



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

VOL. 2, ISSUE 7
JULY 2006

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Bohemian Grove

Hey Fredy, How are you? It has been a while and I hope this email finds you in the best of health.

We are working on trying to make the annual demonstration at Bohemian Grove on July 22 as big as possible this year. There seems to be a growing interest not just from anti war people but also from those organizations working on immigrant rights in Sonoma County. I wanted to make sure that you have gotten the information for it. I want to encourage you and your VFP chapter to bring a bus down for the event.

If there is any other organizer up there that you can think of who should get this info please forward along this attachment My best to you and Sherry.

Bill Hackwell
ANSWER Coalition

Anyone interested contact Fredy Champagne, Garberville Chapter 22

Submitted By: Fredy Champagne

**NEXT VFP 56
MEETING
July 6, 7:00 pm
Marsh Commons,
101 H Street
Arcata, California
707-822-4975
www.vfp56.org**

Dennis Kucinich - kucinich.us - Insight and Action

Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH), who has led opposition within the Congress to the war from the beginning, issued the following statement on the war Supplemental funding bill on the House floor Monday evening:

“Mass death on the installment plan. That’s what this supplemental vote to keep our troops in Iraq is all about.

“Today Iraqi civilian casualties number well over 100,000. Iraqi civilian injuries could be over one million, but who is keeping track? Some act as though the Iraqis are not real people, with real families, real hopes and real dreams and loves of their own.

“We have lost nearly 2,500 of our own brave soldiers. Up to 48,000 troops have suffered physical or emotional injuries that could scar them and their loved ones for life.

“Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Steiglitz says the war could cost \$2 trillion dollars. Two trillion dollars for war while the American people are told we don’t have enough money for job creation, education, health care and social security.

“The Administration went into Iraq without an exit strategy not because they are incompetent, but because they have no intention of leaving.

“We are spending hundreds of millions building permanent bases in Iraq. The Administration recently announced deployment of no less than 50,000 troops in Iraq far into the future. We are looking at the permanent occupation of Iraq.

And so the long cadence of lies has led to Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and Haditha, soon to be replaced by more lies and more tragedies.

“What can you say when you are watching your nation descend, sleep walking, into something like the lower circles of hell in Dante’s Inferno?

You can say stop it ! You can say enough blood is enough blood !

“You can stop it ! Bring our troops home !

“You can say no to any more funds for this war ! And then we can begin a period of truth and reconciliation about 9/11 and Iraq. Begin the healing of the soul of America.

The Bible says, ‘He who troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind.’ Our house

Below is a letter the VFP-56 Coordinating Committee drafted and approved in support of Lt. Watada, the first officer to refuse to deploy to Iraq.

May 10, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Veterans For Peace Chapter 56 is writing to register our support for Lt. Ehren Watada in his legal and moral refusal to accept orders to deploy to Iraq. This Chapter, (along) with other VFP chapters throughout the nation, (have) HAS vehemently opposed THIS (the) war (in Iraq) from before its onset.

Disregard for rules of engagement and for the safety of our military personnel and Iraqi civilians occur daily. We view the deployment of any U.S. military force to Iraq to support this illegal action to be regrettable. The members of VFP-56 call for compliance with international humanitarian law; the immediate withdrawal of troops from the Middle East; and for an immediate end to this unlawful U.S. military occupation.

In addition, we support the rights of military personnel to refuse to be deployed in this illicit armed engagement since members of the armed forces have a legal and moral obligation to resist illegal orders, according to their oath of induction... "... to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic." The United States Constitution makes treaties that are signed by the government equivalent to the "law of the land" itself.

Under the Nuremberg Principles, (one had an obligation to disobey orders of leaders who are perpetrating crimes against peace and crimes against humanity. We are all bound by what U.S. Chief Prosecutor Robert K. Jackson declared in THE 1948 Nuremberg Trials: "The very essence of the [Nuremberg] Charter is that individuals have intentional duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual

state." At the Tokyo War Crimes trial, it was further declared, "Anyone with knowledge of illegal activity and an opportunity to do something about it is a potential criminal under international law unless the person takes affirmative measures to prevent commission of the crimes."

Military personnel have an obligation and a duty to only obey lawful orders and indeed have an obligation to disobey unlawful orders, including orders by the President that do not comply with the constitution or UCMJ.

By his refusal to fight in this war, Lt. Watada is exercising his right(s) and obligation to stand fast to his moral commitment to our Constitution and his sworn oath of induction. His decision is whole-heartedly supported by VFP-56. Our Chapter will consider any actions we can take on his behalf, to affect a positive outcome, regarding his determination not to be deployed to Iraq.

Please keep us updated on what actions VFP-56 may undertake on Lt Watada's behalf to support him both legally and morally.

Respectfully,

VETERANS FOR PEACE, INC.
Humboldt Bay Chapter 56

James M. Sorter, Secretary

The Coordinating Committee met on June 6th in a special meeting to discuss Lt. Watada's refusal to deploy to Iraq because of his moral aversion to this illegal war. A motion was made to draft a letter from VFP-56 in support of his actions. This letter was sent in the name of VFP-56 on Saturday, June, 10, 2006 to lend our support for Lt. Watada's actions and to offer our assistance if necessary. Information concerning Lt. Watada and his legal battle can be found on the Internet at: www.thankyoult.org

DIRECTOR NEEDED FOR ARCATA ENDEAVOR

Opening for Executive Director. Qualifications: BA or BS degree from accredited college; work experience in social work, psychology or administration of services to homeless and indigent clients.

Responsibilities: personnel mgt, fiscal/program mgt & fundraising, board and community relations. Send resume & cover letter to ED, Arcata Endeavor, 501 9th St., Arcata, CA 95521. No telephone calls.

AMAZING

By: Jack Nounnan

Amazing how we've got these extraordinary numbers on our side, maybe 80% of folks across the country, at times, as relates to environmental issues for one, according to poles (and this from a corporate owned sell-out media). And we're still looking anemic vs. those few guys who control the switches and hold so much power of persuasion over "middle management" or whoever... that won't just say no! We're even more invisible about Florida and Ohio and what all that ought to mean to lots of us.

We're all part of the questions and answers of our times. There's nobody else no matter how warm and comforting all those inspiring images of the past, all those willing to carry through so we could be here to even sense it! Always must ask myself, who am I to pose anything whatsoever to anyone, for that matter, yet it's still this thing of what all is right to speak out about and actually doing it? When will we feel informed enough to finally sense we've got to take the plunge, no matter how well prepared? Certain things like pulling someone out of a burning building don't give us time to ruminate. It's always recruiting time, no matter where we find ourselves.

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From Capitol Hill Blue

*The RantField Commanders Tell
Pentagon Iraq War 'Is Lost'*

By DOUG THOMPSON

Jun 5, 2006, 07:13

Military commanders in the field in Iraq admit in private reports to the Pentagon the war "is lost" and that the U.S. military is unable to stem the mounting violence killing 1,000 Iraqi civilians a month.

Even worse, they report the massacre of Iraqi civilians at Haditha is "just the tip of the iceberg" with overstressed, out-of-control American soldiers pushed beyond the breaking point both physically and mentally.

"We are in trouble in Iraq," says retired army general Barry McCaffrey. "Our forces can't sustain this pace, and I'm afraid the American people are walking away from this war." Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has clamped a tight security lid on the increasingly pessimistic reports coming out of field commanders in Iraq, threatening swift action against any military personnel who leak details to the press or public.

The wife of a staff sergeant with Kilo Company, the Marine Unit charged with killing civilians at Haditha, tells Newsweek magazine that the unit was a hotbed of drug abuse, alcoholism and violence.

"There were problems in Kilo company with drugs, alcohol, hazing [violent initiation games], you name it," she said. "I think it's more than possible that these guys were totally tweaked out on speed or something when they shot those civilians in Haditha."

Journalists stationed with the unit described Kilo Company and the Third Battalion of Marines as a "unit out of control," where morale had plummeted and rules went out the window.

Similar reports emerge from military units throughout Iraq and even the Iraqi prime minister describes American soldiers

as trigger happy goons with little regard for the lives of civilians. Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki says the murder of Iraqi civilians has become a "daily phenomenon" by American troops who "do not respect the Iraqi people."

"They crush them with their vehicles and kill them just on suspicion. This is completely unacceptable," Maliki said. The White House tried to play down Maliki's comments, saying the prime minister was "misquoted" *although Maliki himself has yet to make such a public claim.*

"Can anyone blame Iraqis for joining the resistance now?" Mustafa al-Ani, an Iraqi analyst living in Dubai, told The Chicago Tribune. "The resistance and the terrorists alike are feeding off the misbehavior of the American soldiers."

As the resistance mounts and daily violence escalates, the overstressed U.S. units are unable to control the mounting violence and conclusions escalate that the war is lost.

"Our troops overreacted because of the pressure on them, and they killed innocent civilians in cold blood," says Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa.

The former commander of American forces in Northern Iraq admits incidents like Haditha add to the impression that the U.S. cannot win the war.

"Allegations such as this, regardless of how they are borne out by the facts, can have an effect on the ability of U.S. forces to continue to operate," says Army Brig. Gen. Carter Ham. Others say the incident just shows the U.S. has lost the "hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people.

"When something like Haditha happens, it gives the impression that Americans can't be trusted to provide security, which is the most important thing to Iraqis on a day-to-day level," says Anthony

Cordesman, an Iraq expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It tends to confirm all of the worst interpretations of the United States, and not simply in Iraq, but also in Afghanistan and in the region."

Fear for My Daughter

By Sara Rich

Wednesday 14 June 2006

it started out with being scared for her life when she signed up for the military. She assured me that she was promised she would not go to Iraq. I was not as trusting. She was sent to Iraq right out of her basic training. While she was packing, we cried, as she assured me she would be okay. One of her sergeants assured me, "Don't worry, ma'am, we'll take good care of your daughter." I desperately hoped that I could trust him to watch over her. I later found out he was one of the first predators to try to have sex with her and make her "his private."

She spent a long year in Iraq. I feared for her safety every waking minute. She frequently called me crying, telling me very little of the horror she was witnessing - only telling me it was hard. She told me that almost all of the other soldiers were sexually harassing her and that many of her sergeants and lieutenants were really pressuring her and making her life miserable for rejecting them. Calls from her often ended with "Oh, there goes gun fire - gotta go mom, love you."

When she returned from Iraq, she was much more quiet and anxious than when she left. I offered to get her help, but she refused. She told me that if she opened that can of worms she would not be able to function as a human being. I asked her if she wanted to deal with the horrible sexual harassment charges against so many of her fellow soldiers. She said, no mom, it would only make my life even more of a living hell. Then she finally blew the whistle on one of her superiors for sexually harassing her, and she was

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THE INDUCTION PHYSICAL

By Jim Sorter

I can remember those first words as it were yesterday, those soft reassuring words as I stepped to the front of the bus and debarked through the open door, "Alright you numskull, nitwit, sons-a-bitches, get your fairy asses off that bus and get in this mother fuckin' line NOW!!! We're not catering to a bunch of prima donnas here you ass wipes, you're in the Army now!!" With this warm greeting I got my first glimpse of what life, and my home was going to be, for the next four years in the U.S. Army.

It all started back in June of 1958, right after I graduated from Arcata High School. Not knowing what to do and thinking myself a man among men who could challenge any obstacle, I innocently went to see my Army recruiter and volunteered to take the tests which would qualify me to be a Fire Direction Control expert in the U.S. Artillery, which the recruiter assured me was the most lucrative, sought out position available. Passing these tests successfully would entitle me to a choice position, fast advancement, and make me a man to be envied by all who came near. (Not to mention that great uniform which would be a chick magnet wherever I went.)

Three hours and five pencils later, I was informed that I had indeed passed these monumental hurdles and was being considered for a position suiting my intelligence and charm. Within ten minutes my proper niche was found, my position confirmed, and I was told that I would be leaving the following week for Oakland California to take my induction physical.

The big day arrived with thunderheads in the sky and a slight sprinkle falling lazily towards the earth. Not realizing that this was apparently signs of bad omen, I valiantly boarded the plane which would swiftly carry me to my destination in Oakland, and ultimately to my date with destiny.

Now, if you have never been subjected

to an induction physical, you are missing out on one of the most unique experiences life has to offer. Picture fifteen naked men standing in a circle, facing inward, bending over at the waist, touching their toes, while a doctor grabs and fondles their testicles, now picture one-hundred and fifty men, which is closer to reality. The "fear factor" for me had already begun to set in.

"Spreading the Cheeks", as it was serendipitously called was the next degrading surprise, and could have been one of the most horrendous experiences I had to endure if it hadn't been for the other revelations I had in store for me during the remaining parts of this ordeal. In this same circular formation we were subjected to the medical staff using their index finger, exploring each and every one of our lower body cavities. If you are goosy this was like trying to give an enema to a wildcat. Many a man hit a "High C" in the treble clef during this procedure. Never once did I see them change their gloves while examining us. Turning slightly, I saw malevolent gleams in their eyes as they drooled slobber down their chins. You could definitely tell this was more fun for them than for us! After our rectal reaming they returned the gloves to the "freezer" to be used again on the next unsuspecting victims.

Urinating into a test tube was the next phase of the examination. The object is to get as much urine into the tube as you possibly can without causing an overflow. I flunked! With dripping fingers I handed my specimen to a burly, hunched back medic, whose eyes were glassily transfixed upon the lower torso of all who came near. Shielding myself as much as I possibly could from his glaze, I stood there for approximately five minutes while he examined it, said I was sugar and drug free, gave me a wink and was told to go to Room 215 for the next endurance test, the vision examination, which consisted of counting the number of dead flies one could find on a piece of flypaper. If you found and counted ones without wings, you would be eligible to qualify for aviation flight training!

Mental tests to determine level and eligibility for ranking were next. The Army has some very unique methods by which they

classify and judge the capabilities of their personnel. There are three levels of classification, enlisted men, Non Commissioned Officers, and Commissioned Officers. The test to judge your fitness for enlisted man status requires memorization of the section of the Military Code of Justice Manual, which states, "In case of capture your are to give only your name, rank, and serial number." You are eligible for Non Commissioned Officer rating if your can spell you name, (only your first), tie your shoe with help, complete a four word sentences without using the words mother fucker, and shout louder than the psychologist who helped you tie your shoe. To be a Commissioned Officer you had to pass all tests given to Non Commissioned Officers, but in addition you were required to swallow five shots of bourbon in 10 seconds and then see if you could hit your butt with a swagger stick! When the results of the tests were tallied and made official, I was informed that I was firmly established in the elite corps of artillery enlisted men and was I goanna make my Momma proud!

Shuttled out of the psychologist's office, I found myself standing at the end of a long, narrow, dark hall. Groping along I finally reached the other end, which opened into a room full of other equally naked men nervously standing around, cross-legged, trying to look inconspicuous. I stood there, exposed for what seemed like an eternity when finally an officer came in and told us to raise our right hands, (He demonstrated to us which one that was, but had to take two tries to get it.) He led us in the oath of allegiance to the United States. At last I was a God fearing, mean mutha of a soldier. We were congratulated, given our clothes finally and herded onto a bus for a six hour ride to Fort Ord Receiving Center to be welcomed with open arms by our beloved drill sergeants, with the aforementioned vernacular.

I had come a long way since that first day in the recruiter's office. I had successfully hurtled my first obstacle and was eagerly anticipating the second, basic training. I had made up my mind, during the long bus ride, that after the humiliation and degradation

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THE INDUCTION PHYSICAL...

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of the induction physical, I could accept any amount of abuse the Army threw my way! But, have you ever had to wear a piece of bubble gum stuck on the end of your nose every day for a week? Oh well, that's another story!

FEAR FOR MY DAUGHTER.....

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treated like a pariah, while he was moved to a different unit and promoted. She put her head down and worked as a Military Police Officer at Fort Lewis. She was always shocked by the number of domestic violence calls she went out on. The fear of a mother of a peace officer was there, but at least I could call her and knew she was safe. We knew that she was going to be re-deployed to Iraq sometime after the mandatory 18 months stabilization time was over. So, we were looking at November of 2006 for a second re-deployment. Our hearts were heavy at the thought.

She came home for a visit and couldn't face me to tell me she was going back to Iraq much sooner than expected. My fear was skyrocketing. I asked, how can they do that, you will have only have had 11 months of stabilization time. She told me that she refused to sign the paper waiving her rights to 18 months. She was told that her life would be hell in a shit hole if she refused to sign. They screamed in her face and intimidated her to the point that she would shake when she told the story. Our family prepared. She was packed, ready to re-deploy, keys in hand. She said, "I can't do this, Mom, I can't go back there." We shifted into action to protect our daughter.

We networked with everyone imaginable. We knew that we would rather see her in jail than spending another minute in Iraq. We hired an attorney with experience in these kinds of military matters. And Suzanne went into hiding.

Now here we are, facing what we knew was a real possibility. Suzanne is in jail and waiting to be taken up to Ft. Lewis, and I am really scared. The military treated her horri-

bly when she was a soldier, I can only imagine what they will do to her as a prisoner. She is a brave young woman and my hero. But there is only just so much stress an Iraq war veteran can handle.

My fear for my daughter is real. My hope for and belief in my daughter and what she is doing is strong and unshakable. I truly believe she saved her own life with her courage. It is to be hoped that by telling her story and standing strong she can encourage others in the military to stand up, speak out, and refuse to participate in this illegal and immoral war.

Thanks to you all. I knew this was going to happen eventually, so I had my ducks in a serious row. Today I had a press conference, a vigil, at the jail where Suzanne is, and I spoke to 10 different radio shows, some nationally syndicated three TV stations, 3 newspapers and had a million calls.

I only got to talk to Suzanne for one short minute in which we both were crying so hard we could not talk.

They are transporting Suzanne tomorrow in the early morning to Ft. Lewis and returning her to her unit. We are planning to be at the jail at 7:45 - 9:00 a.m. to see if we can catch a glimpse of her as she leaves the jail to show her that we are here for her.

Letters of Support Needed

Please write to Lt. Colonel Switzer, Ft. Lewis, Washington, to ask that Spc. Suzanne Swift receive a medical discharge or an honorable discharge from the Army due to her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. After writing the letter, please fax a copy to:

Senator Gordon Smith

Federal Building

211 East 7th Avenue, Room 202

Eugene, OR 9740

Phone: 541.465.6750

Fax: 541.465.6808

Senator Ron Wyden

151 West 7th Avenue

Suite 435

Eugene, OR 97401

(541) 431-0229

Congressman Peter DeFazio

151 West 7th, Suite 400

Eugene, OR 97401

Phone: (541) 465-6732

Senator Patty Murray

950 Pacific Avenue, Ste. 650

Tacoma, Washington 98402

Phone: (253) 572-3636

Fax: (253) 572-9892

If there is no fax number, you can email them. Let me know if you send a letter and if you get a response.

If you want to donate to Suzanne's legal or medical fund, please contact her mom at formydaughtersuzanne@yahoo.com.

Thanks so much from Suzanne and her family. We appreciate your love and passion. This is so important for us to do - not only to end the war, but to defend women who are in the military. Anything you or your Chapter can do to support Suzanne Swift will truly be appreciated. The World is watching!!

Peace,

Sara Rich, M.S.W.



Stay the Course? What Course?

By Eugene Robinson

Fresh from his triumphal visit to Baghdad a place so dangerous he had to sneak in without even telling the Iraqi prime minister - George W. Bush is full of new resolve to stay the course in his open-ended "global war on terror." That leaves the rest of us to wonder, in sadness and frustration, just what that course might be and where on earth it can possibly lead

This is a "war" in which three men held for years without due process at the Guantanamo Bay prison kill themselves by hanging, and their jailers are so unnerved and self-absorbed that they see the suicides as an attack. Rear Adm. Harry Harris's all-about-me lament - "I believe this was not an act of desperation but an act of asymmetrical warfare waged against us" - was worthy of delivery from Oprah's couch.

Bush claimed at his news conference the other day that he'd "like to close Guantanamo" if only the people being held there weren't so "dam dangerous." These bad people, in other words, are forcing him to hold them indefinitely under conditions that mock international norms. But if the inmates are indeed beyond redemption, why order them to be hog-tied and force-fed when they go on hunger strikes? Why not just let them starve? Why freak out when three of the evil-doers hang themselves? Why not pass out rope and tell the rest to bring it on?

This is a "war" in which the United States drops two 500-pound bombs with the express intent of assassinating Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, a group that wouldn't have existed if Bush hadn't decided to invade. But when the world learns that Zarqawi briefly survived the bombing, and rumors circulate that U.S. forces shot him dead, officials rush to release an autopsy report showing that the butcher with a \$25 million bounty on his head died from blast injuries. An American medic, we

are told, was about to administer first aid when Zarqawi mumbled something unintelligible and expired.

Why do your best to kill an enemy leader a bad, bad man, the worst of the worst - and then try to revive him? Didn't you want him dead?

In this amorphous, open-ended "war" that we're spending precious lives and billions of dollars to wage, the rules of engagement seem to be shoot first and apologize later.

We're sorry if U.S. Marines massacred 24 civilians in Haditha. We're even more sorry than we were after U.S. military personnel tortured and humiliated those prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Bush's stalwart ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, is sorry if London police, conducting an anti-terrorist raid this month, shot and wounded an innocent man whose only "crime" was to come downstairs in his underwear to see who was breaking into his house. But not as sorry as Blair was after the London subway bombings, when commandos shot dead an innocent Brazilian electrician whom they mistook for a possible, potential, just-might-be terrorist.

Nobody's sorry, though, about secret CIA prisons or extralegal detention or interrogation by brutal "waterboarding" or an Orwellian blanket of domestic surveillance. After all, we're at "war."

The military announced yesterday that the number of U.S. troops killed in Iraq has reached 2,500, another of those awful, round-number milestones. It is widely expected that the new Iraqi government will consider an amnesty for some of the insurgents who killed some of those American servicemen and women - drawing a distinction between roadside bombs placed by Sunni Muslims in "resistance" to the U.S. occupation and those placed by foreign al-Qaeda jihadists. If this happens, we'll have taught the Iraqis well. They'll be saying "pardon me" just like their American tutors.

Today's generation of jihadists was forged in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet occupation. How long will the next genera-

tion, being forged in Iraq fighting the American occupation, be with us?

Iraq is just one theater in Bush's "war." Elsewhere, Afghanistan is once again ablaze as the resurgent Taliban counterattacks. Somalia is coming under the sway of an Islamic militia that may harbor al-Qaeda militants. America's popularity in the world continues to fall.

But George W. Bush forges ahead, trying vainly to kill a poisonous, retrograde ideology with bullets and bombs. His "war" is self-perpetuating, and no one even knows what victory would look like. Long after he's gone, we'll still be looking for a way to end the mess he began.

Eugene Robinson writes for the Washington Post

DU/WMD

Peter Aronson

The status of SB 1720, The Veterans Health and Safety Act of 2006 sponsored by Sen Wes Chesbro, continues with good momentum. Your DU committee has a dedicated group of members who have successfully launched a campaign to push this bill which calls for an important outreach program for members of the armed forces exposed to DUst. They have been told it's "safe", despite government data saying otherwise. They don't know exposure criteria, and they don't know how to access federal treatment services all addressed by this bill.

The bill passed through the Senate unopposed (both committees & the Senate floor had zero votes against it). Peter testified at a hearing in Sacramento last month, and Laura will testify there tomorrow at the Assembly Vet Affairs hearing.

We are optimistic about it's passage, but haven't relaxed our campaign contacting every policy committee & and over 1350 letters to various VFW & American Legion Posts, and other vet groups in CA.



Equality and Mutual Aid-Indispensable For Species Survival

By: *Brian Willson*

Growing up in the U.S. American culture seriously conditions us into its key features of individualism, acquisitiveness, and competitiveness. For how much longer will be able to survive in our politics of selfishness and plunder one can only wonder?

A new book by social epidemiologist, Richard Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (New Press, 2005), concludes that the stress experienced from inequality is the leading deep cause of sickness and illness, far greater even than more conventionally attributed causes such as environmental toxins.

Social and economic inequality is extraordinarily corrosive. It affects our health because the quality of social relations is crucial to well-being. The psychosocial impact of stratification, a structural malady that has coincided with the advent of urban civilization some 5500 years ago, effects deeply how people feel and is devastatingly stressful. It is an overriding cause of ill health and breakdowns in social relations.

Wilkinson concludes that modern societies, despite material success, are social failures. Equality (Justice) is our greatest healer!

A book published more than a century ago, *Mutual Aid: A Factor Of Evolution* by Russian Prince/anarchist Peter Kropotkin (1902), in essence makes the same point from an evolutionary perspective.

From the very conclusion of Kropotkin's masterpiece: "Man is appealed to be guided in his acts, not merely by love, which is always personal, or at the best tribal, but by the perception of his oneness with each human being. In the practice of mutual aid, which we can retrace to the earliest beginnings of evolution, we thus find the positive and undoubted origin of our ethical conceptions; and we can affirm that in the ethical progress of man, mutual support – not mutual strug-

gle – has had the leading part. In its wide extension...we also see the best guarantee of a still loftier evolution of our race."

And from the introduction: "It is not love and not even sympathy upon which Society is based in mankind. It is the conscience – be it only at the stage of an instinct – of human solidarity. It is the unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man from the practice of mutual aid; of the close dependency of every one's happiness upon the happiness of all."

Our species' survival hinges on a leap in consciousness that recognizes that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere (MLK, Jr.). Equality is not just a nice idea, it is indispensable for our survival. Empathy is a foundational human characteristic for assuring equality. Cooperation, sharing and mutual aid in social relations, are keys to equality and sense of well-being. This is the revolution within our evolutionary journey awaiting a leap within our individual and collective consciences.

AMAZING.....

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The Buddhists remind us that in 100 years, no one will be left who is alive today.

So much for history and those past, as against our own personal relevance on Earth!

The Hopi's are stunning example of an ancient people surviving to this day, with the most determined vision to live by, yet only by virtue of those alive today does it hold such meaning! Their ancient beliefs are among the strongest living monument of a people of peaceful ways, stunning in consideration of being torn and shriveled by centuries of surrounding forces bent on destroying them. And there are their own moments of forgetting their way, their own factions disputing their directions, human bickering, relentless misgivings of everything from possessiveness to power, with the fractures and undermining of what they have lived to achieve and pass on .

So much of our own established religions point to what we ought to live by, some acting as if they know the answers and are the spokespeople for God, disputing any other choices, while we face extinction based on what they ask us to follow. And for that matter, how can we avoid talking about religion today, especially as it runs and directs our political lives and deeply influences most all other human efforts? Are we just gonna bicker over the substance of what it all brings up or get down and wrestle with it, "yes" and find the real substance of what works spiritually for the majority of us in the midst of all this? What does it matter whether or not we want to call it religion or our own belief system? Are we gonna avoid it or argue about it ...or is there even an alternative we might run into? Could be. Nothing is finished of what has been started and no matter how different we appear to one another, these are the critical issues of our times with all the mess it creates and it's just only us left to tackle it!

Gotta put up a fight , some flack! Feels good! It's kinda like we're these different body parts of a boxer, learning to work together, jab and faint, the timing and all these muscles and tendons and blood pumping, organs doing their job. Teamwork's great if we happen to (of all things) run into it! Might even work miracles! "Yep" . How 'bout some great counter recruitment today! Nothing like a good drag out battle over God! Oooohweeee, bring it on! If the Da Vinci Code can reach 40 million folks (and growing!) why not us too? Are you a believer?

Fourth of July

There is still room for volunteers to help at the Fourth of July booths in Arcata. We will have two booths, a food booth and an information booth. We need help setting up, serving on shifts, and taking down at the end of the day.

Please contact Gordy Anderson 498-5889 if you can help.





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

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LEADERSHIP TEAM

Steve Stamnes Nate Lomba
Kathie Kelly Linda Sorter
Jim Sorter Rob Hepburn
Gordon Anderson

STANDING COMMITTEES

Peter Aronson: WMD/DU
Doug Smith: General Store
Becky Luening: Media
Laura Simpson: VEOP
Carl Stancil: VEOP

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please email it to turtldncer@aol.com, in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.



Reggae On The River

This year is Chapter 56's first year vending food at ROTR. We have planned an ambitious Mexican menu of carne asada; seitan asada; chile rellenos; vegie enchiladas; jicama/mango salad; black beans and rice; and cheesecake.

Your ROTR planning committee: Jim & Linda Sorter, Nate Lomba; John McAlinn; Kathie Kelly; Gordy Anderson; Becky Luening; and Peter Aronson have been meeting weekly. The scale of this is enormous, and the details astounding! We meet on-site on 6/30 to get our vending site. We must attend Health Department meetings and their requirements for all food prep; handling; storage; and serving. It goes on and on.

Our theme has always been to represent VFP well. We have focused on "local and organic", including spending more to achieve this. Our booth materials have been donated by Pierson's (Bill Pierson & Morgan Randall). The community is generous, but this is a very costly endeavor. Thanks to your very generous chapter colleagues who have fronted thousands of dollars, our chapter account isn't used.

We still need some items: 10-15 gal propane tanks; a steam table; freezers; a large griddle or 2; free-standing propane burners; a covered (oven-type) propane BBQ; and a committed crew. Please contact me if you have something to add. Peter 442-3009.