

of 1999, voiced a powerful critique of the system whose truth literally materialized before the world's eyes at the instant of its articulation.

Equally problematic was the inability of this neoliberal regime to actually increase wages and income for a decisive part of the U.S. proletariat and the "middle classes" in the Third World in the 1990s. Neoliberalism is often called a 20/80 system. If it can dramatically increase the incomes of at least 20% of a country's or the world's population, then the other 80% could be forced to go along with the project. Whatever the wisdom of this cynicism, by the beginning of the 21st century neoliberalism's failure to do even this was becoming clear.

In the U.S., for example, the more than twenty years of real wage decline was reversed in 1997, and for the following two years the average real wages increased modestly. This was the first consistent multiple-year increase since the 1960s. But by 2000 this increase had halted, and real wages have stagnated since. A similar prob-

lem revealed itself in Africa, Latin America and much of post-1997 Asia (with Communist China as an exception): the "middle classes" were being decimated. This failure was especially revealed in the Argentine bank deposit freeze in the last year which reversed the gains of Argentina's 20% and have made them sworn enemies of neoliberalism.

That should give the antiwar movement pause. *The Bush Administration takes power not in a moment of business-as-usual, but in the midst of a systemic crisis that transcends a mere recessionary blip in the US.*

The Bush Administration's answer to the crisis of liberalism is simple: War. The 1980s and 1990s saw the building of an elaborate international regime of trade, capital transfer and money flow, but it did not see the development of an institution of violence that would enforce the rules of neoliberalism. Nor was there on the historical horizon an international body of armed men and women that would have the global monopoly of violence. The Clinton/Gore

effort to create a such body through the UN -- one the U.S. government could control from behind the scenes under the guise of a formal equality among national participants -- was anathema to the most powerful fraction of the U.S. ruling class. Its suspicion of Clinton's efforts was behind the extraordinary animus expressed in the impeachment proceedings of 1998 and the electoral coup of 2000. There was a genuine fear that the Clintonites would sign away, on a formal level at least, the U.S.'s imperial role in the 21st century.

Supporters of the Bush administration often describe this role by analogy with the place of the British empire in the 19th century world system. That century's international gold standard and free trade (called economic liberalism) required a hegemonic state that would make sure that the rules of the system were followed. That state was Great Britain. A central ideological problem with liberalism both old and new is that it presents itself as an autonomous, self-regulating system, but it is not. It needs to have an enforcer, since individuals and governments, especially those who are being put into crisis or are chronic losers, are tempted to break the rules. In the 21st century, according to this reasoning, the only state that could play Great Britain's role is the United States.

Why then is Iraq first on the hit list? Clearly, Iraq's oil reserves and role in OPEC makes it an attractive target for an administration that is literally steeped in the oil industry. The U.S. government wants to turn Iraq into the ideal neoliberal oil state.

But there is an additional reason for Iraq having the dubious honor of being the first test case for the hegemonic role of the US: weapons of mass destruction. If the U.S. is to be the enforcer of neoliberalism, it must have a virtual monopoly on these weapons. But Saddam Hussein's regime has been very interested in investing in industrial development that has in the past also been used to develop chemical and biological weapons. These weapons were used extensively in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The Bush administration has put forward a doctrine with respect to Iraq that, if generalized, would look something like this:

(1) Almost any advanced technological production process can be used to create "weapons of mass destruction."

(2) Any such production process not directly controlled by a multinational corporation (MNC) headquartered in the US (or Japan or Western Europe) can be used by a government to create weapons of mass destruction.

(3) No government outside a list agreed upon by the US government ought to have the capacity to build weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, no government (whether democratically elected or not) outside of the agreed list can be allowed to exist unless its advanced technology is controlled by an acceptable MNC.



photo credit: V. Kelly Bellis

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LENNON

A few very cold peace activists stand on the bridge in Ellsworth on Feb. 15, 2003. Over 90 rallied in Ellsworth, adding their numbers to thousands who protested in Maine and millions worldwide.


NEWS: CONTINUED FROM PG. 12

The day ended - at least for this frozen radical - with an extremely powerful performance art piece by a young woman. Wearing nothing but a thin summer all white dress (a vision of beauty & innocence), with daisies in her hair, she wheeled a 50 gallon barrel full of blood (not real, but lookin' real!) down Congress St to City Hall. The sun was down & now it was damn cold! I was wearing at least 5 layers & freezing - yet there she was - now standing in front of City Hall as the 5pm bells begin to toll. She spilt the blood on the ground & began to pluck the flowers from her hair & toss them in the pool of blood under her

feet. It was incredibly moving. Thankfully, her friends were there to immediately throw coats & blankets over her afterwards.

What a great day - especially when you reflect that we were part of an estimated [11] million people world wide who came out today to tell the United States Government that WE DON'T WANT YOUR WAR! It was really wonderful to see so many people out in the cold weather, & to see such diversity! Let's do this again sometime soon....

(Ed Note: Reports of the amount of people at the Portland march ranged from 700 to 2,500.)

Excerpt from a Newswire post (written in Brazil, as part of the Maine Solidarity Delegation trip) by Hillary Lister, 02.04.03

One thing that really struck me amidst all the beauty and amazing experiences and people and great food and hot weather - A good portion of my conversations consisted of showing the photobook of various events and protests in Maine that I'd put together prior to traveling to Brazil, and working hard (either through a translator or in broken Spanish/Portuguese) to convince the other person that there are very large amounts of people in America who don't support Bush or war on Iraq, that Americans really aren't all behind the Bush regime, that the mainstream media lies about the amount of support in the US for the Bush regime.

This conversation recurred many times, with random people on the buses, business owners, vendors, people I met at the Youth Camp, even with many activists who don't trust the mainstream media in general. It was really eye-opening how it seemed almost every person I randomly encountered and talked with would first ask, upon finding I was an American, if or why I liked Bush, and then was truly shocked and surprised to learn that I didn't support his regime or its policies, how they were surprised that even an American attending the Forum would not support the Bush regime. It really sunk in for me that the corporate media is doing a very effective job of creating a picture of America for the rest of the world that can only lead to more hate, resentment, and demonizing of everyone in the US, and is creating an environment that is ripe for another twin-towers style attack.

**"As Goes Maine, So Goes The Nation ...":
Cities (and Towns and Schools and States) for Peace**

Maine may lead the nation if the state Senate passes a resolution urging George Bush to look toward diplomatic solutions -- instead of war -- when dealing with Iraq. This resolution, sponsored by Portland State Senator Ethan Strimling, passed in the Senate, was revised and passed in the House, and then was sent back to the Senate for approval, where it is tabled as of this writing. While people are waiting to hear the results of the Maine resolution, many Maine towns and cities are actively passing their own resolutions, joining the 107 cities in the US that have currently passed resolutions. Hallowell, Orono, Portland, and Waterville, as well as Bates College have already passed resolutions, and resolutions are currently before the town governments of Bangor, Camden, and Farmington, and Bowdoin and Colby Colleges. On Mount Desert Island, the Bar Harbor Town Council has called a special "open-floor" town meeting in which debate on the resolution can take place. This special meeting was called after the Town Council decided twice to take no action on similar resolutions brought before it. To find out more about anti-war resolutions in Maine and around the country, you can contact Cities for Peace, a nation-wide growing coalition of local elected officials and concerned citizens working to get City Councils and other civic bodies to pass resolutions against a war on Iraq. You can visit their website at: www.citiesforpeace.org, or call them at 202-234-9382, ext. 228. If you have email, you can also join the Maine Peace & Justice listserve for daily updates and discussion on anti-war organizing in Maine by visiting lists.psouth.net/mailman/listinfo/mepeaceandjustice.

For those without Internet, contact Peace Action Maine at **P.O. Box 3842, Portland, ME 04104**, or by phone at **207-772-0680** or the Eastern Maine Peace & Justice Center at **170 Park Street, Bangor, ME 04401** or by phone at **207-942-9343**.

Mainers March ...Away

BY W.T. WHITNEY JR

Maine people went to New York on February 15. Many of us rode through the night on four filled up buses. Coming out at 42nd Street, we were at once swallowed up by hundreds of thousands of other human beings. You know why they were there.

Five bus-mates headed out together. The crowd on Lexington Avenue took Robert away. Then Todd was swept off by a surge down 52nd St. Rick, Carolyn, and the present writer marched block after block up 2nd Avenue, which was full of people and for the most part devoid of cars. Masses of people were looking for a passage to the sea, to 1st avenue. The police were blocking the streets. Rick stopped to take pictures, and he too was gone.

Carolyn worried. Would Rick make it back to Shea Stadium and the buses? So up and down the Avenue we went, against the current, looking for Rick. We saw, heard, and felt great waves of signs, bird puppets, drums, and marchers. They were coming at us, old and young, all the world's people, well off people, working people.

We patrolled the Avenue for nearly two hours, and they came on and on. They were upbeat, but above all else, intense and serious. This was an army of winter soldiers.

At 71st St. the police let them go east to First Avenue, where forty blocks of human beings were jammed into mobile police pens listening to speeches by TuTu, Belefonte, Angela Davis, Julian Bond, Pete Seeger, and many others. Only one person from our busload of 55 reached 1st Avenue and saw the stage. Another was close enough to hear speeches via the sound system.

Several times Carolyn borrowed cell phones to call her literary agent who was out there on the street, somewhere. They would not meet that day, nor would other friends find each other. Too many of their brothers and sisters had come between them.

The police and the City had ruled: No Permit! No March! But we thought we saw people marching. There was every appearance of a march. They came on and on.

You do the math. Multiply one to five thousand people per block, 25 to 30 blocks per avenue, three avenues, and street after avenue, here and there, all over New York. From portable radios came reports of millions in Rome, millions in London, hundreds of thousands in Berlin, in Spain. We knew that in almost 700 U.S. cities and towns, people were marching, 500 back in Bangor, Maine, 200 in Augusta, 1000 in Portland. All over the world they were saying, "No." In New York, we felt "wicked good." That's a Maine expression.

Carolyn was wearing her militia jacket and holding up a sign that said, "Shoot your TV." There were cartoons on it of little people laid low by the media. Every five minutes or so someone was taking pictures of her sign. Rick was fine, arriving home after 26 hours on the road and on the streets. The light in his chicken house was still on. The temperatures had been 20 degrees on 2nd Ave, 8 degrees below zero on Yagger Rd, Norway, Maine. The winds were cold in both locales, but winds of affirmation and resistance were blowing too.

Bridges For Peace
Sunday Bridges for Peace

All vigils will take place from 12 noon - 1pm each Sunday.

(If there is contact information, you might want to contact the organizers to guarantee that Bridges will be occurring each Sunday):

Augusta, Memorial Bridge, Jeanne Schork, 623 3761, keggi@prexar.com

Bath, Gretchen, rivers@lincoln.midcoast.com

Belfast, most will be meeting in town rather than on bridge, Nan Stone, 338-5559, coverlock@hotmail.com

Calais, Tom Miller, Tmiller@T-online.de and Jerry Storm 255 8635

Damariscotta, Main St., joebren@lincoln.midcoast.com

Falmouth, Route 1, ladyofwoods@peoplepc.com; debbie@peaceactionme.org

Lewiston, Renee Cote, Reneec42@aol.com

Lincolntonville, Duck Trap River Valerie Behrens, cschool@cschool.acadia.net

Portland, Casco Bay Bridge, greg@peaceactionme.org

Rockland, Tim Sullivan, sullboat@gwi.net

Saco, Don Kimball, 773 4331, DonKimballJr@aol.com

Thomaston, Thomaston/Warren Rt 1 bridge, haviland@midcoast.com

Topsham, Green Bridge

Waterville, at the bridge where KMD and Silver St. meet (near the Waterville House of Pancakes), Charlie, Ron, rturcotte@midmaine.com

Wiscasset, adburt@wiscasset.net

Friday Bridge for Peace

Ellsworth, Union River Bridge, 5-6:00 PM, Hugh, hcurran@downeast.net



Maine Solidarity Calendar (continued from pg.10)

People's Free Space Meeting

Time: 7:30 PM
Location: Portland West, 181 Brackett St, Portland
Info: We are organizing a community space in Portland. Come to get involved & offer input. Every 1st Wednesday is Movie Night. Every 3rd Wednesday is a film and discussion night.

Thursdays

Peninsula P & J Potluck Supper

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Phone: 326-4405
Email: robbins@downeast.net
Location: Congregational Church, Blue Hill
Info: 2nd Thursday each month. Potluck supper and conversation, planning.

Northern Lambda Nord Meeting

Time: 6:30 PM
Phone: 498-2088 or 800-468-2088
Location: GLBT Community Services Center, 658 South Main Street, Caribou
Info: 2nd Thursday each month.

Ellsworth Area Peace & Justice Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Phone: 667-0268
Email: eadams@downeast.net
Info: 2nd Thursday of the month.

Sundays

Yankee Boyz

Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Phone: 783-4630
Email: yankeeboyz@hotmail.com
Web: members.tripod.com/TransSupport/meetings.htm
Location: Unitarian Universalist Church (corner of Pleasant St & Elm St), Auburn
Info: Female to Male Transgender Support Group. A social/support group for those born female and which female and/or "woman" as an identity does not fit. Call ahead to verify meeting is taking place.

"Other"

Downeast Vigil of Hope

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Phone: 546-2961
Location: Steuben Green, Harrington Library & Machias Savings Bank, Machias
Info: Sponsored by Work for Peace. Occurs the 11th of each month. Call for exact locations

Weekly Repeating Events

Sundays

Food Not Bombs Meal

Time: 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM
Email: wynken_blinken@hotmail.com
Web: <http://www.xmbjx.com/fnb>
Location: Monument Square, Portland
Info: Anyone who is hungry is welcome to join us for a free warm vegan meal every Sunday. We also need for more members!

South Berwick Peace Vigil

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Email: renalasel@hotmail.com
Location: War Memorial, Rt 4, S. Berwick

Belfast Women In Black Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM
Location: Southeast corner (Hayford Building) of High & Main St, Belfast
Info: Everyone is Welcome. Wear black to symbolize mourning for all victims of war.

Kennebunk Women in Black Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM
Phone: 985-1459
Location: Main and Water St, Kennebunk

Rockland Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Phone: 273-3247
Email: tims@maine.greens.org
Location: Park & Main St, Rockland

Sanford Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Location: The park in the center of Sanford

Bridges For Peace Vigils

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Phone: 563-5416
Info: See pg. 14 for more info & locations.

Bar Harbor Peace Vigil

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Phone: 288-4365
Location: Village Green, Bar Harbor

Skowhegan Vigil For Peace

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Email: ashahn@kynd.net
Location: Downtown Skowhegan

GLBTQ Congregation Services

Time: 4:00 PM
Phone: 621-2658
Web: <http://www.northernlightsmcc.com>
Location: Northern Lights Metropolitan Community Church, Riverside Drive, Vassalboro, ME
Info: An all-inclusive church meaning that all religions are represented in the congregation, including Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.

Blue Hill Candlelight Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Email: robbins@downeast.net
Location: Grounds of Town Hall, Main St. front lawn, Blue Hill

Mondays

Youth Adelantando Meeting

Time: 5:15 PM - 7:30 PM
Phone: 947-4203
Location: Peace & Justice Center, Bangor
Info: A self-governed group of youth working on building connections between youth in El Salvador & Maine, corporate control, & peace work.

Lewiston Peace Vigil at Kennedy Park

Time: 5:30 PM
Phone: 946-4478
Location: Kennedy Park, Lewiston

Portland Vigil For Peace

Time: 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Monument Square, Portland

Bangor Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Phone: 990-3626 or 1-800-429-1481
Email: drew_eman@hotmail.com
Location: 80 Exchange St, Bangor
Info: Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

Deer Isle Peace Vigil

Time: 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Phone: 348-2511
Location: Rt 15 on the left, Across from Deer Isle Congo church, Deer Isle

Tuesdays

Bangor Candlelight Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Phone: 942-9343
Location: Federal Building, Harlow St., Bangor
Info: BYOC (Bring Your Own Candle)

Portland Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600
Email: outright@outright.org
Web: www.outright.org
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland
Info: Safe drop-in space GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

Rt. 1 Advocacy Group

Time: 7:00 PM
Email: stevbee@midcoast.com
Location: Historical Society, 225 Main St., Warren
Info: Group dedicated to protesting & researching alternatives to the DOT's Route 1 widening project

Gay Men's Support Group Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM
Email: centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com
Location: UU Church, Augusta

Wednesdays

Newcastle Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 12:15 PM
Phone: 563-5416
Location: Newcastle Square Park, Newcastle

Peace Action Maine Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM
Contact: Peace Action Maine
Phone: 772-0680
Email: jennifer@peaceactionme.org
Location: In front of Library, Portland
Info: Vigil to Stop the War

Bucksport Peace Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM
Phone: 469-3946
Location: Municipal Building, Main St, Bucksport

Let Cuba Live Meetings

Time: 7:00 PM
Phone: 273-3247
Email: stevbee@midcoast.com
Web: <http://www.letcubalive.org>
Info: Usually takes place at the 55 Plus Center in Brunswick, but people should call or email first. 1st & 3rd Wednesdays.

Thursdays

Camden Women in Black Vigil

Time: 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM
Phone: 549-3061
Location: Rt 1 & Atlantic Ave (in front of Public Library), Camden

Augusta: Stand For Peace

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
Location: State Street Rotary, Augusta

Central Maine Outright Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM
Phone: 621-6393
Email: centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com
Location: 11 King Street, Augusta
Info: A weekly safe drop-in program for GLBTQ and allied youth ages 22 and under

Fridays

Houlton "Stand for Peace" Silent Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM
Phone: 532-4570
Location: Monument Park (Near the Peace Pole), Houlton

Farmington Women In Black

Time: 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM
Phone: 293-2580
Location: Post Office, Farmington

Augusta Peace Vigil

Time: 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM
Phone: 549-7516
Location: Lithgow Library, Augusta

Portland Q&A

Time: 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state.
Email: outright@outright.org
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland
Info: For GLBTQ youth 16 and under.

Ellsworth Peace Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Phone: 667-0268
Email: eadams@downeast.net
Location: Bridge to Bucksport and Blue Hill, Ellsworth

Brunswick Peace Vigil

Time: 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM
Phone: 725-7675
Location: Brunswick Mall, Brunswick

Lewiston/Auburn Outright

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Phone: 786-2717
Email: outright_la@hotmail.com
Web: www.outrightla.org
Location: 145 Lisbon St, Room 302, Lewiston
Info: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

Portland Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state
Email: outright@outright.org
Location: 832 Congress Street, Portland
Info: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

Downeast Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Phone: 667-3506
Email: dean@downeast.net
Location: 25A Pine St, Ellsworth
Info: Every 1st and 3rd Friday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

Coastal Outright Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM
Phone: 800-207-4064
Email: coastaloutright@yahoo.com
Location: Rockland
Info: For GLBTQ youth in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties, ages 22 and under. Meets the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

Saturdays

Norway Women in Black Vigil

Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Phone: 743-2183
Email: atwhit@megalink.net
Location: Witherell Park, Norway

Winthrop Peace Vigil

Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Phone: 685-9604
Location: Post Office, Winthrop

Lenten Vigil for Disarmament

Time: 11:30 PM - 2:30 PM
Phone: 338-4776
Location: Administration Building, Washington St., Bath Iron Works, Bath.
Info: Begins Ash Wednesday, March 5 and continues every Saturday in Lent (March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, and 19) until Easter Sunday. More info on page 17.

Houlton Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM
Phone: 532-3797
Location: Monument Park (Near the Peace Pole), Houlton

Eastport Peace Vigil

Time: 12:30 PM
Email: connoink@midmaine.com
Location: Overlook Park, Eastport


GNP: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

papermaker, although he's held various positions throughout the years. "I started out as a temporary position in the mill back in 1974. I was eighteen. I went in with the intent that maybe I would pursue a secondary education later on. Then I got in there and started making the big money and I stayed. And I like the area and I met my wife and we ended up having a child and we stayed here. I've been here for 29 years now. I guess I don't know if that was a good decision now or not." But John's attitude speaks otherwise. I get the feeling he'd go back to the mill right now if the gates opened up.

John is laid off and collecting unemployment. For two years John's wife, Laviana, has been working for a construction company in Portland. She travels over two hundred miles and stays with her brother during the week. There are many families that are not so fortunate. "Some of these people were the sole bread earners, and those families are really crushed. They've got mortgage payments, probably got a big car payment, maybe a camp payment, I can't even imagine how they are doing it."

Still, the shutdown was not much of a surprise. The millworkers have grown very thick-skinned over the past twenty years, as Great Northern went through a steady series of mergers, ownership changes, and temporary shut downs. "It's been like a plague for the community for so long. We were such a large size and had so many machines operating. Through the years we would lose and lose and lose... I don't think it happened over night. When the big conglomerates started coming in and purchasing, they took profits out of this community and brought them down south and invested it in their mills. We never really had too much of an investment up here in these mills. So in result, your left with older machines, outdated machines, that can't compete with the bigger machines that are out there.

"The employees always expected that this place just couldn't go on running the operation the way they were doing it. And we all could foresee this, we didn't want to believe it, but we kept saying 'My god, look at the debt.' And we kept hearing, 'Oh, the railroad's not coming in today,' or 'This company has to be cut a check before they'll bring woodchips in,' so there was speculation that maybe it had finally come to a head. When they first told us that they were shutting down, they said it was only going be for a two-week period of time. I walked out that day and I said 'This might be my last day coming in here' and sure enough it was my last day. So we've always felt that it was moving in that direction, but we just didn't want to believe that it was happening. And then a week or so later we realized that they were going through bankruptcy and that hit home, and then the fears really started coming: 'Where are we gonna go from here?' Where are you going to go, especially with just a high school education and papermaking in your back pocket?"

The amount of support for communities affected by the Great Northern shutdown has been tremendous. "It's almost unforeseeable even, how much support there has been across the state, it's been dramatic. People are helping in dramatic

ways." John also notes that there is a sense of pride among the local families, and despite the availability of assistance for food and even fuel, only some of the more than 1,100 families affected have sought assistance. This is sure to change, however, as time goes by and people are still out of work.

As with most company towns, Great Northern makes up the majority of the tax base in Millinocket and East Millinocket. Millinocket has made efforts to diversify the tax base, but other area towns are still highly dependent on the mill. There has also been discussion about consolidating schools and town services in Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Medway. This may be critical, especially for the school system. "When I graduated from high school it was a class of close to 300. If these graduating classes now hit 100 they're lucky. I think our kindergarten class now is 28 kids. There's no young kids here anymore, everybody's left. The only people that are working here are older. There's a few younger families, but very few in comparison to what it used to be in the 70s when I graduated from high school."

The future of Great Northern is still uncertain. The Governor has appointed an interim team of officials to try to find a new owner. The uncertainty has led to a feeling of limbo and uneasiness. In the meantime, John and many other former GNP employees have been visiting the KATEC career center. John says the center is helpful, and it keeps his mind focused. He's taking some computer classes and is considering a career in electronics, something he has always been interested in.

"I'm 48 years old, even if I do get a secondary education I'll be over 50 by the time I get out. You know with a high school education there's not that many opportunities out there. I feel that maybe with my involvement and my experiences in the mill outside of just my education, that I'll probably be called back. Or if I do have to reaply the chances of me getting back in are probably pretty good. Hopefully I don't have to leave the area. I've got a beautiful home here, it's bad enough my wife's had to leave. That makes it hard when we're trying to make ends meet... This is a one horse town. There's nothing else left here. If you want to live here, you've got to travel to go work."

"I would say a majority of the employees want to return to work in the mill, but I think they know in the back of their minds that not all of them are going to get called back up. I know some people that have had it, this is the last straw, some of them are just pursuing their education and they don't want to go back, they have no plans to go back. They're just fed up, they're fed up with the uncertainty. They've had enough. They just want to get on with their lives without Great Northern Paper in it."

It might be several months before a final decision is made about the mills, before people in the Millinocket area get any kind of closure. Until then, like John, they will try to imagine a life without Great Northern.

-CATHERINE SCHMITT

Solidarity with the Katahdin Area

BY JACK MCKAY

We've seen corporate greed stealing our jobs and sending them to sweatshops overseas in the shoes, apparel and assorted industries. Forget about country, no time for patriotism, we are told, this is the iron law of economics. Besides, they tell us that these industries are more suited for developing nations like Mexico or China.

Now it turns out that the most capital-intensive industry around, papermaking, also looks overseas for cheap labor costs. In a recent industry article, International Paper (IP) vice-president Richard Phillips states that "estimated labor costs per operating man-year in the United States... are 50% - 2000% higher than in competitor nations." So, the strategy of some companies with older mills, called "assets" by Phillips, is to first "harvest the asset until it becomes unprofitable" and "to make no investment in the declining asset but take the money overseas to a new location better situated to a growth market and manufacturing base with lower costs."

So some of Maine's paper companies have been "harvesting" money from plants here and taking it to low-wage, low-cost, low-regulation locations in Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, Argentina, etc.

Welcome to a new chapter in the "free trade" saga, and this tale strikes home. Millinocket and the Penobscot Valley are ground zero.

International Paper's Vice President also tells us that sometimes a few mergers and consolidations are thrown into the mix to make it all the more palatable and squeeze more money out of the "asset." Phillips describes this as "phase 4": the mill "has reached the end of its useful life and is only attractive to a new owner who may be able to reduce personnel, bargain for more contract flexibility, renegotiate wage rates, and secure tax incentives..." When Inexcon purchased the Millinocket mills in 1999, they negotiated a contract, which had \$65 million worth of concessions spread over five years. One example of the concession was workers paying \$181 a week for health insurance. The company gained tax breaks, sold hundreds of thousands of acres of the woodland and its valuable hydroelectric system.

This February in court, in front of over 50 Millinocket workers and all the media, the lawyer for the Boeing Corporation (as by far the largest creditor, the banking wing of the airplane manufacturer effectively owns the company), warned that in order for a mill to be profitable, the unions had to play a big part (read concessions) and the property tax rate would need to be cut. The lawyer even specified that the school district would need to re-arrange its priorities.

What they don't tell us is that in order to "harvest" the money and "take the money overseas", these companies need the support of the U.S. government. Our government negotiates the "free trade" deals like NAFTA, and the WTO, which provide the security needed for these companies to invest all that money and "harvest" all the new money from the "asset" now located in Mexico or China. General Motors is the largest private sector employer in Mexico and it has got the full guarantee from our government that those "assets" will be able to grow money for decades to come.

(By the way, Boeing, the largest airplane manufacturer in the world, has made the parts of its airplanes in China for many years, and was one of the strongest lobbyists for China's admittance to the WTO.)

The Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council has joined in coalition with Food AND Medicine and PICA to educate and organize around these issues of corporate greed and governmental mismanagement, and strengthen our unions. So far, this effort has received the financial and political support of the Southern Maine and Central Maine Labor Councils, the Maine Labor Council, and District 99 of the Machinists.

This coalition is working to help re-build the Katahdin Area Labor Council with the following goals in mind:

1. Build support for politicians who support us
2. Educate the union members and the public about the benefits of union solidarity, how it helps members and how it is a great thing for our country.
3. Join with allies to educate and organize around corporate greed, corporate driven globalization along with ways to build grassroots support for governmental policies, which help the majority of Americans, not just the rich.

It is crucial for tens of thousands of workers in Maine -- and in fact for a good portion of our economy -- that we continue to have a strong manufacturing base and a strong paper industry for generations to come.

It may prove that the mills in Millinocket need tax assistance to survive, and they should have it. But we should make sure that wealthy companies aren't just "harvesting" both the mills and our tax dollars to "send the money overseas".

Further, our politicians should look at our trade policies which support (and sometimes force) U.S. manufacturing companies to move production overseas to re-import into the U.S.

The new management team lead by Jim Giffune, well respected by many, is charged



with getting the mills ready to be sold. Giffune shares the outrage of shipping jobs overseas "This business of people buying Maine stuff, moving it out of state and shutting the Maine portion down has got to stop."

It is important that we work to support those who support us. Further, we must help to strengthen the people who care the most about the fate of the mills- the workers who make the paper. The GBA-CLC is committed to helping them be as strong as possible during this time of crisis.

Please call 989-4141 if you wish to help.

A benefit supper for Katahdin millworkers and the Katahdin Central Labor Council will take place on March 8th in Brewer, and everyone is welcome to come. For more info, see the Solidarity Calendar, page 10.

Jack McKay is president of the GBA-CLC (Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council).

Ability Maine Speaks

From The Bottom Of The Ramp

BY NORM MELDRUM

I stood there on the brick sidewalk viewing the ramp; viewing the whole great length of the ramp. I made a quick decision, grasped my wheelchair and hauled it up over the steps to the entrance. Why would I do such a crazy thing? To help you understand, I need to explain my disability and my experiences with it.

I've lived more that half of my life with a "hidden" disability. Much of that time I was considered to be just another hypochondriac complaining of severe pain and inability to move about easily. I was advised to "be less concerned about my condition." Fortunately, one day a physician believed me enough to order some back x-rays. In one quick x-ray I gained credence. It was official -- I had a congenital anomaly in my back that was causing the symptoms. Unfortunately, this doctor didn't have much to offer in the way of treatment. I continued on with increasing pain for a few more years.

At about the time that I was finding it difficult to walk to the mailbox, I decided that the conventional health care delivery system was never going to be of much help to me. I took control of my own health care. I researched Thoracic Outlet Syndrome and Cervical Rib Syndrome on the internet. I discovered that a physician in Germany had published a protocol for managing my condition. Using that protocol, I found health care providers that could provide pieces of the treatment that I need. I currently have a massage therapist, a General Practitioner who prescribes the small amounts of medications that I sometimes need, an Osteopathic Physician who works diligently at trying to keep my skeletal system in line and myself in charge of the necessary exercise program and stretching regimen.

The process of taking charge of my own health care was long and difficult. After about 4 years, I feel that I have a system that is working for me. I learned to trust

my needs and feelings and to replace systems and individuals that were blocking progress. During this process I got a lot more tolerant of others with "non-conventional" disabilities and a lot less tolerant of medical care providers that behave paternalistically. I certainly learned not to take any crap from anyone. So here I am -- hauling my wheelchair up the steps.

I can now do lots of the activities that "normal" people can do, but I can't stand on hard surfaces or walk any distance on pavement. My initial solution to this problem was to stay at home. I stopped going to museums, malls, anywhere that would require standing more than 15 minutes. Grocery shopping became a grueling event, the object of which was to finish before the pain medication wore off. Then, one day I had this great epiphany: "In my basement is a very expensive lightweight wheelchair that isn't being used!" My next thought - "I'm not the kind of person who uses a wheelchair." This was quickly followed by the realization that I was being even less rational than usual.

Again, here I am, in Portland, Maine, at the Portland Museum of Art, hauling my wheelchair up the steps. It's not like they don't have a ramp. However, a few years ago the City of Portland replaced their old cement and asphalt sidewalks in the downtown area with really cool brick ones. Unfortunately, someone forgot that we have frost in Maine - lots of frost. Frost heaves brick and stone. It's a long way across the front of this big building to the ramp. Looks like about a quarter of an acre of nubby brick. (If you ever desire to create the experience of riding a wheelchair over a brick sidewalk, just tie your Radio Flyer little red wagon behind your pickup and get towed down the road at about 35 miles an hour.) So, I grab the wheelchair, drag it up the steps, through the plate glass doors, and sit down. I'm thinking, "I dare anyone in this lobby to ask me why I'm sitting in a wheelchair that I just carried in here." No one dares to ask - it's a good day.

A Letter from Bob Walters: Bring Democracy Now! To Maine

Numerous people around the state of Maine have been working continuously for several months to get Maine Public Radio to air Amy Goodman's show Democracy Now! In the course of that time we, the Bring Democracy Now! to Maine campaign have enlisted the support of over 50 organizations. The AFL-CIO, Council of Churches, Maine Independent Media, The Green Party, Maine Peoples Alliance, and others are among those who have signed a letter that has been presented to Maine Public Radios board of trustees. The letter requests that MPR adds Democracy Now! to their weekly broadcast schedule. We have distributed more that 5000 postcards, addressed to Mr. Charles Beck, MPR's program Director, calling for the same.

Democracy Now! is presently broadcasting on over 120 stations nation wide. In Maine it is carried on WERU weekdays at 5pm. Many folks have come to rely on the show for reliable news not aired anywhere else in the state.

Most recent guests were Ralph Nader, Michael Moore, Joan Baez, Helen Caldicott, Scott Ritter and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's son

If we are going to bring about change in this country we need to have an educated public. The people who are fortunate enough to hear WERU, receive a privilege that the rest of us in other parts of the state can not enjoy. Their awareness is reflected in the quality of calls received by the station. If Democracy Now! was the mainstay of our nightly news program we might not be talking about going to war with Iraq. Maybe we could be solving our environmental problems instead. We might even have universal healthcare.. Searching for oil may not be as important if we were relying on alternative sources of energy. Our society might even be less corporate and more

humane.

During the summer I listen to Democracy Now! at a small shop that I own in Stonington.. I play the radio loud enough so that my customers can hear it. Those who know the show appreciate it. Those who hear it for the first time express their interest.

Students at Bates, Colby, and Bowdoin, as well as other college students around the state are getting involved in the campaign. We will continue to try and get more people involved.

On February 11th in Lewiston, a congregation appeared before MPR's Board of Trustees to present a letter with the list of supporters.

One person in Belfast said, "Maine Public Radio is too corporate. It simply sucks. Wouldn't it be great if it aired Democracy Now! I would be come a member again." I hear this again and again.

Please continue to support this campaign, we are very grateful for your support. A copy of our postcard, available for e-mail, is on our website. Updates on our progress can also be found on the website. For more information you can contact me by e-mail: rjwalters1926@yahoo.com Phone number- 833-5730

Our website is:

www.nancho.net/dn2maine.net

The people at Democracy Now! are thrilled, gratified and very supportive of our efforts.

An Update: Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman spoke in Maine on February 21st and 22nd in support of this campaign and on major issues going unreported in the corporate media today. Audio recordings of her talk are available online at www.maineindymedia.org and on CD or tape, see page 23 to order.

ANNOUNCEMENT

For the third year, we are holding a **Lenten Vigil for Disarmament at Bath Iron Works**. We will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 5 from 11:30 to 12:30, and we will continue every Saturday in Lent (March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, and 19) until Easter Sunday. We will meet at the Administration Building on Washington Street and hold signs and pass out leaflets to the workers and passers by.

Operated by General Dynamics, BIW builds the Aegis Destroyer, a conventional and nuclear weapons guided missile warship that is certainly a weapon of mass destruction. Our government's concern over the possibility of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq sidesteps the reality that the US military and defense industry are in full scale production of weapons systems that kill indiscriminately.

We vigil at BIW because we believe these weapons, including the Aegis Destroyers, are crimes against humanity. General Dynamics is a military contractor that specializes in the most horrendous weapons systems imaginable. GD built 18 Trident Subs in Groton, CT in the 1980's and '90's. Now GD continues to build the Aegis Destroyer and to do Research and Development for more sophisticated killing machines.

In 1991 and again in 1997, a group of plowshares activists including Philip Berrigan symbolically disarmed the USS Gettysburg and the USS Sullivans at BIW. In our vigil for disarmament, we stand with them in calling for an end to the building of these warships which represents a large part of Maine's economy. A permanent war economy is immoral and must be exposed for what it is-a theft from the social programs that could alleviate the problems of hunger and homelessness.

Slavery existed in our country for centuries, and Abolitionists led the way in exposing the crime it was by vigiling against it until it was outlawed. The building of Aegis Destroyers needs to be exposed as a crime also. Please join us in standing as witnesses against this ongoing crime. We must become our own weapons inspectors and root out all production of weapons of mass destruction in Maine. Our hope is in real disarmament, and it must begin with us. It is time to beat swords into plowshares.

George and Maureen Kehoe Ostensen FMI:338-4776



PRISON ISSUES FROM MAINE AND BEYOND

WARREN: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

sessions. At least I don't have another guy in here like they do over in medium security. I don't know how those guys do it. We're in these cages for 12-13+ hours a day. They're small, and from what I understand the med cells are even smaller. That fits a recurring theme here. It doesn't seem like much thought was put into the design of this place. Maybe there was. Maybe the plan is to expose us to some kind of sensory deprivation.

I'm back. It's time to head off to "work." I'm a cleaner. I spend about 10 minutes a day, 5 days a week, sweeping. I probably shouldn't complain. There are many here who don't have any work assignment. They miss out on good time, and can't come out of their cells at night.

I've got the rest of the morning to kill. I guess I'll do some reading - maybe I'll write my sister.

Lunch time. It's turkey salad. We have turkey by-products 7 times this week. Unless you're on a vegan diet, or have other special dietary needs. Then you can eat all of the rotten salad you can stomach. That and the endless supply of peanut butter. The food's really bad - except on the days when we have outsiders touring the place. You can always tell when they're here - lunch is pretty good then.

Over lunch a couple of the guys I sat with were talking about trying to get some kind of protest going again. Maybe a work stoppage this time. Sounded like a good idea. Talking to the administrators doesn't help. All they're interested in is canceling programs and visiting hours, and finding more excuses to keep us locked in our cells.

"Work & rec" is late again. It's supposed to

be at 1:00 p.m., and it's now 1:40. Since my work assignment is in the morning, I have afternoon rec. I have a choice to make today. Although exercise is an important part of my life - trying to stay healthy in a place where there is so much inactivity is difficult - education is also important. This is one of the two days a week I can use the computers in the Ed. Dept. I feel so strange calling it that. Let me explain: They refer to it as the Ed. Dept. In all actuality, not much educating goes on in there. There are no teachers. The three staff that "work" (I really don't know what their job descriptions are) aren't qualified, certified, or able to teach the most remedial subjects. Volunteer prisoners are actually the teachers. In spite of their noble intentions, none of them are qualified either. Don't get me wrong - it looks like an Ed. Dept. Just minus any educating.

Not only must prisoners forsake exercise - haircuts, visits, and all other activities and programs not relating to "work" must be given up in order to get an education. I'll opt for the computer today.

Dinner time. As my friend and I walk along the walkway towards the mess halls, we stumble across a guy lying in a pool of blood. He looks like he got messed up pretty bad. He could be a child molester, or an informant - both of whom are targeted regularly with violence like this. Or he could be another victim of mistaken identity. Whatever the situation, we have to mind our own business, and let the guards do their work. Otherwise we could be next.

On the way back from another lousy meal we pass two guards helping the guy towards medical. I'm reminded of something Colonel O'Farrell said during one of the Longtimers meetings back in Thomaston. He was there addressing about 150 of us in regards to the move to Warren. "You guys

are headed to a real prison," O'Farrell said with a twinkle in his eye and a grin on his face. I've wondered if he really knew what he was saying. The facts are that before the move to Warren, MSP experienced approximately 40 disciplinary reports a year, with the majority for minor offenses. There have been approximately 1,000 in this facility since it's opening in February 2002. In the past month there have been 2 stabbings, a melee involving a half a dozen prisoners, and a handful of fights and other serious incidents. And that's just what the guards know about! In the 10 years prior to the move, MSP recorded 4 major assaults. To reiterate, we've seen that amount in the past month alone. Now, Mr. O'Farrell, you have your "real prison."

Why all of the violence? I'd say the lack of incentives to stay out of trouble would be a good place to start. Gone are incentives such as an adequate number of decent job assignments. Gone is the craft room program, where prisoners could build novelty items to sell to tourists in the prison store, and use the money to pay for things like restitution, child support, phone bills, etc. These are but a couple of many examples. Then there's this "get tough on the prisoners" attitude present in the contact between the guards and the prisoners, as well as in the strange policies such as the 24 hour lights, the inexplicable 5:40 count, and similar indignities. Personally, I feel as if I'm provoked constantly throughout the day. I have no disciplinary history, and mind my own business. Nevertheless, guards treat me as if they have standing orders to harass me anyway they can think of. It wasn't like that prior to the move.

On with my day ...

After dinner, I decide to call my Mom, who lives out of state. I don't call often because she's on a fixed income and the rates are exorbitant - a 20 minute phone call cost

about \$18. Two minutes into the call the phone disconnects and the recording "Due to custom calling features your call ..." comes on. The people we're calling are not supposed to use those features or the phone will automatically hang up. The thing is, my mom doesn't have those luxuries on her phone.

This happens to the prisoners and their families all of the time. We're told that it's a glitch in the system that they're working on. Just like the static and volume of the intercom- they've been working on it for 10 months. I often wonder ... with the huge payback (somewhere around a 40% kick-back) from the phone company the state gets for these calls, just how much of an accident the hang-ups are. Connection fees for these collect calls are \$2.50 and up, plus the per minute charge.

Finally 9:00 p.m. One more bugle and count, and I can put my head under the pillow to get away from the light, and go to sleep. I need to go to bed early again because the floor move may happen tomorrow. It's been a long day ... Good night. "INMATE! INMATE! GET UP! THERE'S A FIRE!" I rush out of my cell half naked, and am herded out into the cold. As I past the clock it reads 11:30. A fire drill at 11:30 at night! Just some more sensory deprivation.

To be continued...

For more information about Jinx or the Maine State Prison in Warren, please contact:

breannaannaerb@justice.com
or mail to Maine Indymedia, PO Box 1444,
Waterville, ME 04903, attn: Breanna

PEACE: CONTINUED FROM PG. 13

This argument means that the U.S. government has taken on the role of over-seeing and vetoing all forms of industrial development throughout the world in perpetuum. Autonomous industrial development not controlled by an approved MNC or a "friendly" government is out of order. Hence this "war on terrorism" doctrine becomes a basis for the military control of the economic development policies of any government on the planet (in contradiction to the tenets of neoliberalism!)

The consequences of such a doctrine are, of course, enormous, although their immediate impact is on the Hussein regime (and any of its successors). For even if Saddam Hussein could prove beyond a rea-

sonable doubt that there were no chemical, biological or atomic weapons in Iraq at this moment, the Bush doctrine would not be satisfied. The mere existence of industrial capacity not owned and controlled by MNCs in Iraq that could be used in the construction of weapons of mass destruction would violate the doctrine.

This doctrine shows us that the struggle now unfolding in Iraq is not only about oil. What is at stake is the shape of planetary industrial development for decades to come. The combination of the restoration of oil-driven accumulation with the imposition of the Bush doctrine on global industrial development ensures that the "suburban-petroleum" mode of life we are living in the U.S. (and increasingly in Western Europe) will lead to endless war.

Maine Books To Prisoners

P.O Box 1582, Portland, ME 04014
(207) 778-3402
mainebookstoprisoners@justice.com

Maine books to prisoners is a newly formed non-profit, volunteer based collective working to distribute books free of charge to incarcerated people in Maine and surrounding area. We are dedicated to offering the women and men behind bars an opportunity for self-empowerment, education, and entertainment through the medium of books. We believe that education and activism both inside and outside of prison walls are integral parts of a larger movement towards social justice. Below is our wish list to get this project running. If you can not help with any of these items but wish to know more about the group or have a fundraising idea feel free to get in touch with us.

Maine Books To Prisoners Wish List:

1. Free book storage/office space (anywhere in Maine, but preferably the Waterville area)
2. Books!
3. Book Shelves
4. Money (especially needed for postage)
5. Envelopes, packing tape, and other stationery supplies
6. A postage machine
7. Computers

Thank you for all your help!

Don't Peek! Answers to the Acrostic on page 20 below:

A. Requiem; B. Above the fray; C. Lassitude; D. Pax Americana; E. Hot off the wire;
F. Needs the clues; G. Athlete; H. Duck-billed platypus; I. Ebenzer Scrooge; J. Rails;
K. Catcombs; L. Rebutal; M. Altered; N. Shaved; O. HHH; P. I hate war; Q. Next time;
R. Gentlemen of the; S. Timothy Robbins; T. Hen's teeth; U. Extension cord; V. Pushups;
W. Abolitionists; X. Rhett; Y. The cheese; Z. Yellowstone River
Quote's Author: Ralph Nader



Prison Queen

Women & Prison Reform in India

BY RITA DIXIT-KUBIAK

UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA: *Preeta Bhargav, a fortyish single mother and published poet, is not only the state's first female jail officer, she is superintendent of the Udaipur Central Jail, five district jails and eleven sub jails. More remarkably, she is eulogized in poems by prison inmates as their harbinger of hope and light. Colleagues and Udaipur citizens she has skillfully enlisted into her prison reform programs call her a visionary who has single-handedly raised their consciousness about the dignity and potential of each and every human life. The following is Preeta's story of her leap from a naive village maiden and novice jailer to the crusading custodial matriarch she has become in India's prison system today.*

I was born into a large farming family in a small Rajasthani village called Dholpur. I was the sixth child, and my parents could barely afford to give me any education. My only formal schooling was from the fifth to tenth grade. I got my college education through correspondence courses and much against my parents' will. They feared too much education would ruin my chances for marriage. I finally had to threaten suicide to get my way. I did not want to end up like my mother and sisters whose lives were mired in oppression and drudgery in a very patriarchal family. I had to manage my studies along with household chores and the usual farm labor of fieldwork, grazing cattle and keeping the wild peacocks away from the crops. I barely had time for my lessons except late at night in dim lantern light.

I was a willful child and determined to shape my own life. My stubborn nature was perhaps due to my reliance on a strong inner voice. This voice has been my primary guide to this day. Whenever I am sad, confused or stuck, my next choice or decision always seems to spring from this source. It was my trust in this voice, plus my early life experiences that seem to have guided me to my present profession.

I was a little girl when the Indian government began negotiating a truce plan with the dacoit gangs in Rajasthan. Our officials promised them lenient jail terms, instead of the death sentence or being hunted down and shot, if they laid down their arms and turned themselves in. The dacoits were bandits who worshipped the goddess Kali. Although they admittedly robbed and murdered, they followed their own code of ethics that forbade robbing the poor and harming women and children. My father was a mediator between these dacoit gangs and the police. Many of the dacoits would surrender themselves at our farm, and we even had prison laborers work there. The dacoits and other convicts provoked my curiosity. I would always volunteer to take them water and tea and then hide out and listen to them talk to each other. They often sang together as they worked. I would listen to the dacoits sing devotional songs all night long and tell their life stories as they

camped at our farm waiting for daybreak and their surrender to the police. My experience of the jail inmates and surrendering dacoits never left me with the sense that they were intrinsically bad. On the contrary, they seemed affectionate and often quite decent. I felt their condemnation and ostracism by society was cruel. I had heard stories that inmates in the jail were poorly treated and even tortured. So my desire to do something for these people came very early on in life. Somehow in my young heart I felt a need to re-establish the humanity of these people within a society that saw them as scum and deserving of humiliation and pain.

Looking back there were also a few important synchronicities that led me to this work. After completing my bachelors degree and then my masters in history, I decided to move to Udaipur and take a bachelor degree in education. This again provoked much familial opposition, but I was determined to have a career, and an education degree could get me into the teaching profession. That was my original intention anyway, but life soon took a different course. In the resource library where I studied, I came upon a notice for the Rajasthan Administrative Services competitive exam. If I passed this exam I could become a senior officer in the Rajasthan civil service, which includes jail administration. I sat for the exam and put custodial services as my first choice. I felt the best public service I could perform was inside the prisons. I would have extended contact with the inmates and the time to work with them during their collective and individual transformations. I did well in my exams and was awarded my first option. I was sent to Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh for nine months of training with thirty other aspirants from across the nation. I was the only female, and I am proud to say that I got the best cadet award for that program. I returned as the first woman prison officer in Rajasthan's history.

Instead of being delighted, my parents were appalled. "How can a village girl who's barely left home dare to manage a jail?" They shouted and pleaded in turn. The opposition to my jail work came from every direction. My husband who I married shortly after returning from Lucknow, and his family were equally opposed to my choice. They wanted me to stay at home and do their bidding like a traditional middle-class Indian daughter-in-law. I tried my best to accommodate their demands while continuing my work, but their psychological pressure was so intense it made life impossible. In the end I had to separate from my husband and his family to maintain my sanity. I am not divorced yet, but I live separately with my daughters, Sumaya and Ananaya.

My male colleagues and the jail inmates did not make my entry into this profession easy either. In spite of being a top cadet my colleagues would relentlessly challenge my abilities. They would advise me to resign, and use the most abusive language in front of me to test my reactions.

The prison inmates would also misbehave with me. No one understood why a young woman would want to work in a place where most ordinary people would shudder to go. They eyed me as though I was a loose woman. I clearly had to prove myself.

I turned inwards for inspiration, and the answer I got was to act as their mother figure. Although most women are reduced to chattel or objects in India, the mother is still accorded the highest place of respect. A mother symbolizes unconditional love, justice and deep care. She can do no wrong to her children and always thinks about their welfare. I decided I would not allow men to look upon me as just another young woman. I would become the jail matriarch, and the inmates and officers would be my family. I would build a community that would support all of its members and encourage the most positive and creative behavior from each.

I expressed this with total candor and sincerity to my colleagues and the prisoners. I told them that we needed to work together, and absolutely respect for each other. I told them I was not merely a correctional officer, but saw myself as a mother concerned about each of them, about their progress, protection and welfare. My intuition proved absolutely right. It transformed my work place. I had leaped from an apparent dead end to a space of creative possibility, and I was determined to take everyone with me. Jailers and inmates alike soon began to respect and trust me. In turn I have had to keep the highest personal standards of efficiency, honesty, fairness, and positivism.

Indian jail services have four explicit goals: Safety/security both for society and within the prison system, custodial surveillance, punishment, and reform/rehabilitation. The last obliges us to prepare inmates for respectable lives when they re-enter society, and this of course has always taken a back seat. Our jail manuals are still based on Britain's Indian Prison Act of 1894 and are not too expressive on the subject of reform. We have finally just submitted a new prison act to the Rajasthan State Government which does feature a comprehensive reform package. We are awaiting its approval.

Our jails are full of the poor, and occasionally the middle class, but never the rich who seem to be above the law. Our inmates' crimes include murder, theft, drug trafficking, and violence against women such as rape and dowry burning. These types of crimes are increasing across the nation. Three years ago the population in the Central Jail was between 600 to 650 prisoners, today it is between 800 to 850. The increase has everything to do with the rise of a pernicious consumer culture that is eroding and displacing our sense of community and spreading a virulent form of individualism which values material objects over all human relationships. As the modern market economy spreads greed and avarice, the burning of women for some extra material comfort or the selling of drugs for quick money hardly horrifies anymore. What we truly face - and have to reverse - amongst our inmates is a systematic suppression of conscience, empathy, and care for life within the society as a whole.

My staff is instructed to give positive reinforcement for efforts made by prisoners, to discourage negative behavior, and to preempt the formation of bully gangs so common in jails. I cannot permit negative forces to run the jail. In the jails I supervise we rethink all the social issues - both modern and traditional - that plague our society. For example we discourage class and caste associations, and regard all religious-cultural observances equally. Everyone is responsible for the cleanliness of the premises, and we use eco-friendly biogas technology that uses our raw sewage to provide us non-polluting energy for lighting and cooking.

In general, jails and prisons are desperate dismal places. They are dateless zones where only prison gongs and the inmates' breathing mark off their debt to time. As a person committed to reform rather than retribution my ultimate hope is to transform jails. After thirteen years in this profession, I am convinced that every convict regardless of their crime sooner or later feels remorse and repents. It is therefore primitive and inhuman to commit prisoners to negative and hopeless places. Rather they should get the opportunity for catharsis, so they can transcend their misdeeds and move toward positive futures.

My main aim is to keep the prisoners positively channeled and inspired and to maintain an environment conducive to this process. Reform and rehabilitation are difficult tasks since our budget is low, but we do our best to provide work, vocational training, literacy and ethics programs and to organize plays, music recitals, yoga and meditation classes, and sports events.

I want to rebuild a sense of community, and the feelings of trust, love and cooperation which that implies. To do this I need the combined assistance of the jail administration, the prisoners, and the larger community outside the jail. I invite non-governmental organizations, school teachers, students, artists and musicians to join us in the prison's extra curricular activities, and I insist that they treat the prisoners with respect and dignity. I ask them not to come out of morbid curiosity about people society has caged, but with a desire to support people who are sincerely trying to change. I encourage the prisoners to look upon their visitors as brothers and sisters, to forget their past and to believe in their own capacity for friendship and decency. Retaining prisoners' links to society is an essential aspect of rehabilitation. Our efforts to preserve these connections have paid off with the Udaipur community coming forward to raise 800,000 rupees (\$16,000) for an open jail in this city.

The work of reform is diverse and perpetual, and since I am not god I constantly pray that I do not make a careless mistake and jeopardize the confidence of the community around me. However up to this point my intuition and actions have been well rewarded. I am grateful to my staff and to the Udaipur community for their tireless support. I am thankful to the jail inmates I have known for confirming my deepest beliefs in humanity. I know I am on the right track because in the three years I have been in charge here, recidivism rates have dropped to nearly 5%. We have very few returnees.



ACROSTIC #267

by Herschel Sternlieb

Acrostic directions: Fill in the numbered blanks next to the lettered clues on the left. Then transfer the letters to the grid according to their designations. The grid can also help you solve the clues. If you need answers to the clues, turn to page 18.

- A. Mass for the departed. 60 143 181 219 228 127 250
- B. Neutral or non-participating. (3 wds) 171 83 206 102 54 25 153 189 217 198 237 9
- C. State of exhaustion or torpor. 6 112 50 98 85 99 125 66 180
- D. U.S. imperialist desire. (2 wds) 47 39 244 251 213 13 106 28 238 117 132 176
- E. The latest news is _____. (4 wds) 12 255 2 186 242 216 34 234 243 174 202 167 162
- F. A puzzler _____. (3 wds) 207 223 154 144 73 124 77 212 116 161 182 107 10
- G. Participant in sports. 215 81 43 203 61 97 200
- H. Egg laying mammal. (2 wds-onehyphenated)
- I. The source of "Bah Humbug!" 89 123 63 239 74 224 109 204 214 105 157 53 37 92 14 254 227 22
- J. Harrangues. 57 52 67 91 208 111 220 246 4 152 135 231 100 18 44
- K. Underground burial chambers. 258 166 205 114 128
- L. Refutation, legal plea 69 8 196 82 222 145 29 201 252
- M. Atlantic fish related to the herring. 94 65 226 139 259 185 55 184
- N. Pared, cut closely. 32 177 158 19 51 146 173
- O. LBJ's VP 49 20 108 256 131 41
- P. FDR's comment on armed conflicts. (3 wds) 130 148 138
- Q. What many losers seek. (2 wds) 151 87 101 210 93 129 5 118
- R. _____ jury. Ubiquitous trial phrase. (3 wds) 40 72 209 168 133 35 195 249
- S. Star of the Shawshank Redemption. (2 wds) 121 137 17 233 218 247 46 149 164 191 122 230 26 78
- T. As scarce as _____. (2 wds) 147 1 248 163 187 179 260 31 159 190 236 119 58 155
- U. Flexible and removable electrical conduit. (2 wds) 64 165 140 96 11 199 79 193 170
- V. Face down exercises. 115 68 178 235 62 86 104 48 221 36 194 211 141
- W. Thoreau, Lincoln and Emerson. 30 70 240 197 16 160 56

1	S	2	E	3	W	4	I	5	P	6	C	7	Z	8	K	9	B	10	F	11	T	12	E	13	D					
	14	H	15	W	16	V	17	R	18	I		19	M	20	N	21	Z		22	H	23	Y	24	X	25	B				
26	R	27	Y		28	D	29	K	30	V	31	S	32	M	33	Y	34	E	35	Q	36	U	37	H	38	Z	39	D		
40	Q	41	N		42	Y	43	G	44	I		45	W	46	R	47	D	48	U	49	N	50	C	51	M	52	I	53	H	
54	B		55	L	56	V		57	I	58	S	59	X	60	A	61	G	62	U	63	H	64	T	65	L	66	C			
67	I	68	U	69	K	70	V	71	W	72	Q	73	F		74	H	75	Z		76	Z	77	F	78	R		79	T		
80	Z	81	G	82	K	83	B	84	W	85	C	86	U	87	P	88	Y	89	H		90	W	91	I	92	H	93	P	94	L
95	Y	96	T	97	G	98	C		99	C	100	I		101	P	102	B	103	W	104	U	105	H		106	D	107	F		
108	N	109	H	110	Z	111	I	112	C	113	W	114	J	115	U		116	F	117	D	118	P	119	S	120	W	121	R		
122	R	123	H	124	F	125	C	126	Z	127	A	128	J		129	P	130	O	131	N	132	D		133	Q	134	Y	135	I	
136	Z	137	R		138	O	139	L	140	T	141	U	142	X	143	A	144	F		145	K	146	M		147	S	148	O		
149	R		150	Z	151	P	152	I	153	B	154	F	155	S	156	X		157	H	158	M	159	S	160	V	161	F	162	E	
	163	S	164	R		165	T	166	J	167	E	168	Q	169	X		170	T	171	B	172	Z	173	M		174	E			
175	Z	176	D	177	M	178	U	179	S		180	C	181	A	182	F	183	W	184	L		185	L	186	E		187	S		
188	Y	189	B		190	S	191	R	192	W	193	T	194	U	195	Q		196	K	197	V	198	B	199	T	200	G			
201	K	202	E	203	G	204	H	205	J	206	B	207	F		208	I	209	Q	210	P	211	U	212	F	213	D	214	H		
215	G	216	E	217	B	218	R	219	A	220	I	221	U	222	K	223	F		224	H	225	Y		226	L	227	H	228	A	
229	Z	230	R		231	I	232	Z		233	R	234	E	235	U		236	S	237	B	238	D	239	H	240	V				
241	Z	242	E		243	E	244	D	245	W	246	I	247	R	248	S	249	Q		250	A	251	D	252	K	253	W			
254	H	255	E	256	N	257	Z	258	J	259	L	260	S																	

- X. Scarlet's love 142 169 24 156 59
- Y. A mouse's quest. (2 wds) 42 188 88 33 134 27 23 225 95
- Z. Wyoming stream (2 wds) 75 136 38 229 21 7 80 76 241 232 257 150 110 172 175 126

Maine Lost History: The Skowhegan Textile Strike

BY GRAHAM HALEY the Skowhegan textile strike of 1907.

In January of 1905 a secret meeting was held in Chicago of 32 delegates representing over 100,000 workers. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a new revolutionary organization of skilled and unskilled workers, of all industrial fields, "to put the working class in possession of the economic power, the means of life, in control of the machinery of production and distribution, without regards to capitalist masters". This was to be the first meeting of what was to be called the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), also known as the wobblies.

A new socialistic, revolutionary unionism was founded in the IWW; its formation was the inevitable result of the downsized and degraded plight of the working class at the turn of the century. Its influence relative to its small size was significant in the labor movement. Although the union membership never succeeded 10,000 at a time, some of the greatest labor struggles were waged and fought by the IWW, including

Bill Haywood had said at the first convention, "we come out of the west to meet the textile workers in the east." In 1905 the IWW began to organize in Maine. Charles Scontras, author of *The Socialist Alternative: Utopian Experiments and the Socialist Party of Maine, 1895-1914*, observed that "the tolerance level within the labor movement in Maine for radical unionism was... revealed when Maine's largest central labor union, Portland, received a national appeal by radical unions to form the Industrial Workers of the World." Scontras notes that very few labor representatives favored the transition to industrial unionism. The *Daily Eastern Argus* reported that "no delegates present... favored the change and all who spoke were opposed to the new movement." However, this opposition did not stop the IWW. In the fall 1906 the industrial union rooted itself in Skowhegan, Maine, and in January of 1907 employees of the Marston Mills, under the leadership of the IWW, called for

a strike.

On Monday afternoon, at around 2:30, two hundred and twenty-five textile workers of the Marston Mills quit work and walked out of the factory. The *Somerset Reporter* had reported "trouble brewing" amongst the employees since the discharge of Mamie Biludeau, who according to management performed work in a "unsatisfactory manner". The IWW claimed she was discharged because she had played an active role in organizing her co-workers. When Mr. Teal, superintendent of the weaving department, dismissed 26 weavers and three other employees, "stating he found it necessary to curtail production and had decided to shut down the number of looms for the present" according to the *Somerset reporter*, all those working at the Marston textile mills, except management, went on strike.

The IWW denied the allegations that workers were fired because of unsatisfactory work, stating that the thirty employees who were discharged were union members, and were not laid off because of "natural desire to curtail their [Marston's mill] production", but because the workers were

"active" unionists.

The local papers reported discontent with the workers actions, moreover with the involvement of the IWW, who had ordered the strike. "The hardest thing to accept with the equanimity is the fact that the discontent is formed, not by those among the workers involved... but the invariable head of the disturbance is a coterie of individuals [the IWW and strike supporters] who come to us from other manufacturing centers." The *Somerset Reporter* accused the IWW of coercing the employees at the Marston Mills, reporting that some strikers were reluctant to strike, and others were being "forced to participate". "They are moved by the slightest incident or for no reason at all to organize a strike."

On the fourth day of the strike, workers slowly filtered back into rank and file, and soon enough 20 finishing rooms were again operational. The *Somerset reporter* predicted that "it seems probable that by the first of the week the greater portion of the local employees will be back in the mill,



NEWS BLURBS

short attention span news compiled by sterren

Maine towns seem to be disappearing - jobs are going, schools are going, farms are going, people are going, & now the towns themselves might be going. One usually thinks of towns with only truly tiny populations deorganizing. Yet now, Milo, a town with a population over 2,000, a town with its own school, downtown, & supermarket, is investigating deorganizing. Milo is looking into this possibility as a way to reduce the tax rate for the town & its residents. If it does deorganize & become a township it will lose its tree growth reimbursement & school subsidy.

Of course, fewer towns will need school subsidies if the pattern of rapidly closing all the small schools & bussing students away to consolidated schools continues. Despite many studies & personal experiences that show small schools in give higher quality education than schools with a larger student population, have lower drop out rates, provide more personal attention to students having problems, provide a social center for a town, provide a job base for towns, & help keep young people in the area after they graduate, the state government is pushing hard for small schools to shut down, under the rallying cry of "regionalization." Caratunk elementary school, one of eight remaining one-room schoolhouses in the state, will likely be closing at the end of this school year, with students being shipped a half-hour away every school-day to Bingham. Three years earlier, the West Forks school was closed, & before that the school in Forks Plantation was eliminated. The townspeople of Pittston are facing the possibility of their two elementary schools, and many fear that the residents of the town will vote to close the schools since it, like a large portion of Maine towns, has an increasingly older population that does not have children in school. Augusta school officials are considering closing the Buker middle school, resulting in 26 people losing their jobs. Local parents in Rockwood are fighting to keep their elementary school open, but enrollment is dropping as the town increasingly becomes populated by retirees & summer people. If the school is closed, students will be bussed either 20 miles to Greenville or 26 miles Jackman. In Howland, the town was initially seeking funds to build a new high school, funds which were rejected by the state. Instead, the townspeople are being pressured to follow the conclusions of an official state report that urges them to look into sending their 230 high school students to Mattanawcook Academy in Lincoln, and thus close their own school. The state used the fact that the Howland has limited options in math, physics, chemistry, & social studies, and that it doesn't have high MEA scores as reasons it shouldn't have a new school and should, instead, consolidate. If the extra 230 students joined Lincoln it would bring the school's student population quite over capacity, likely requiring the addition of portable classrooms. How this would help the students' test scores & learning opportunities goes unanswered....

Having to go to increasingly crowded, impersonal schools might make kids frustrated & want to drop out to do something else with their lives. However, if a bill that is currently before the Legislature gets passed, they wouldn't have even that option. The bill, sponsored by Democratic Representative Judd Thompson of China, prohibits anyone under 17 from dropping out of school. Seventeen-year-olds would be allowed to leave school with parental permission & 18-year-olds could drop out without permission. The dropout law as it stands now (which currently prohibits people under age 15 from dropping out) is not widely enforced, but if for any reason the state decided to begin enforcing the law, especially if this new bill is passed, the parents of underage dropouts could be fined or even put in prison. It is not clear what would happen to the kids themselves, but being sent to a juvenile detention center would seem the likely next result.

Dairy farms, like schools & towns, are also rapidly disappearing from the state. The last year saw 10% of Maine's 412 dairy farms go out of business, and according to an article in the Kennebec Journal, 60 more are expected to close by this spring. These closures are resulting largely from the extremely rapid consolidation of dairy buyers, with the corporate agribusinesses having an inordinate amount of control over the price farmers get for their milk - the price is currently at a 20-year low. In December, Hood, New England's largest independent milk processor announced plans to merge with National Dairy Holdings of Dallas, making it the 2nd largest dairy company (behind Dallas-based Dean Foods, which owns Grant's of Bangor, West Lynn Creamery, & Cumberland Farms) in the country. Federal antitrust regulators are currently reviewing the merger, since it would give the newly merged company an almost complete monopoly, resulting in Hood/National Dairy having control of 90% of all New England milk. If the merger occurs, the only major plants left in New England that won't be selling to Hood or National Dairy will be Oakhurst & Guida's Dairy, of CT.

People who make their living from fishing aren't finding themselves in all that much better shape. A report sponsored by Coastal Enterprises Inc, surveyed 25 Maine fishing communities, & about 80% of the respondents stated that the shifting control of Maine's coast from local fishing communities into suburbs & summer-home towns, is an immediate or long-term threat to their livelihood. As the property is being bought up, property taxes are shooting up, zoning regulations are arriving, & the face of the communities & waterfront is being changed by competition from recreational users & development pressures. This shift has resulted in property tax protests on Chebeague Island & other southern Maine fishing communities. The report lists a possible partial solution as property tax-reform. People who made their living from fishing are being forced away from the shore, & are losing access to the shore as well. None of this is news to anyone living in or around these areas, but now there's an official report.

If you're in Maine, you're probably pretty aware that jobs seem to be disappearing fast. The most obvious & discussed is the temporary and/or permanent layoffs in Millinocket. If the mills permanently close 1,130 Great Northern Paper employees will lose their jobs, and according to the Dept. of Labor, an almost 4,000 more people are estimated to lose their jobs that are connected to the mill's operation, workers, & tax base. This includes everyone from truckers, railway workers, loggers, restaurant & store workers, to

school employees, maintenance workers, & engineers. Workers in Millinocket are also worried about their prospects of getting rehired if the mills do get purchased and reopen, since the Canadian-owned Belgravia Paper Co. has signed a "letter of intent" to purchase the mills. When Belgravia bought up the Simpson paper mill in Oregon, it rehired only 20% of the former workers, requiring them & all applicants to take a series of tests on mechanical & math skills, spatial understanding, & verbal reasoning, which most people failed. The workers who were rehired took pay cuts of about \$1,000 a year. Similar situations have occurred at other mills purchased by Belgravia. Due to the fact that the Oregon mill had entirely shut down before it was purchased by Belgravia, the pre-existing union contract was nullified. When the mill reopened, it hired mostly new people, and the union was not able to re-form. Plant manager Brian Konen came forth in a Bangor Daily article with a piece of classic anti-union rhetoric, declaring, "[Before Belgravia took over the mill], we had a work force that wasn't very interested in making the mills very profitable."

As a result of the GNP mill shutdowns, Northeastern Environmental Services in Pittsfield has already laid off 12 people since so much of their business is connected to the mills. Even without a ripple effect from GNP, though, Maine jobs are continuing to disappear. Clear Channel Communications, cut 5 full-time jobs from stations in Bangor & Ellsworth. Clear Channel, the world's largest radio broadcaster, concert promoter, & billboard advertising firm, owns 19 stations in Maine. As Clear Channel has bought up stations that were previously competitors (& had more local programming & variety), it is consolidating its operations. 13 to 15 people are losing their jobs at Maine Brand Manufacturing, a glove maker in Littleton. 40 people lost their jobs at Penobscot Frozen Foods in Belfast, though the company says it expects the layoffs to be temporary. 46 people lost their jobs when Ken's Family Restaurant in Winslow closed. 68 people are losing their jobs at the Energy East-owned Central Maine Power in Augusta. 80 people who work for ICT Group Inc, a telemarketer in Calais, will be losing their jobs at the end of March when the call center closes. ICT closed the Calais center because it is moving more of its operations outside the US. 85 people lost their jobs in February with GE in Bangor, though 40 of the 85 may possibly be rehired. Also, all 500 employees at GE Power Systems in Bangor will be out of work for two weeks this summer for a temporary shutdown, the first in several years. 91 people have lost their jobs at Pratt & Whitney's aircraft engine plant in Bangor. Clothing manufacturer, Kent Inc., in Fort Kent, is hanging on a week at a time, looking for potential investors. The workforce has dropped by 45 people in the last month, from 165 to 120 people - it is unclear from reports whether those 45 workers left voluntarily. 43 people who work at National Semiconductor in South Portland lost their jobs in late February. About 300 people, mostly hourly workers, will be losing their jobs at LL Bean in the coming months, despite having one of the most profitable Decembers in history in 2002.

State jobs, of course, are also disappearing, with 1/3 of the cuts, 116 full-time equivalent jobs, coming from the Departments of Conservation, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Marine Resources & Environmental Protection. There is speculation that these cuts will result in some clam flats staying closed due to lack of testing for bacteria, a reduction of hunting permits due to lack of gathering population data, a lack of ability to enforce many regulations. Also, the state will be making cuts to 49 state police post positions, many of them civilian secretarial positions. The loss of these positions will mean troopers will be spending more time in the office handling their paperwork, & less time out of the office.

Dover-Foxcroft is under consideration by the Department of Defense for a missile interceptor program. Piscataquis county & much of northern Maine were major centers of military missile programs during the Cold War, and perhaps in this new perpetual war the military will again be attracted to Maine for its rural open spaces and desperate need for jobs.

And increasingly the only jobs that people can find are part-time service jobs without benefits (though, this year, even the growth of these service jobs has failed to balance out the loss of other jobs in the state.) Massachusetts-based Packard Development has gained the agreement of homeowners on Storey Street (off Western Ave) in Augusta, that they will sell their homes if a retail store complex which will likely provide low-wage, no-benefit, part-time jobs to Maine workers, is approved for construction on the land. If approved, taxpayers will likely be paying for Storey St. to be widened, since it currently can not handle the traffic that a retail development would bring. There is also early discussion of constructing a new entrance/exit ramp off I-95 if this development is approved.

Nearby, at Shaw's on Western Ave, self-service checkout terminals made a debut at the end of December, eliminating the need for a cashier or bagger at each terminal. Home Depot has seen the advantages of this, testing out the self-checkouts in several of its stores. The technology could help Home Depot implement its proposal, announced earlier this year, to shift more of its employees from full-time to part-time (also likely meaning from benefits to no-benefits) status. More than 500 stores are expected to have these registers in 2004. So even the promise of big retail chains bringing jobs, however bad, could be a myth in a few years - they'll hardly need employees at all.

To end this on a possibly lighter note. To the casual observer, it seems like Wal-Mart is coordinating positive press coverage. The February 14th Morning Sentinel carried a large front page photo & article on a Wal-Mart wedding in Farmington, part of a new Wal-Mart wedding package, discount full service legal weddings offered in the stores. A week later the Franklin Journal carried a large front-page story & article on the same thing. In a time when corporations send press releases with full instructions to news organizations on how to run a story our news is becoming little more than ads. (For a background on corporations placing the news, see the article "Selling Ketchup, Selling War" in the December issue of the NY IMC paper the Independent. Contact the Maine Commons to get a copy.)



D.I.Y. MEDIA

HOW-TO GUIDES FOR MEDIA EDUCATION

Interview With Maine Filmmaker Mike Reynolds on His First Documentary

Could you tell us what your documentary is about?

"Life and Death in Maine" is a documentary on the 2000 Maine Assisted Suicide Referendum that focuses on the Disability Rights Resistance to the proposed bill.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I have lived in Maine all my life. I have a disability called Cerebral Palsy. I'm 29, graduated from Lewiston High School and UMaine Orono. I received my degree in English, with minors in creative writing, disability studies and multimedia graphic design.

What in your life inspired you to make a documentary on this subject?

I decided to get a camera to record the hearing on the bill in 2000; it was not the first time an assisted suicide bill was introduced in Maine. The Bill was killed in hearings in 1998, but the state of Oregon had passed a law to allow physician induced death (my phrase for assisted suicide), and in 2000, if the bill was not passed, it would go to a popular vote. The signatures largely were gathered by people in Maine, but paid for by some pretty powerful and wealthy pro-death groups nationally. I taped several events around the issue, and was originally going to try and tie the movie into my life's milestones. I started using a wheelchair in 2000, I was told my job was cut the day before the Legislative hearings, and other stuff like that, but it really became more of a history of the right to die movement, the disability resistance to that movement and this battle that took place in Maine. I sat on the videos for over a year, figuring I'd do something with them. Then everything after September 11th happened, and I realized as soon as I got some stability in my life I really wanted to tell this story.

Did you run into any difficulties in making this documentary?

I guess I was a bit naïve. I was much more focused on a good production and getting it shown at a conference in Boston, than things like marketing, setting up business plans and the luck would have totally burdened me down if I put all of that on the plate before I was almost done with the film. ROSC (Resources for Organizing and Social Change) is the fiscal agent for my website www.uppity-disability.net, and after trying to get press coverage and everything it was really just time consuming. The original video capture card I got could not produce the output quality I needed, and it was almost totally self funded. I received grants from ROSC and other sources, but the majority of the bill was out of my pocket.

You frame the issue of assisted suicide as primarily an issue affecting people with disabilities. What are your feelings on requested assisted suicide for people with cancer or similar terminal illnesses?

I think if assisted suicide is being considered an option, that's a sign of some form of need going unmet. ...[T]here is tremendous progress in pain management; the horror stories people talk about do not need to happen. Besides that, the diagnoses of "terminal" are, at best, one doctor's guess. My parents were told I wouldn't survive my birth ... the first night and week. I'm still alive. "Terminal" is a subjective diagnosis. It also has been shown that the dying process is a valuable part of life - look at "Tuesdays with Morrie." That book only illustrates one of many valuable stories.

Furthermore if we allow physicians to help with a suicide, we totally distort the doctor-patient relationship. Doctors take an oath to first do no harm. This pro-assisted suicide trend is not being organized by people with disabilities, it is being organized by able bodied people who think losing bladder or bowel control is a fate that is a logical reason, in their arguments, to kill one's self. I mean, as a person who is incontinent, the argument is insulting and ridiculous.

Did you have a background in video production prior to making this documentary, or did you teach yourself as you went?

I did some stuff in high school and interned at a couple places in college and came to the realization that the types of socially progressive stuff I wanted to ideally do wasn't going to happen unless I really got lucky, and it seemed very insular in Maine, versus NYC or LA, but with the desktop technology it is as if I had a editing suite at home, and digital editing was as nice and sometimes better. And the whole way in which the internet and technology has changed, the software that came with my capture card and some freeware video software was all I needed. It is very cool that basically anyone with enough sheer determination can do a project like this.

What would you do differently if you had to opportunity to make this documentary again?

A lot of technical things, like record events on slower speed tapes and maybe [I would have] looked for a camera that was a Hi-8 vs. VHS-C for basic things like battery life. ...[I]f I would have gone into the hearing thinking "I'm documenting this process," with financial backing, I know it wouldn't be as edgy as what it turned out to be. I put this out to tell my story, not to please some commercial appeal. ...I think it tells a compelling story, and funding and better equipment would have helped out, but I am very satisfied with production.

What equipment was needed to make this video? How much did it cost to make it, how did you get funding? How did you get access to that equipment?

It was all total under \$1000, probably. If you don't count my camera it would have been \$300 total. Most of the equipment was my VHS-C camcorder and a Dazzle USB capture card authored to Video CD and transferred to VHS. All consumer grade technology you can buy at any store.

Do you plan to do future documentaries on other subjects?

I have a few ideas but I'm more concerned and concentrating with trying to promote this film, so it seems like a long ways off.

Do you have any advice for someone starting out who would like to do a documentary on a subject that is important to them?

Try and capture events and the events illustrate your points, don't be too concerned with having the best camera in the world. ...Bells and whistles are wonderful if you can afford it, but capturing the event in the highest possible quality is the one thing I learned that I wished I would have done.

If people would like a screening of this documentary, who should they contact?

Mike Reynolds, www.lifeanddeathin-maine.org, or write the Maine Commons. I am currently working on a few screenings throughout Maine this spring and summer. There is also ordering information on the site.

Human Rights Traveling Film Festival
March 2-9, 2003
at SPACE, 538 Congress St., Portland

The Human Rights Traveling Film Festival comes to Portland on March 2-9 with seven titles from six countries. The films and videos provide personal testimony to threats against freedom and address the impact of war on people throughout the world. The festival showcases the heroic stories of activists and survivors of atrocities from around the world through the eyes of committed and courageous film makers.

The festival will take place at SPACE, a nonprofit, artist-run multimedia venue in Portland. Proceeds benefit Human Rights Watch and the SPACE A/V fund to help purchase audio/visual equipment for future screenings and events as well as providing infrastructure and support for local artists.

The opening night is free. Tickets to all other shows are \$5 (\$4 for students). Festival passes are \$25 (\$20 for students) and are available at SPACE and at Videoport (151 Middle St., Lower Lobby, in Portland).

For more information and a schedule of films, visit the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival website at www.hrw.org/iff/2002/about.html or contact Jon Courtney at (207)773-6354 or at jcourtne@maine.rr.com

STRIKE: CONTINUED FROM PG. 20

and that things will be running smoothly again."

But on January 31st the situation hadn't changed, and Sam J. French, an IWW agitator from the New York headquarters of the IWW, had arrived in Skowhegan. French addressed the strikers with words of good hope. He predicted 200,000 union members nation wide supported the strikers' efforts. After the first week of February the situation had not changed. "... The strikers at this time are of good courage and apparently enjoy their self-enforced vacation", the local newspaper reported. "From an impartial point of view the state of affairs as it exists is much to be regretted by all who have the best interests of our town at heart."

The United Textile Workers of America (UTWA), of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), did not support the textile workers' strike. In a letter to the employees of Marston Mills John Golden, president of the UTWA, denounced IWW tactics as "dirty", regretting that the workers "have been so carried away with empty promises", and advised all employees to return to work. "Should they fail to take advantage of this advice... we will supply the firm [Marston mills] not with 'scabs', but with union men and women, who, while standing out for their own rights, will not lose sight of the fact that other people have rights also."

The attempts of the UTWA and AFL strikebreakers did not have the effect that they planned. In a note to the manager of the Marston Mills the local 379 of the IWW set five demands:

"Sir - In order to remove indefiniteness from the situation, and to give you no further change to imagine that you don't know what we want... [we] send you this note hereby informing you that our position is that what we demand: 1st - That all those employed at the Marston Mills on January 7th be re-instated 2nd - That the fineing system in the finishing room be abolished 3rd - That Charles North, overseer of the finishing room, be discharged 4th - That the minor grievances be discussed and settled 5th - That a committee of the employees to be elected for the purpose of aiding in the adjustment of any grievances that may arise, be recognized and treated with by the mill officials, whenever a grievance is referred to it by anyone or all of the employees."

In response J.W. Blunt, manager of the Marston Worsted Mills, noted that "there is nothing in your requests that the mill can't grant."

The noted response was read aloud before a meeting of the strikers, and a unanimous motion was passed, "that this note be stored in the archives of Local 379 for the benefit of some future historian of Skowhegan labor troubles."

How long the strike was prolonged is subject to debate. One historian estimated the strike to have lasted until April of that same year. However, the struggle resulted in a complete victory for Skowhegan textile workers and the Industrial Workers of the World, despite the anti-union press and AFL strikebreakers.

*Most of the information in this article pertaining to the textile strike was extracted from primary sources, thanks to the Skowhegan Library.



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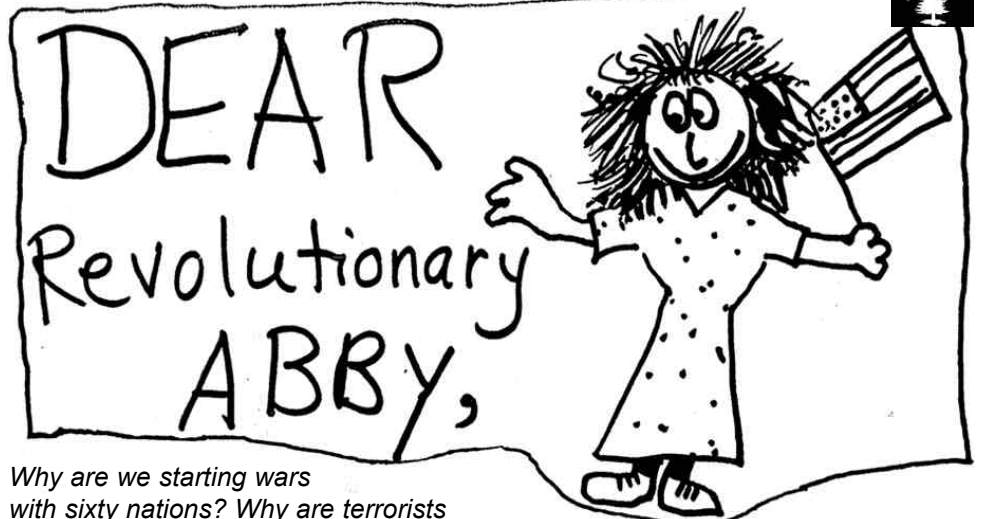
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Turn over for Volunteer Form



Why are we starting wars with sixty nations? Why are terrorists attacking us? What are we doing? Trying to take over the world or something?

Yours, Wondering in Winslow

Dear WW,

We? What's this we?

Did the Mega-Mammoner investors and the Senators and Reps of DC and the Prez and his cabinet and the CIA and Pentagoners who made these plans behind closed doors invite we to join them?

We pay taxes, yes. They don't.

We watch TV and read the mainstream news which they concoct, twist, shape and fabricate.

They designed our schools to exclude most of us from inclusion in their system which makes them IN CONTROL. Those of us excluded are given the choice of going into the military for education, for security. Or the terror of poverty.

Then we get to go to war for them.

Their media lies and omits so much REAL NEWS that we often support them in their truly EVIL actions which bash other countries and destroy our rights, give us bigger taxes, give us more stress.

They are so sneaky and corrupt (the CIA for instance) that many of us who have gotten our hands on uncensored news are beginning to wonder if maybe they hired the September 11, 2001 terrorists. It looks like they certainly knew beforehand that the terrorist thing was about to happen. They certainly are happy that it happened. They are on top of the world these days. They have unprecedented power.

Who knows? Not we.

Yours forever in truth, Revolutionary Abby

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