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WATER WARRIORS TAKE ON WORLD FORUM

Frontline report from the 3rd World Water
Forum in Kyoto, March 16-22

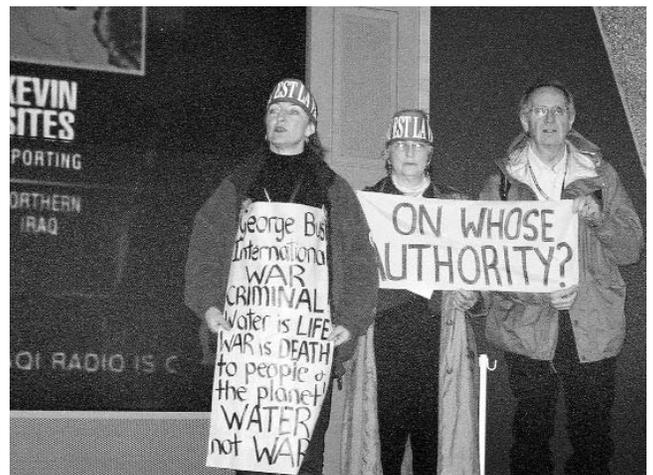
By Ruth Caplan

Gently tinkling bells wafted to the dais where Michel Camdessus was holding forth on his prescriptions for managing the world's water. A momentary frown crossed the brow of the former head of the IMF. He continued his prescriptions in declarative sentences trying to ignore the bells attached to poster board lie detectors with arrows pointing to the highest level of alert.

Speaking of sub-sovereigns (we might call them communities), Camdessus set out prescriptions for local regulations aimed at

creating a safe haven for foreign investors. This is the only way the UN Millennium goal of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water would be met, he proclaimed. More tinkling bells from the lie detectors. Even the "suits" seated in the large auditorium began to smile.

Thanking Camdessus profusely at the end of his speech, Margaret Catley-Carson, chair of the Global Water Partnership, one of three sponsors of the Third World Water Forum, and a sponsor of the report, gamely noted that protests were expected at



AfDers Nancy Price (middle) and Blaine Stevenson (right) join a New Zealand ally to protest war and water privatization.

this session. Maggie, as she is known to her close associates, asked for questions from the floor.

Voices from the global south told of their disastrous experiences with water privatization. Maggie's attempt to return to the panel presentations was thwarted by protests from the mikes followed by a

Water Warriors continued on page 6

COUNCIL WRESTLES WITH FUTURE OF NATIONAL OFFICE

Secluded in subterranean rooms, surrounded by palaces of corporate power in Washington, D. C., 18 Alliance Council members hunkered down to solve the vexing problem of financing the ongoing operation of the national office. Two weeks earlier Nick Biddle had taken emergency action in the face of a cash flow crisis. He put himself on unpaid leave and laid off Stephanie Scadding, the full-time office manager in Waltham.

The meeting started with a philosophical evening session on Thursday, March 27

National Office continued on page 2

REDWOOD AfD WINS IRRADIATED FOOD FIGHT

By Jan Edwards

The Point Arena, California School Board passed a policy against accepting irradiated foods from USDA child nutrition programs or any other source, on February 6, 2003. Point Arena schools are the first to explicitly reject such food as part of policy, following the lead of the Berkeley School District, which passed a resolution rejecting irradiated food, and which already has a policy preferring

organically grown food.

Redwood Coast Alliance for Democracy was very active in this victory. AfD member, Bill Meyers, is also the school board president and introduced the policy change. Several other AfD members spoke in favor of the ban at the public discussion during the meeting.

The policy was made necessary by the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill by Congress,

Irradiated Food continued on page 10

National Office Debate

Continued from page 1

in which Council members and non-Council participants, including the editor of AA and Nick Biddle, expressed their overall concerns about the direction of the Alliance. Many people dealt with the problem of the Alliance being a two-headed organization with one head concentrating on grassroots chapters and the other involved with changing corporate power on the national and international level. Ted Dooley epitomized this dilemma with the question, "Why would people in Minnesota want to support the national office?" while many people expressed the frustration of Sue Wheaton, who pointed out that society needs the Alliance and that we cannot spend so much energy on internal dynamics.

The next day, Co-chairs Ted Dooley and Nancy Price guided a day-and-a-half discussion to resolve the immediate future of the national office. Nick Biddle and Treasurer Vikki Savee laid out the basics. The Alliance spent \$21,000 more in the past year than we took in, although we had also paid off \$13,156 in past debts. The IRS fined the Alliance \$7840 because IRS 990 forms had not been filed for 2000 and 2001 while Nick Penniman was the coordinator. This made it difficult to receive foundation funding. Our current staff has fixed that situation; the CPAs think they can get the fine excused, and the Alliance is receiving



Nancy Price and Ted Dooley

grants once again. Beyond that the Alliance still owes vendors over \$7000 and has another 25,229.28 of friendly long-term debt incurred during the startup of the organization. Fortunately, the membership responded magnanimously to the recent appeal letter, which relieved the immediate crisis.

Nick Biddle observed that core operations of the Alliance cost \$4500 a month and dependable income amounts to \$7500 per month. He suggested that the council vote to maintain the national office with one staff person to fulfill the core functions.

All alternatives were discussed from bankruptcy to full staffing. Steve Cheifetz adamantly promoted the option of reducing down to an answering machine and a post office box. Kati Winchell wondered how the Alliance was going to end corporate domination without even an office.

A straw vote was taken on six options: 1) no office and parcel out tasks to volunteers; 2) no office with a part-time worker, working out of his/her house; 3) an office staffed by volunteers; 4) an office with a part-time paid staff and supplemental volunteer staff; 5) an office with a full-time staff person; and 6) a full-time staff person working out of his/her house. The straw vote narrowed the choices down to options 4 and 5.

The next day was spent defining the core operations and expenses as well as the dependable income. Core operations included: bookkeeping, bill paying, membership renewals, money processing, documents for the IRS and the state, database maintenance, sustainer management, sending out appeal letters, answering the phone, receiving visitors, reproducing mailing materials requested, filing, responding to inquiries about the AfD, and producing

THANKS TO THE MEMBERSHIP

On behalf of the entire Council, I thank you all—over 254 members and friends of the Alliance for Democracy—who replied so readily to our most recent appeal. To date over \$10,340 has been received and is most gratefully acknowledged. Your generosity is heartwarming and with your help we are in a position to keep the national office and its essential core functions intact and to continue our campaigns, our fundraising, and our outreach to people like you across the country. Your contributions will be used wisely to support our mission. Today, our democracy is in more peril than we could ever have imagined.

Nancy Price, Co-Chair



Steve Cheifetz

Alliance Alerts. Monthly core expenses included \$2500 for salary and benefits for one full-time person, \$1546 for office rent and expenses, \$275 for AA and \$450 to send out six appeal letters, which totaled \$4771 per month.

Monthly dependable income included \$1500 from new members, \$1500 from sustainers, \$1500 from renewals

and \$3000 from contributions arising from appeal letters. Total expected monthly income is \$7500.

After extensive and passionate discussion the Council voted 11 to 5 with two abstentions to maintain the office and hire a full-time staff person to complete the core functions. The Council accepted Nick's resignation as Executive Director and thanked him for his service over the past year. They then offered the full-time office manager job to Stephanie Scadding who accepted over the next week and was soon back at work. The Alliance was back in business and the Council could burst back out of their cave to confront the corporate powers that loomed on all sides.



Sue Wheaton

CAMPAIGN REPORTS BRING LIFT

Gems delivered in the form of campaign reports lifted spirits at the in-person Council meeting in Washington.

Jo Seidita reported that AfD members have been active in creating a staffed and functioning California Clean Money campaign (see pg.11). Jack Vander Ven reported on the communications cooperative (see pg 6). Kati Winchell reported that the North Bridge Chapter in suburban Boston was successfully educating people about the PATRIOT Act. Nancy Price reported that they were fighting a bio-terrorism lab in Davis, California, and she is launching a web site entitled *Science for Peace*. Jim Tarbell reported on the success of AfD and its allies in stopping a corporate water grab in Northern California. Ruth Caplan reported that a world-wide coalition called "Our World is Not for Sale" has formed to fight the global, corporate-driven, free-trade agenda. She said it is made up of a wide variety of people from fisher folk to landless workers

Most astonishing, however, was Cliff Arnebeck, who surmised that since the unions and the Alliance shared similar goals, he felt confident in asking them for \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year for the Alliance on an ongoing basis.

OMBUDSMAN QUESTION SENT TO MEMBERSHIP

The most searing and divided debate at the in-person Council meeting concerned the role of the Alliance Ombudsmen. After a misunderstanding erupted in last fall's Vice Co-chair election, the Council Bylaws and Election Committee (BEC) issued a seven-item job description for the Ombudsmen which talked about the Ombudsmen receiving concerns and complaints about the Alliance and managing the resolution of those complaints through mediation.

The Ombudsmen, Dave Lewit and Bonnie Preston, responded with an eleven-point job description that said the Ombudsmen do not see themselves as

By Nick Biddle

The Alliance for Democracy has been facing a deep financial threat for some time; however in mid-February I realized that its bank accounts were at risk of complete exhaustion by the month's end. I alerted the National Council, which quickly composed an appeal letter to you and all other Alliance members. Once again, you have proven your exceptional dedication to the organization and its message. The March 4 appeal letter sent on behalf of the full Council has yielded a return of \$10,340. The Alliance for Democracy continues because of your immense generosity.

Nevertheless, the general flow of revenues versus expenditures since my arrival in Waltham on April 24, 2002, has been running in the red. The budget doesn't balance. And this unfortunate situation compelled a soul-searching review of the organization at the trimestral meeting of the National Council in Washington, D.C., from March 27 through 30.

Your response to the March 4 appeal letter confirmed what Council members believe in their hearts—that the founding premises of the Alliance are as compelling as ever. To wit: corporate domination is

lawyers or mediators. Instead their aim is to "raise a red flag when policies, procedures and interactions seem to keep the system from working fairly or from living up to its democratic ideal."

Jo Seidita said that sounded like the Ombudsman was a judge and executioner. Ronnie Dugger made a motion that the Council pass a modified version of the BEC's job description. After much discussion the Council divided on the motion with seven for, seven against, and one abstention.

The Council then voted to send the question back to the membership at the next convention.

CHANGE AT THE NATIONAL OFFICE



unjustly destroying the fabric of America; only a democratic social movement can subordinate corporations to the people's will; and, we will have succeeded when

the political economy of the United States is just, democratic and sustainable.

With so much work to do, the Council looked only to the question of how to keep doing it. After reviewing the books, I pointed out that the backbone of the operation in Waltham, which consists primarily in managing membership services, is affordable. In the conviction that a national presence of the Alliance is necessary to its mission, the Council accepted my recommendation to downsize the national office sufficiently to keep it going without accruing additional debt. Regrettably that measure requires my resignation as Executive Coordinator, which I tendered on March 28.

My work with the Alliance is far from over. I am committed to spearheading production and web publication of the weekly Freedom Flyer. Pursuant to that, I will remain what is called in computer jargon the webmaster of the Alliance website. My interest in water privatization and the newest Alliance campaign, Equal Independent Allies, will keep me involved in several Alliance projects. Additionally, I plan to work with other Alliance members to launch a new website with the Alliance mission at its core. It will be linked to email communications that creates an organizational vehicle in the mold of Move On and True Majority. This is an ambitious agenda for a volunteer, but we live in a critical moment and the Alliance presents the best way through the crisis.

It has been an honor to be AfD's Executive Coordinator. I've learned a bunch and am a better person for it. More importantly, I've gotten to know you, Alliance members, whose drive and dreams are the best among us.

In alliance.

ALLIANCE ALERTS

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ALLIANCE ALERTS is a publication of **The Alliance for Democracy**, whose mission is to end the domination of our politics, our economics, the environment, and our culture by large corporations. The Alliance seeks to establish true economic and political democracy and to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy.

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THE ALLIANCE AND THE WORLD

By Jim Tarbell

In the cold of the East and the sun of the West, Alliance members raised their voices and put their bodies on the line to oppose corporate-driven imperial war. Eight years ago, when there was no Alliance, the American public was unaware of the power that corporations had over their lives. Now after eight years of solid work educating our compatriots, people have begun to grasp the dangers to our democracy posed by the corporate-driven free trade agreements; the absurdity of corporate personhood; and the importance of publicly financed elections. Eight years ago Americans were in denial about the American empire. Now half the signs in the marches talk about oil, empire and corporate power.

At the same time, the reality of the empire has been dropped upon us: the continual war of conquest and plunder; the threat of the victims of empire bringing the war into our lives; the loss of our constitutional rights; and the end of the American republic. While we have defined the forces, they have consolidated their grasp on power. The challenge before us is immense.

But we are not alone. Never before has a world democracy movement emerged as we have seen in recent months. Millions in London, Rome, Paris, Boston, D.C., New York, San Francisco, and L.A. protested the war. Landless workers took over the Brazilian presidency. Argentine citizens said no to the global commercial empire and are creating new means for independent livelihoods.

While we must keep up the pressure for change in our local communities, we can also participate in world-wide conferences and protests. Come to Washington, DC June 4-6 for a **Take Back America Conference** (spindler@ourfuture.org). Come to Sacramento to "**Stop hijacking the world's food supply and increasing hunger**" as ministers from 180 countries gather there for the Expo on Agricultural Science and Technology June 23 to 25th (silr@jps.net). Come to Cancun, Mexico, September 10-14 for the **World Trade Organization Ministerial** and finally come to Miami November 20-21 for the next **Free Trade Area of the Americas Ministerial**. The future depends upon it.



Above: Joanne Nagy, Henry Farber, Warren Felt and Dolly Arond, all of the San Fernando Valley Chapter, march in California opposing the war.



Left: Steve Cheifetz and Kay Loveland of the D.C. Chapter, Jane Lynn, Kristin and Kati Winchell of the North Bridge MA Chapter and Rick LaMonica of the St. Louis Chapter all march in Washington, D.C. protesting the war.

THE FREEDOM FLYER

What It Is and How It Works

The Alliance for Democracy invites you to help generate a progressive/populist dialogue in America. To start, a group of us are now writing one single-page, double-sided flyer each week about pressing issues of the day. We are Granny D, William Rivers Pitt, Ronnie Dugger and Nick Biddle. We are calling ourselves the Freedom Flyer Collective.

We are living an American emergency. The Bush rush to aggressive war is terrifying, and utterly contrary to the principles for which the United States is supposed to stand. The un-elected Bush government, appointed to office by the Supreme Court, has used the fear generated by 9/11 to undermine civil rights, declare war across the globe, and cut taxes to large corporations and their owners.

We are asking for your help in getting these flyers out into the streets where you live. The idea is that if 100 people in 100 towns and cities do this we have the makings of a new communications system for the present crisis. Since multinational corporations control the U.S. media, citizens aren't getting the full story about anything. The Freedom Flyer Collective exists to fill the gaps. Freedom Flyers speak to war, government hypocrisy, civil rights abuse, the shutting down of civil liberties, and corporate crime. They also pose alternatives, describe solutions and outline strategies for using democracy to achieve peace, justice and prosperity.

So far we have produced flyers entitled: The War and Kucinich; Instant Quagmire;

Bloody Distraction; War Tumbling Down; Imperial Disease; A Call to Citizens; Not in Our Name; The American Emergency; Lies Against Peace and Freedom; Granny D and Sanity; and 800 Bombs on Baghdad.

This is what we ask. Each Tuesday we email a new Freedom Flyer to thousands of people at freedomflyer@yahoo.com and we also put the flyer on the Alliance website (www.thealliancefordemocracy.org). If you are not already receiving the Freedom Flyer electronically, please send an email to freedomflyer-subscribe@yahoo.com and it will begin coming your way each Tuesday.

The Freedom Flyer can be downloaded easily from the AfD website. Once on the website, click "This Week's Flyer" on the homepage.

Now for the most important part. Photocopy the two pages so that they become a single-page, double-sided flyer. Make as many copies as you feel comfortable distributing (say 50 to 500). Then take them to the streets.

Once you have a pile of flyers, we recommend a couple of strategies. The first is to stand on a busy corner and hand them out to people walking by. The second is to walk around to coffee shops, record stores, book stores or any progressive retail outlet and ask to leave the flyers in appropriate spots for free distribution. The third method is called "mall activism." Take the flyers and place them under the windshield wipers of cars parked in malls. Of course, the flyer is ripe for distributing at

marches, vigils, rallies, etc. Being creative you'll come up with your own way.

The goal of the Freedom Flyer Collective is to invigorate public dialogue and generate democratic action. In the spirit of Tom Paine, we proclaim our duty to remake the world again.

ALL MEMBERS JOIN ANN AND ALL

We have a system to alert each other about issues and events for which combined action by Alliance members across the nation could have significant impact, and a forum to relate your goals, accomplishments, questions and concerns instantly to all Alliance friends.

To fulfill these functions, we have created two listserves—ALL and ANN. Please subscribe to both.

ALL exists for members to converse electronically about issues, actions, events, books, editorial opinions and other relevant topics. It serves as an open-ended forum for discussions of interest for all AfD members who choose to weigh in. ALL presents the opportunity to articulate our opinions on Alliance campaigns, the anti-war movement, democratic failure and how to reclaim democracy.

The second listserv, ANN, functions to announce events, action alerts, accomplishments and issues specific to the AfD. It is a bulletin board for dispensing information rather than a forum for written interaction. Those who subscribe to ANN receive its messages, but not all are able to post messages to it. Messages are posted onto ANN by AfD national Council members, national office staff, campaign coordinators and chapter contacts. It is important that all Alliance members join this listserv so that they may stay up to date and in touch with the organization's activities.

To subscribe to ALL write: the-alliance-subscribe@igc.topica.com into the address box of an email and send the email with no further instructions.

To subscribe to ANN write: the-alliance-announce-subscribe@igc.topica.com into the address box of an email and send with no further instructions:

Do it today and get connected.

ALLIANCE ALERTS MOVES WEST

With this issue of Alliance Alerts, the editing and production is taken over by Jim Tarbell in Caspar, California. All queries, corrections, ideas, suggestions, and complaints should be directed to the Caspar address on the masthead. It would be great to receive the activities of all chapters for future issues. Letters to the editor and thoughts of members for the Members' Forum section are most welcome. Relevant photographs, car-

toons and line drawings are also wanted. In future issues we will look at both the domination of large corporations and the meaning of establishing a true democracy.

Alliance Alerts will be published quarterly on July 20, October 20, January 20 and April 20. Deadlines for each issue will be the twentieth of the previous month. Send submissions via email to rtp@mcn.org either pasted into the email or as a Microsoft Word Attachment.

INDEPENDENT ALLIES IS A COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE

Bold plans to seek the launching of a national progressive/populist communications cooperative were consolidated at the last membership convention of the Alliance in Gettysburg, PA. Several significant steps have been taken since then under the leadership of Jack Vander Ven of Cincinnati, the chair of this AfD planning group.

Most significantly, Peter Mott of Rochester, NY has secured a comfortable, rustic resort in the Adirondacks in upstate New York, the Blue Mountain Center, for an organizing conference on the project,

which is scheduled for the weekend of May 22-25.

The AfD group, which met in person in Cincinnati late last year, was subsequently challenged and stimulated by group member Steve Cheifetz, of the Washington, D.C., area on the topic of diversity. He has engaged in further discussion and telephone conferencing about assuring sufficient diversity in the organizing of this project at Blue Mountain.

Letters of invitation to some organizations and individuals are being sent out in April, signed by; Vander Ven; Joe Davis of

New Bedford, MA, who is chair of the systems planning subcommittee; and Ronnie Dugger, signing as co-founder of AfD. Dugger is also the author of "Equal Independent Allies," a theory paper on forming such a cooperative which helped launch "Independent Allies," the five-year experiment in cooperative communications launched and conducted by AfD members in San Antonio, TX.

"We are proceeding thoughtfully and carefully, but with resolve," Vander Ven said. "We will keep the members fully informed as this unfolds further."

Water Warriors Challenge the Corporate Agenda

continued from page 1

walk-out by the World Water Warriors and their supporters, including Public Services International, the Indigenous Network, and International Rivers Network. Filled with irrational exuberance, more than 100 protestors returned to take over the stage with banners held high.

Earlier, a disguised water warrior, a.k.a. Ruth Caplan, spied on Maggie and Camdessus planning the session. The documentary film crew was alerted and filmed Nancy Price offering a "Water Is Life" headband to Michel Camdessus, who accepted with some confusion. The World Water Warrior banners in English, French, Japanese and Spanish were then handed out at the doors to all comers.

From the first day, when warriors wore headbands and bright yellow signs protesting water privatization, the desired consensus by the corporate sponsors of the forum was doomed. At every major session, water warriors took to the mikes. The governance panel was forced to consider corporate corruption and IMF/World Bank lack of accountability to communities. Any hope of consensus on partnerships was dashed when the session chaired by Maude Barlow condemned the privatization agenda of public/private partnerships. In a live call broadcast at the alternative water forum in Sao Paulo, the words "we broke the consensus" rang across the Pacific.

Wars over oil — Future wars over water. The connection was made. When Bush gave the 48-hour warning, Nancy Price

stood next to the larger-than-life screen showing CNN coverage. Holding a protest sign hastily written on notebook paper, she was mobbed by Japanese TV and cameras. When the war started, a group of warriors sat in silent vigil in front of the same screen. And when Winonah Hauter from Public Citizen made a presentation to the closing ministerial meeting on the outcome of the partnership dialogue, the only applause of the session came when she added that she was ashamed of what America was doing in Iraq.

Water, war and the corruption of the corporate agenda were continually pushed by the water warriors at this Third World Water Forum, which included 10,000 to 12,000 participants, 351 sessions and 38 themes held in three cities. For an official report from the World Water Forum go to <http://www.world.water-forum3.com/> which proclaims this to be "the most important international water meeting ever."

Ruth Caplan is Co-chair of AfD's Corporate Globalization/Positive Alternatives Campaign.



ALLIANCE SCORES TWO VICTORIES ON GATS

By Ruth Caplan

The Alliance recently scored two significant victories in its campaign opposing the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services—GATS. The U.S. "offers" have been made public and they reject the European Commission's "request" that water "collection, treatment, distribution" for human use be opened up to foreign competition under highly favorable GATS rules.

For the past year, the Alliance has demanded that the office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) make public its "requests" and "offers" to other member countries in the bilateral negotiations to expand GATS. In meeting after meeting, the USTR refused. This changed on Monday, March 31. On that date, the deadline for WTO member countries to make their initial offers, the USTR published its offers on their website <http://www.ustr.gov>.

According to Peter Collins, the USTR negotiator on GATS, the decision was made by USTR chief Robert Zoellick to dispel misinformation about what the U.S. was offering. Not a word was said about turning down the political heat.

Indeed the political heat was fueled by the leak of the final requests from the European Commission several months earlier. The Alliance was one of a select number of NGOs around the world which received the leaked documents now publicly available at <http://www.polarisinstitute.org>. After receiving the leaked documents the Alliance issued a press release which said in part:

Despite frequent denials by European trade officials, they are targeting public services in the current round of services negotiations. The Alliance for Democracy has received leaked official European Commission (EC) documents confirming that the U.S. Postal Service and municipal water/sewer systems are on the negotiating table. The EC even wants their businesses to be eligible for federal small business administration loans now restricted to U.S. citizens.

"From the mail we receive to the water we drink, the European requests show that our basic public services are under threat," observed Ruth Caplan, coordinator of the Alliance for Democracy's trade

campaign. "European corporations want global trade rules so they can profit each time we drink a glass of water or send a letter to Grandma ... Our municipal water/sewer systems are under a GATS attack and local officials have not even been told. Secret negotiations about the public's right to water is not how democracy should work.

"It is time for the United States to make its requests and offers public," Caplan declared. "The public needs to know whether the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) headed by Robert Zoellick will protect essential public services or trade them away in response to the European requests. The Alliance calls on USTR to make public all its requests to other countries immediately and to make its offers public as soon as they are made."

The EC is specifically requesting that its corporations be given market access for "Water collection, purification and distribution services through mains" within United States' boundaries. This classification under "Water for Human Use &

Wastewater Management" has been created by the EC.

This request on water for human use by the European Commission was summarily rejected by the USTR. After three years of organizing to keep water out of GATS, the Alliance has clearly scored a very important victory. Alliance members who wrote or called the USTR, who contacted their member of Congress, and who raised the issue in their local community share in this victory.

Our work is not over. Water privatization could be promoted at the next WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, through the proposed new agreements on investment and competition—a return of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which was the Alliance's first national campaign and first major victory when the MAI was defeated in 1998. We must also keep up pressure to defeat the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which has chapters on both investment and services that would give more power to corporations.

But first, sit back and celebrate our victories in a long and hard struggle.

INDIANAPOLIS WATER PRIVATIZED

By Jack and Stefanie Miller

Thanks to the considerable help of Council Co-chair Nancy Price, Indiana AfD and other state and local groups are working with Public Citizen to demonstrate the need for public control of the Indianapolis Water Co. The water utility was purchased last year by the city, but management was immediately turned over to US Filter, a subsidiary of the French company, Vivendi Environment. The speed with which this privatization took place lent new meaning to the term "Fast Track." Management proposals were due February 8, 2002, and US Filter was recommended to the Water Board 18 days later. The City Council approved the contract March 18th and on April 30th US Filter began management.

Right away US Filter began saving money for stockholders the old fashioned way—eliminating employee benefits and cutting corners. Non-union employees lost their valuable "defined benefit" pension; health care coverage was reduced; vacation time, personal days, sick days and hol-

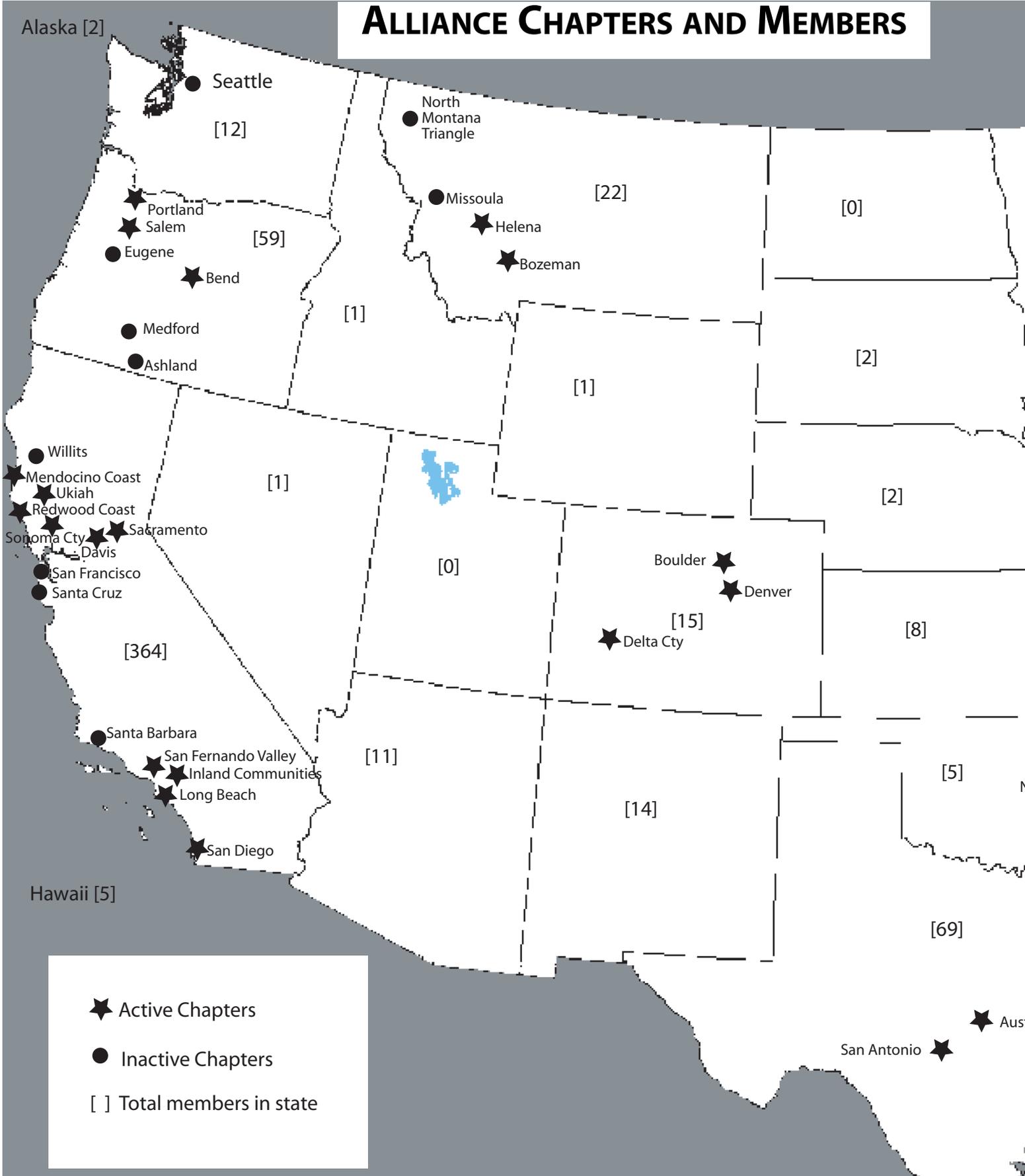
idays were all reduced. As a result, employees filed a federal lawsuit against US Filter and the city. The suit charges fraud, conversion and requests that the contract be declared invalid.

US Filter was in the spotlight recently because frozen fire hydrants resulted in several structures, including a church, being destroyed by flames. (US Filter reportedly cut back on hydrant testing earlier this winter.)

We also hope to use this issue to educate city officials on the pitfalls of globalization. The city's attorney tried to reassure us that US Filter is an American corporation and international trade agreements don't apply. Of course, he couldn't be more wrong. (Maybe he was fooled by the "U.S." in the corporate name.)

In conclusion, this is an excellent opportunity to educate and organize around an issue that impacts everyone. Access to clean, reliable water should never be dependent on greed-driven, unaccountable transnational corporations.

ALLIANCE CHAPTERS AND MEMBERS



- ★ Active Chapters
- Inactive Chapters
- [] Total members in state

Where We Are, Have Been and Could Be

If you want to start a new chapter or if you find any missed or misrepresented information contact Jim Tarbell at rtp@mcn.org



Food Fight

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signed by President Bush, in which an irradiation industry-sponsored rider required the dumping of unmarketable irradiated foods into the National School Lunch program and Child Nutrition program. It had been announced that irradiated foods could be sent to public schools as early as January 2003, but the foods have yet to appear in the system. A long presentation to the Board was made by Christine Bruhn, PhD., who promotes irradiated foods for the USDA. A short statement was made by a staff person from Public Citizen, which has long opposed and investigated the irradiation industry.

Over 50 parents and community members were present, most of whom did not want irradiated food served in the school. The science of irradiated food was vigorously debated. Marc Lappé, PhD., a toxicologist, stated that the latest, most rigorous

studies at the Pasteur Institute in France are very cautionary and need follow-up studies. Because of these studies the European Union has halted the process of certifying foods to be irradiated.

"Mrs. Bruhn stated that it would be unethical to test potentially dangerous

food on adult humans or children. She stated that no such tests had been conducted by the FDA. That convinced me that we should not test this potentially dangerous product on our school children," said Board President Bill Meyers, who introduced the policy.



Mark Lappé of the Center on Toxics and the Environment explains the ramifications of irradiated food to the Point Arena School Board

Why the Alliance Should Get Involved in Food Irradiation

This issue affects us all. Not only will irradiated food be served in our schools, but it will go into all the commodities programs.

This is a corporate power grab. The nuclear industry now has another market for used medical and other nuclear waste products; the factory farm corporations lower their health and cleanliness standards in every step of the process of food production and meat processing; and the large corporate farms have another chance to crush the small, family farms.

This is a democracy issue. Snuck in at the last minute as a rider, the word irradiated was never used in the bill. This is "irradiated pork barrel politics" pushed down our throats by a Congressman who has a big irradiation facility in his state. It is corporations making public policy decisions for us all, with no public discussion—not even in Congress. Irradiated food has failed in the "free market." Consumers refuse to buy it. So the industry has found a way to make profits by dumping irradiated food

on schools and the commodities program.

And worst of all, it's a health issue; a mass experiment on the most vulnerable people in the country—the poor, especially poor children—who may be forced to get 100% of their food through these government programs. Irradiated food has never been tested on humans—let alone children.

But now for the good news: WE WON in Point Arena!

And we think you will, too, if you are willing to make it an issue in your school district. The precautionary principle is on our side, and so is the public. No one from our community spoke up in favor of irradiated food at this meeting, yet the room was filled with parents and others demanding the ban. Although it was helpful to have a school board member strongly in support, it was the community who won this fight. We know this to be true (school board members later said it was the community that convinced them), and it was very empowering for folks to feel their power and really make a democratic change in their lives and the lives of their children.

And it seems, at least for now, schools will have the choice to accept irradiated food or not. It will not cost the school any money to reject this dangerous experiment. But if your school says nothing, the irradiated food will start to arrive.

Public Citizen and other groups working on this would love to ally with the Alliance. We would be glad to share what we have learned and help however we can. To get started, see the Public Citizen website: <http://www.publiccitizen.org/cmep/foodsafety/> or contact Bill Meyers at 707-882-1818 or wmeyers@mcn.org

We encourage AfD chapters around the country to consider working on this issue. It took us two months, beginning to end, and now it is done. Every day people from the community come up to us and thank AfD for taking the lead in this. It is probably the most popular thing we have ever done. It's local. It's national. It's global. It's our food. It's our children.

Jan Edwards is a member of the Redwood Coast AfD chapter and part of the leadership team of WILPF's Challenge Corporate Power, Assert the People's Rights Campaign.



AfD PUSHES INDIANA CLEAN ELECTIONS

By Jack and Stefanie Miller

Indiana AfD is working to build the Indiana Clean Elections (ICE) Coalition. This legislative session, freshman Rep. David Orentlicher, (D-Indianapolis), has introduced HB 1983, which would create public financing for gubernatorial or legislative candidates who agree to limit their spending. The program would be funded by the sale of personalized license plates—money that now funds the

Democratic and Republican state parties—and from a \$2 voluntary checkoff on state income tax returns. According to the *Indianapolis Star*, Orentlicher, involved in the most expensive legislative race in Indiana last year, said, “This is something I’ve always supported, even before I decided to run for office. When your race is a very expensive race, you see firsthand the problems that exist.” He and Republican opponent Jim Atterholt spent nearly \$780,000 combined for a job paying about \$37,000, including expenses.

The bill was assigned to the House Elections Committee. Its chairman, Rep. Ed Mahern, (D-Indianapolis), did not give the bill a strong hearing. The trouble, he told the *Star*, is that the financing bill requires

\$5.25 million from the general budget to get it started—money the state doesn’t have, given its \$850 million budget deficit.

With the part-time legislative session nearly over, the ICE Coalition supports a resolution assigning the issue to a summer committee to study publicly-financed elections based on the Maine and Arizona models.

HELP PASS CORPORATE 3 STRIKES IN CA

By Lois Robin and Len Beyea

Alliance members need to support a Corporate Three Strikes Act recently introduced in the California Senate. SB 335 is a revised version of one developed by Alliance members in Santa Cruz, California. The California Senate Judiciary Committee was to begin hearing the bill on April 29, so messages to the Committee members are urged now.

With passage of the bill, corporations with at least three criminal violations of a million dollars or more during a ten-year period will be put out of business in California. To read the bill, you can access it as a link at www.corporate3strikes.org.

The bill also requires that corporations submit a yearly statement of criminal convictions. These will appear on the Secretary of State’s web site.

In addition, any corporation that has committed a first or second strike offense will be required to publish the details in a full page ad in the largest newspaper in both the state and the largest community in which the offense took place.

The Alliance is joined by a number of coalition groups working on this issue. The Foundation of Consumers and Tax Payers Rights has played a central role in moving this bill to center stage, and they will be a major rallying group for its passage.

You are urged to read the bill and formulate your own reasons for supporting it. Please contact members of the committee to urge them to approve Senate Bill 335 at (916) 445-5957. The committee includes Martha Escutia, Bill Morrow, Dick Ackerman, Gilbert Cedillo, Denise Ducheny, Sheila Kuehl, and Byron Sher.

AfD SPEARHEADS CA CLEAN MONEY

By Ronnie Dugger

The California Clean Money Campaign (CCMC), launched five years ago by the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the AfD, ran a full-page ad in the *Los Angeles Times* following California Governor Gray Davis’ inauguration. The ad invited Governor Davis, who spent more than \$20 million in his campaign, to join CCMC in taking a different kind of oath, to wit:

“The people of California, being sick and tired of special interests running our state and nation, do solemnly swear to work relentlessly to pass the California Clean Money/Clean Elections Reform so our leaders will never have to sell their souls to big money again.”

“While the Governor tackles the daunting task of restoring California’s economy, we want to ensure that the budget and public policy decisions do not cater to the wealthy contributors and special interests,” declared Jo Seidita, CCMC president.

“Campaign costs continue to soar while voter turnout continues to decline to a new low. Candidates reluctantly spend the bulk of their time in nonstop fundraising while voters feel that big donors have bought the candidates’ loyalty thereby making their vote meaningless,” Seidita continued.

On the basis of assessments of the resources needed to overcome the expected overwhelming corporate outspending on the ballot initiative for clean money, the CCMC has postponed its ballot initiative

until 2008, but its leaders are negotiating with members of the California State Assembly and Senate to sponsor a clean money bill.

The group also organized a summit meeting of the state’s political reform community to discuss their priorities for reform and establish time tables. Ten organizations attended the meeting including: Common Cause; the League of Women Voters; California Public Interest Research Group; Center for Voting and Democracy; California Voter Foundation; Center for Governmental Studies; Greenlining Institute; Southwest Voter Project; and the youth group, Democracy Matters. By the end of the day all groups had agreed that full public funding was an ultimate goal.

Seidita, who is also the Vice Co-chair of the AfD Council, stated, “We are very proud of the role our local AfD chapter played in launching the Clean Money effort and the role we continue to play.” Four of the current seven CCMC Board members are AfD members, and the immediate past president of the Valley group, Tobi Dragert, is the new editor of the CCMC newsletter. In addition to Seidita, AfD members on the board are: William Forthman, Secretary/Treasurer; retired CEO Theodore Williams, Chairman; and Northern California AfD member Stephen Fein, who is also organizing chair for the Northern California Clean money group.

AFD HEADLINES THE LA TIMES

By Jo Seidita

Ceil Sorenson and Jo Seidita, San Fernando Valley AFD members, were pictured on the front page of *Los Angeles Times* February 19. The occasion — the City Council debate on an anti-war resolution.

Ceil Sorenson, frustrated by the Council not opening the discussion to “public comment” as required by Council procedures, attempted to speak at the close of the debate but was ruled out of order and ushered out of the City chambers by two burly policemen with reporters trailing after her for interviews.

Public comment had been limited to 30 minutes, all to pre-assigned celebrity speakers. Over 400 supporters of the anti-war resolution were in attendance and many of them had petitioned to speak. Ceil felt the pre-assigned speakers had spoken eloquently, but she was still frustrated that some points such as Bush’s plan for carpet bombing were not made dramatic enough.

“Bush is planning carpet bombing of

Baghdad in the first days of the conflict targeting water, food and communication facilities and shelters to say nothing of the slaughter of thousands of civilians. Over 50% of the population of Baghdad are children age 15 or younger,” she shouted.

She was gaveled down and the police moved in to escort her out of the chamber, creating a perfect photographic opportunity for the large blue peace sign draped over her back with a peace dove and PEACE in large letters.

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2003

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Plea for Peace

As the Los Angeles City Council debates an antiwar resolution, 81-year-old Ceil Sorenson is removed by police. Sorenson, of Hills, had tried to speak after the time for remarks had ended. The council resolution fell one vote short of passage. **B1**

MALICE IN BLUNDERLAND A MERRY SUCCESS

By Ronnie Dugger

The Regent Theater in Arlington, a suburb of Boston, was filled the night of March 1st for an Alliance benefit featuring a half-hour, five-act play, “Malice in Blunderland,” written for and contributed to the occasion by Jerry Polner, a long-time Alliance activist who lives in Brooklyn and who was present for the performance. Granny D (Doris Haddock), peace activist Randy Forsberg, recent Massachusetts Green gubernatorial candidate Jill Steinberg, Nick Biddle, and Ronnie Dugger starred in Polner’s play.

Sponsored by the North Bridge Alliance Chapter, the event was a smashing success dramatically and financially. A total of 371 tickets were sold at \$20 each; the evening netted \$4,162.24 for the Alliance, all of which the North Bridge Chapter contributed to the national Alliance. Intermittently, Tom Neilsen, “the bard insurgent,” stirred, angered, or inspired the audience with movement songs passionately

delivered to his own guitar accompaniment. In addition, two local theater groups, Boston MOBE and the Wellfleet Harbor Actors performed, “Alternatives to Duct Tape: Or, Everything You Wanted to Know About Student Activism but Were Afraid to Ask,” and scenes from, “A New War.”

In Polner’s play, Forsberg, Haddock, and Dugger were the corporate villains; Biddle was a U.S. soldier on night guard duty in “Lavakstan,” and Stein was a hapless walk-about in the night whom the guard challenged, only to learn that she had been educated at Harvard. The play opened with one of the villains rapping his gold-headed cane to call to order “this meeting of the International Global World Class Really Big God Damn Energy Companies. I get to tell all of you what to do and you’ll do it and like it.” They agreed that the trouble with 17 dictators that nobody owns is that they won’t listen, and agreed that the point of the IMF and structural

adjustment was “to give us a better class of dictators.” Scenes with the villains alternated with the edgy, ultimately resolving confrontation between the soldier and the suspected terrorist. Amateurs all, the actors relied on copies of the script in their hands, but brought the play off with spirit and verve.

AfD chapters or others who wish to communicate with Polner about further productions of his play may reach him at 423 15th St. #1A, Brooklyn NY 11215, 718-965-0486, jerrypolner@earthlink.net.

The program offered special thanks to the performers, theater staff, and also to Adam Sacks, Barbara Clancy, Dave Eggers, Lynn Gargill (whose idea the venture was), Jan Johnson, Cynthia Ritscher, Lois Voltmer, Ruth Weizenbaum, Mary White, and the North Bridge Chapter.

Before the event, those working on it were unsure whether it would succeed; by the end, people were dancing in the aisles.

CHAPTER REPORTS

Mass. Bay South Chapter

We have been involved with anti-war activities, from members supporting Randy Forsberg's campaign against John Kerry for US Senate (protesting his refusal to take anti-war leadership) to protest marches, to resolutions not only from the chapter but local churches. We ran a workshop on looking at the ambiguities of terrorism, and hosted Nick Biddle at a public meeting to set the war in the wider context, which is sparking interest among Peace vigilers from nearby towns. We are helping to publicize Freedom Flyers, including 100 announcement flyers at a rally in Missoula, MT!

AfD-Minnesota Chapter

AfD MINNESOTA FORUMS

Saturday, April 19, at 10:00 a.m. at B.B. on the Lake: The Code for Corporate Responsibility (C4CR). John Karvel. AfD-MN and AfD National have each endorsed this effort. Karvel speaks with confidence and passion. Visit the website <http://www.C4CR.org/>

Saturday, May 10, for Mother's Day this year, give peace! Nonviolent Peaceforce. See <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org>.

Saturday, 7 June, School is out! Let's return in the fall with a better method. Larry Olds and Betsy Barnum present Popular Education Liberation, not Subjugation!

Saturday, September 13, a preview with local organizer Jack Heckelman of the Earth Charter Summit 2003 which is coming on Saturday, October 11. See <http://www.earthcharter-minnesota.org>.

Saturday, October 18, a preview of the Activists' Conference to be held simultaneously to the National Lawyers Guild <http://www.nlg.org>, which will hold its national convention, Demand Democracy, in Minneapolis on Thursday, October 23 through Sunday, October 26.

Saturday, October 25th, local activists will gather in an Activists' Conference to develop a model and action for organizing, coalition building and maintaining diversity in the movement. Somewhere, somehow the two will converge.

Saturday, November 8, presenters to be announced: Reparations for Slavery!

Saturday, December 13, last minute gifts? Sweat-shopping for the Holidays! Remember, there's only 11 sweat-shopping days until Christmas! What Would Jesus Think?

San Diego Chapter

The San Diego group is involved in the Clean Money Campaign. It is working hard to recruit people to gather signatures for "clean money". They are also reaching out to other organizations to endorse the campaign and gather signatures.

West Los Angeles Chapter

The newly formed West Los Angeles Chapter is exhibiting a lot of energy in reaching out to other groups and trying to focus in on major issues. The group is planning to outreach to other progressive groups and organizations to author a major progressive agenda (or platform). The goal is to make these voices as powerful as the conservative and religious right-wing coalition. They are trying to facilitate a coalition around a unifying goal that removes corporate interests that detract from our major interests of health care, social welfare, civil liberty, and justice policies.

The San Fernando Valley Chapter

We have been involved in the peace protests and are listed as a major sponsor. The chapter was also one of the sponsors of events at the local level for International Women's Day on March 8.

A New South LA Chapter?

There is interest in forming a new chapter in the South Bay Area of Los Angeles. Anyone living in Torrance, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Hawthorne, Inglewood, etc., please call John Shawstad at (310)329-9539.

Mendocino Coast Chapter

We sponsor First-Friday Community Forums in conjunction with First-Friday Art Openings in Fort Bragg, CA. We also organize a free video lending library and sup-

port Reel World Visions which organizes monthly video and speaker presentations. In addition, we sponsor Democracy Now on our public access cable channel and a weekly AfD video show.

Recent forums have featured Peter Phillips of Project Censored and Alexander Cockburn of Counterpunch. In the summer we plan to bring together all factions of the community for a forum on war and the role of our military.

Washington, D.C Chapter

A plan to celebrate Congressional opposition to the war on Iraq with a Valentine's Dance featuring Granny D (Doris Haddock), last Feb. 14th, fell afoul of complications which included an adjourned Congress, a big snowfall and a massive New York demonstration against the war. Despite these difficulties, 25 people turned out for the dance, which was lively and fun, with a terrific band. Granny D demonstrated that she was a better and stronger dancer than many of the people there, all much younger than she. Sue Wheaton, for the D.C. Chapter, honored Ms. Haddock with an embroidered tribute. A few intrepid souls danced the night away and boarded buses at 6 am for the demonstration in Manhattan the next day.



Ronnie and Granny D at Valentines Dance

A KEY TO WINNING: NUMBERS!

By Peter Mott

Febbruary 15, 2003, the day 10 million people in hundreds of cities on every continent demonstrated against war in Iraq, will go down in history as the first time that the people of the world expressed their clear and concerted will in regard to a pressing global issue. On that day, history may one day record, global democracy was born." (Jonathan Schell, *The Nation*, March 10, 2003).

Our key question is how to involve the American demonstrators in the work of the Alliance? How do we engage their passion for democracy here?

Our Membership Committee is taking a fresh look at these basic questions. It would help us to get your thoughts about:

- Effective methods: to retain current members; to attract new members and form new chapters; to bring the big issues to your local citizenry (e.g., water privatization, clean elections, health care, corporate domination, the USA PATRIOT Act); and to work with the media.
- How: to reach out?; to invite new people to join with us on local or national campaigns or actions?; to persuade progressive groups nearby to link to a national movement?

• Personally, after attending all the Alliance conventions, learning about our participation in lawsuits, anti-globalization demos and other campaigns, and seeing our plans for a communications-cooperative we're convinced: To know us is to love us! How do we get many more people to know us?

We are looking forward to reading your ideas. Please send them to the Membership Committee Co-chairs: Ruth Weizenbaum, 734 Old Marlborough Road, Concord, MA 01742, (rweiz@world.std.com) or Peter Mott 57 South Main St., Pittsford, NY 14534. (interconnect-mott@juno.com).

MEMBERS' FORUM

Democracy Doldrums

By Richard Leamon

I'm in some place worse than the doldrums. Our California Clean Money Campaign (public financing of elections) has been put off until 2008. The Republicans have taken over Washington, D.C. The Democratic Party is impotent because they get their money from the same places as the Republicans.

I can't sit around and do nothing. We must attack in some way. I've been talking about "The Revolution" since 1994. People smile when I talk about having one of those peaceful revolutions that Thomas Jefferson said would be needed from time to time to keep democracy on the right path. My smile is gone. I hope yours is too. Those of us that care about these things are split into dozens of battles on a wide variety of issues. We must come together with an ultimate plan.

I'm not saying that fighting timber harvest plans, water wars and protesting the coming war and a host of other issues are not important. Some issue must be supremely important. What is it? For me it is improving the ways we vote in America. A half dozen electoral reforms are being worked for. They all will help. We must be bold. We must see this as truly being a revolution against the plutocrats.

Even newspaper editorials are using the word "plutocracy." Democracy is going to die in the United States of America over

my dead body. The elections of 2004 will be a watershed. If Republicans continue to hold power we are roadkill. Our initiatives will all die.

The real fight is not the liberal left against the conservative right but top versus bottom. Paul Wellstone always said "Organize." That is key! I don't care if you disagree with me. I just care if you want to do something or not. More than one million people have given their lives so we could have democracy. I want my children and grandchildren to have democracy. What are you and I prepared to do about it?

The Peaceworkers

Sue Ann Martinson suggests to her fellow members that they acquaint themselves with the nature of the Nonviolent Peaceforce and consider contributing to it.

"The Nonviolent Peaceforce is an international group of civilians working together to expand the power and potential of nonviolent peacemaking," she says. "Our purpose is to create a trained, international, civilian, standing, nonviolent peace force. The Peaceforce is a grassroots organization—multiethnic, international, and intergenerational—that is supported by ordinary people and leaders throughout the world. Multicultural Peaceforce members will be sent to areas of conflict to prevent violence, protect human rights, and create space for conflicting parties to make peace."

The Peaceforce is developing orga-

nized, large-scale nonviolent, third-party intervention tactics. One study has resulted in a clear plan of action that includes: accompanying vulnerable leaders and negotiators in conflict areas; creating an international presence in vulnerable villages, borders, and peace zones; monitoring (using media and other methods) to deter violence; and placing Peaceworkers physically between opposing groups.

The Peaceforce is recruiting active and reserve fieldworkers who will be trained in nonviolence as well as fieldworker supporters to maintain international communication, media contact, outreach, advocacy, and spiritual support. The Peaceforce has opened offices in Ottawa, London, New Delhi, Brussels, San Francisco, and St. Paul. Supporters include: Ela Gandhi, a member of the South Africa Parliament and granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi; the President of Nigeria; the International Fellowship of Reconciliation; International Network of Engaged Buddhists; Muslim Peace Fellowship; and seven Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: Oscar Arias, the Dalai Lama, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, and Lech Walesa.

If you would like more information about the work of the Nonviolent Peaceforce, please contact (and tax-deductible donations may be made to) Peaceworkers, 801 Front Avenue, St. Paul MN 55103, 651-487-0800. Website at www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org, email at info@nonviolentpeaceforce.org.

ALL ABOARD FOR ELECTION YEAR DEMOCRACY CARAVAN

By Ben Sher

Clearly, "the street" is rising up to say no to unconstitutional, undeclared war, invasion, and occupation. Putting 200,000 soldiers in harm's way is a sure-fire way to dominate the news media through election day. It will distract us from the state of the economy. It will distract us from the condition of the global environment and the stealth effort to gut decades-old constitutional protections. It will distract us from demanding reforms to protect our Social Security, pension funds, and 401ks, none of which are secure so long as giant corporations are permitted to run amock in our government.

A saying from the streets is "Regime Change Begins at Home." Now is the time to start organizing that effort, and we don't mean the longshot of impeaching Bush, which would only topple the head while what we really need to do is hobble the legs of this camel of undue corporate interest that plagues the nation from Main Street, yes, even to Wall Street. We need a new instrument that can help counteract

Bush's "weapon of mass distraction."

Therefore, we are looking for people who'd like to join our Democracy Caravan. We plan to travel the country carrying a message of sweeping reform and peace to plain American folks from all walks of life. The project will be just one new form of alternative "mass media" that will help build a new democracy movement in this country. With some hard work and a little luck there is much we average Americans can do to take back our government from the likes of George Bush and the corruption of big money and giant corporations.

Our travels will coincide with the presidential election year, so we can visit Iowa and New Hampshire and the other early primary states. We will be in a position to provide popular spectacles before the national spotlights of Big Media. We will be representative of The American People. We will be spectacular, our train of 50 or 100 cars, buses, and trucks complete with our own motorbike escort, appropriately clad in patriotic bunting. It is time indeed for

We the People of the "American Street," to rise up, get out on the stump, and unmask this charade of American politics for what it is: a sham of corporate-sponsored corruption where, in the words of Greg Palast, we get "the best democracy money can buy!"

The caravan is planning to depart from Northern California in early September. It will take a three-month swing to the East Coast and back, via the Free Trade Area of the America's meeting in Miami.

If you like the idea of a Democracy Caravan, let us know if you'd like to participate in the carvan or know someone who might (either by going on the caravan or acting in a support role from home) or let us know if you'd like the caravan to stop in your town or if you have suggestions of symbolic or otherwise good places for the caravan to visit. Interested people are invited to a caravan planning meeting at the Sher Farm in Placerville CA the weekend of May 30. Email benjmsher@yahoo.com or call 530-622-6598.



JOIN NOW! BEGIN THE CHANGE

Fill out this form to ensure that the views of the Alliance are heard at this critical time

Name _____ \$50 sustaining membership.

Address _____ \$35 regular membership.

_____ \$25 tight-budget membership.

_____ _____ additional contribution.

Phone _____ I want to be a member but can't afford a donation now.

Email _____ Will contribute time and energy.

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ASHCROFT AND THE FEC STONEWALL THE ALLIANCE—AN UPDATE

Attorney General John Ashcroft and the Federal Elections Commission continue to delay the Alliance for Democracy's complaint about Ashcroft's alleged campaign finance law violations during his 2000 senatorial campaign. The case centers on a *Washington Post* story which reported that Ashcroft's Spirit of America PAC contributed a mailing list to Ashcroft's 2000 campaign committee worth well over \$100,000, far exceeding the campaign donation limit. As a result, the Alliance, Common Cause, the National Voting Rights Institute (NVRI), and two Missouri voters, including one Alliance member, filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC).

In March 2002, after a year of no response on the complaint, the Alliance and the two voters, through NVRI lawyers, sued the FEC in Federal Court emphasizing that since the "complaint was brought against the nation's highest law enforcement officer, the FEC should rule on the complaint without continued delay."

A year later, despite orders from the court compelling the FEC to act on the complaint, no ruling has been forthcoming. The complainants have also been stymied in their discovery process to seek the facts behind the FEC's failure to act on the Alliance complaint.

The FEC's failure to act prompted articles in the *Washington Post* and Capitol Hill's *Roll Call* as well as a friend-of-the-court brief from the Campaign and Media Legal Center. This brief pointed out that "In recent years, the structure of the Commission and the highly politicized process of nominating commissioners have colluded to render the watchdog agency a 'dog that doesn't bark.'" The *Roll Call* article quoted NVRI attorney Lisa Danetz as saying, "It doesn't really matter what campaign finance laws we have on the book. If the FEC refuses to enforce them, politicians, or PACs, or whoever can feel pretty free to ignore the law."

ALLIANCE TAKES ON THE U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE—AN UPDATE

An attack on Ohio judicial independence is part of a grand strategy by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, now reportedly also joined by the Business Roundtable, to create more business-friendly state Supreme Courts around the country. The strategy is modeled upon what was done by the Michigan Chamber of Commerce through a combination of rule-making, legislation and litigation to achieve complete Republican control of the Michigan Supreme Court.

In the AfD legal case against the Ohio Elections Commission dealing with this issue, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported on 2/21/03 that "names of those who paid for negative ads against Justice Alice Robie Resnick in the bitter 2000 Ohio Supreme Court campaign will remain secret for at least several more months." The Ohio Elections Commission put off hearing the matter until mid-summer to give the Ohio Supreme Court an opportunity to rule on an attempt by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce to keep contributors' names secret.

The *Columbus Dispatch* also quoted AfD lawyer Cliff Arnebeck as saying, "What's clear at this point is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce wants to drag this out and make arguments that already have been rejected."

In regard to the legislative side of this effort in Ohio, the Chamber of Commerce is seeking legislation, which was introduced at a press conference by Governor Robert Taft and Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell last summer, that would effectively moot the pending litigation in which the Alliance is involved. It would also reverse 100 years of laws prohibiting electioneering activity by corporations for or against political candidates.