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ALLIANCE CASE NAILS ASHCROFT

By Ronnie Dugger

In what an attorney for the Alliance and other plaintiffs called "a slap on the wrist," the Federal Election Commission has levied a \$37,000 fine upon determining that the year-2000 political committee for the election of John Ashcroft to the U.S. Senate violated election law by accepting \$110,000 in illegal contributions from another polit-

ical committee which Ashcroft had established to run for President.

Ashcroft's presidential PAC, named the Spirit of America, was allowed by law to give his senatorial PAC only \$10,000, which it did. The Ashcroft presidential PAC also spent \$1.7 million developing a donors' mailing list, obtained \$110,000 renting it out, and

Ashcroft Fined continued on page 2

AfD CONVENTION IN BOSTON

July 20-22

By Ted Dooley and Nancy Price, AfD Co-chairs

Our convention theme, *The American Emergency: The Road Ahead*, is compelling and poignant.

It seems to us that over the past half dozen years the Alliance, along with its scores of friends and allied groups, has been remarkably successful in educating the people on the horror of the corporate theft of our democracy. Recently, one of

AfD Convention continued on page 11

GMOs—WHO DECIDES?

The People of Mendocino County

by Jan Edwards, Redwood Coast CA AfD

Have we missed something? Do you remember any big demand by consumers for tomatoes having the anti-freeze qualities found in the blood of flounders? Were we sleeping through the public debate on the pros and cons of creating corn engineered to withstand endless spraying of Round-Up® herbicide? Surely we would have noticed if Congress passed a law giving the right to alter and patent all life on this planet to some big corporation.

GMOs - Who Decides? continued on page 3

BUSINESS GROUPS CAUGHT IN POLITICAL ACTS

In a case in which the Alliance is a plaintiff on behalf of the public interest in Ohio, Franklin County judge, John F. Bender, ruled last November that Citizens for Strong Ohio (CSO), the issue-advocacy group of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, must cough up the identities of persons and corporations which funded a drive to defeat a liberal Ohio Supreme Court justice or else pay a fine of \$25,000 a day until it does. Bender gave CSO two weeks to comply, but the group and the Cham-



ber appealed, forestalling his ruling for the time being.

The Ohio Elections Commission had ruled the preceding September, by a 4-2 vote, that the CSO should not be able to keep secret the names of people and corporations that gave at least \$4 million in an effort to defeat one Supreme Court judge (as well as to reelect another). *The Columbus Dispatch* reported that Judge Bender was "growing impatient with delaying tactics of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce," but so far those tactics have continued to work.

Meanwhile the Texas Association of Business (TAB), is under investigation for colluding with Tom DeLay's Texans for a Republican Majority PAC and the Law Enforcement Alliance of America to help elect a business friendly Texas legislature in 2000. The TAB collected \$1.9 million in



Rep. Tom DeLay

corporate funds that targeted 24 legislative seats

"This complaint outlines the apparent misuse of corporate funds to fill the legislature with big-business, anti-consumer zealots," said Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice. "It looks like the Texas Association of Business and TRM worked hand-in-hand to electioneer with illicit corporate funds. We urge the prosecutor to determine if this new Republican majority is in fact an illegal majority."



Ronnie Dugger and Jim Tarbell contributed to this article

Ashcroft Fined

Continued from page 1

then gave the \$110,000 to Ashcroft's senatorial PAC. The FEC fined both PACs the total of \$37,000.

The FEC vote was 5-1, with the Democratic chair of the FEC, Ellen Weintraub, the one dissenter. She said the decision "ignores the heart of the complaint," the transfer of a \$1.7 million mailing list to Ashcroft's senatorial PAC, and that the fine is "so low" she believes it does not adequately reflect "the severity of the conduct at issue."

The Alliance for Democracy was a leading plaintiff in this matter. As summarized in *The Washington Post* by Thomas B. Edsall and Walter Pincus:

"The issue of the Ashcroft campaign's use of the Spirit for America's donor list was first raised by *The Washington Post* in February 2001, and the next month the National Voting Rights Institute, Common Cause, the Alliance for Democracy and two Missouri voters filed a complaint with the FEC. In March 2002, the NVRI representing the two voters and the Alliance for Democracy filed suit charging that the FEC had failed to investigate the apparent illegal contribution. Ashcroft's Senate

campaign committee initially tried to get the lawsuit dropped. In October 2002, the plaintiffs asked Ashcroft to release records of the FEC investigation. The attorney general refused and another suit was filed, this one seeking a court order to have the records released or have the FEC make a finding."

The FEC announced its decision by press release last December. Edsall and Pincus subsequently reported: "During more than two years of investigating, the FEC never directly questioned Ashcroft or obtained a sworn statement from him even though the issue of his personal ownership of a mailing list and the income it produced were central to the inquiry...Weintraub...said she and the other two Democrats on the panel did not have the required four votes to carry a motion to interview Ashcroft. In addition, she said, all the commissioners did not want to be seen as 'harassing the attorney general of the United States' and so never sought to question him."

The Post quoted Bonnie Tenneriello, an attorney with NVRI, calling the FEC action "a farce." NVRI said, "The FEC's conciliation agreement with the Ashcroft committees reveals that John Ashcroft was directly involved in the cir-

cumstances leading to the violations," adding, "John Ashcroft's political committees, and possibly John Ashcroft himself, engaged in serious violations of federal campaign finance law during the 2000 election. The FEC's fine is merely a slap on the wrist." The NVRI said the small fine amounted to a tax on illegal activities. Further redress, contrary to acceptance of the FEC's administrative decision, may be sought.

Many Thanks

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you—to all who so generously responded to our end-of-year appeal. We have now received \$9,646.00 in contributions, and we gladly welcome three new sustainers to the roster.

Sustainers are just that, they provide a predictable monthly income to help with budgeting.

With our all-volunteer office, we have now pared down our expenses to the basics, and every penny goes a long way—as the saying goes.

We can now put our modest savings toward membership and chapter outreach and development.

Nancy Price and Ted Dooley
Co-Chairs

GMOs- Who Decides?

Continued from page 1

Who is making these decisions?

Multinational corporations are pushing "Frankenfoods" down the throats of people everywhere. Global protests from South America to the European Union pit small farmers and the concerned consumer against these giant corporations and their enforcement mechanisms, the WTO, FTAA, and other trade agreements.

We have had no say in the matter. Important decisions involving creation and ownership of life itself have had no public input. They are made in private boardrooms, and the issues discussed are profits and corporate growth. We citizens are reduced to consumers and told to vote with our pocketbooks. But the corporations have fought labeling, making pocketbook choices impossible. More importantly, Genetically Modified Organisms cannot be an issue of markets and consumer choice. Once they spread, we all have them, like it or not.

Much has been written about the health and environmental concerns regarding GMOs. But this is also about democracy—grassroots, local democracy.

Who should make these decisions?

Although the public was not included in the decision to release GMOs into the environment, the citizens of the California County of Mendocino are making the decision for themselves as they prepare to be the first locality in the nation to ban the growing of GMO crops. In March, 2004, voters will decide on Measure H, an initiative to create a "Prohibition on the Propagation, Cultivation, Raising and Growing of Genetically Modified Organisms in Mendocino County."

In early 2004, a major propaganda battle has raged in this "Redwood Empire": on one side, the giant GMO-producing corporations; on the other, small organic farmers and others, including all the local Alliance chapters, who support the initiative.

But why should it be left to Mendocino County or other localities to ban these crops? Where is the state or the federal government? There seems to be no political will for protecting our



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A Tomatofish?

farmland. Localities are left to band together and protect themselves. In Mendocino County we are preparing to counter the corporate propaganda, win the vote, and then defend and enforce our new law.

The challenges to the legality of such a measure can come in many guises and from different directions. State governments do not look favorably on the counties making independent decisions, and the federal government feels the same way about the states taking independent actions. The resulting conflicts—called "crises of jurisdiction"—define the gray areas where local democracy can triumph. If Mendocino voters pass this ballot measure, they are saying, "The county is the level at which we choose to make this decision."

Corporations may choose to sue the county using the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution to argue that only the federal government can regulate interstate commerce. They might go to the WTO or to NAFTA, claiming restraint of trade or loss of future profits. Or they may pressure the state legislature to exert control over its "disobedient" county. Perhaps a local farmer will be encouraged to bring a suit claiming that he is being denied his right to grow GMO crops. It would be surprising if corporations did nothing to challenge such a law.

As citizens of the United States, we must not only be prepared for challenges to our local control over our food, health, economy, and environment but also must be prepared to direct our local, state, and federal representatives and law enforcement agencies to stand up to the challenges. We need to educate ourselves and think through what it means for the people to assert their rights to make democratic decisions about what is best for them and what they choose to value. We can take inspiration from the people around the world who are standing together to say no to GMOs.

To follow the issue check out Mendocino Organic Network, www.MendocinoOrganicNetwork.com.

Corporate Attack on Democracy

By Jim Tarbell

Steven Beckley, the treasurer of the *No on H Campaign* does not even live in Mendocino County. He is the CEO of a bio-tech industry group tenaciously working to defeat Measure H. "If it's Mendocino County today," he worries, "it could be some other county tomorrow." He connected with an international biotech industry group, CropLife America, to dump \$150,000 into defeating Measure H. "The industry will campaign aggressively to defeat the measure," he promises.

It is a prime example of transnational corporate money trying to control local democracy. Monsanto, Dupont, Dow and others are involved. First they sued to keep the measure off the ballot. When they lost in court, they started a massive PR campaign run out of Texas.

Misleading push polls called households across the county. Frequent mass mail flyers peddled false fears of government intrusion and skyrocketing taxes without mentioning GMOs.

This opposition has been called "a virtual who's who of the biotech and agrochemical industry." Measure H supporters point out that "This is Mendocino County vs. hundreds of corporations."

The results of the March 2 election will determine if the voters of Mendocino can outduel the money power of multinational capital. In the meantime the industry's worst fear is coming true—"concerned citizens in Sonoma, Marin, Humboldt, Placer and San Bernardino Counties are already mounting campaigns modeled on Mendocino County Measure H to ban the growing of GMOs."

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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Nancy Price and Ted Dooley

Co-Chairs of the AfD National Council

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NEW AfD COMMUNICATIONS VENUES

The Alliance is redesigning the manner in which it communicates both internally and externally. At the heart of this new communications paradigm will be the monthly AfD Email Newsletter and the new Online Forums for AfD Chapters and At-Large Members. Both of these communication venues are described in separate articles on this page.

The advent of these new communication mechanisms allows *Alliance Alerts* to metamorphose into an exciting new creation outlined at the recent in-person Council meeting. As a quarterly publication, *AA* does not come out frequently enough to provide members timely alerts for urgent actions around corporate and democratic issues. The new monthly email newsletter will do that.

Alliance Alerts can be transformed into a magazine providing a corporate analysis on the multiple issues being undertaken by the burgeoning world social justice movement. As part of the mosaic of this movement, this publication can concentrate more on articles like the ones in this issue on corporate funding of elections in Ohio and Texas, local campaigns like GMOs in California, and the establishment of media reform groups. Watch these pages for further developments and come to the convention if you want to become more involved.

MONTHLY AfD EMAIL NEWSLETTER

By Nancy Price

AfD plans to launch a short monthly Email Newsletter to supplement the quarterly Alliance Alerts. Because many members are not connected with chapters, we would like to draw chapters and members-at-large together by knowing what each is planning, doing, thinking and accomplishing...to help keep us connected, inspired, and supported as we engage together to fight the illegitimate corporate take-over of our democracy.

Everyone is invited to send timely news on: chapter and member activities; work related to our national action campaigns; materials available to share for education and mobilization; and any other "AfD tidbits." Send submissions to peoplesall@aol.com and put Email Newsletter submission in the subject line.

This will be sent to all for whom we have email addresses. If you think we do not have your address and would like to receive the newsletter, email the AfD office at peoplesall@aol.com and put "Member Email Address" in the subject line.

ON-LINE FORUMS FOR AfD CHAPTERS

By Jerry Krantman

Ukiah, CA AfD member Jerry Krantman has offered free, on-line discussion space to all Alliance for Democracy chapters at www.americandreamradio.org. Chapters can use these discussion forums for on-line committee discussions or between-meeting discussions of Alliance events, strategies, or small talk, available only to members of that chapter. It is a convenient and free way to encourage discussion when an in-person meeting is not practical or when scheduling conflicts make it hard to get together all at once.

This is a more flexible and organized format than e-mail or listserv's for discussing ideas and creating archives

where others can see what's been discussed and even search all the discussions for topics of particular interest. It's far less cumbersome and is a great way to bring new members up to speed and to keep formative discussions available so members can read the thinking that went into past decisions.

Each chapter can decide whether to allow anything-goes, uncensored discussion, or assign moderators from your group to make sure that things stay civil and on-track. We imagine that most will want to keep discussions private, however we can make them available to the public if that is your preference, or just to registered members of the site. Members who start new topics can choose to check back for replies or

can choose to be notified by e-mail when people reply. Notifications can be immediate, daily or weekly summaries. If anyone prefers a more private venue, users may set up their own private discussions with members of their choosing.

While we don't charge for these services, we encourage donations to support our work of encouraging dialogue, education, and action on issues of corporatism and democracy.

Come by to listen at www.americandreamradio.org Click on the DISCUSS link to see American Dream Forum. Register to participate in the existing Community Forums. Contact Jerry (jerry@americandreamradio.org) if you need more information.

OMBUDSMEN'S CORNER

**If this ship is foundering,
we need a better one. Sail
on!**

By Bonnie Preston and Dave Lewit,
Ombudsmen

The Alliance ombudsmen realize that starting an organization and writing a constitution and by-laws is extremely difficult. We sincerely applaud those who undertook and accomplished this daunting task back in 1997. Having lived with the result for a few years, however, we see a need for changes.

We would like to see broad membership involvement in establishing principles that should underlie a new constitution and by-laws, and in writing the actual document. In this article we would like to begin the conversation with a brief critique of the current constitution and by-laws.

We believe that the Alliance for Democracy should reflect the best and newest ideas about how a democracy should function. But the organization seems mired in a system based on the one in Washington that we would like to change. There are more inclusive and supportive, and less competitive, ways to operate. We should aim to include as many people as possible in governing the organization, and find ways to insure that everyone has a voice.

The current constitution and by-laws (CBL) reflect a strongly top-down management, in spite of stating that individual members of the organization shall be the source of all authority and policy in the AfD. The council is said to direct the activities and affairs of the organization. People are asked to apply for membership, as if they could be turned down for some reason, but such reasons are not stated. In three different places, the expulsion of members or chapters is outlined.

The council sets dues (many organizations allow people to choose from a range) and may authorize reductions.



Ombudsman Bonnie Preston

Chapters must apply to be part of the organization. Even collaborating groups are asked to sign formal agreements to work with AfD. Decisions are made at the conventions, which very few members are able to attend. Many "delegates" are self-selected. Voting is supposedly weighted by the size of a chapter, but that is a system that has not really worked. Votes are taken on a variety of resolutions that are hurriedly written and voted on at the convention, with little discussion and no time for returning to the chapters for direction on voting.

The ombudsmen are not recognized as speaking for the membership, although they are supposedly independent of the council. Election to the council is competitive. A more member-centered, democratic organization would encourage leadership from all members, and would be concerned with nurturing and developing new leaders.

The processes outlined in the CBL are too formal and cumbersome, and do not allow members to act in a timely fashion. Conventions, which decide on issues and priorities, are now being held only once every other year. In a fast-paced world, things have to be set up for rapid responses. (Gandhi said, "There is more to life than speeding it up." But what are we going to do? It has sped up.) We need to be flexible and trust our members to do the right thing.

Roles and procedures for chapters are sketchy in the CBL. There is no discussion of regional or interchapter relations. There is no mention of council's responsibility to assist and coordinate chapters, and little on the relationship of



Ombudsman Dave Lewit

chapters to national. Not every member belongs to a chapter (and not every member of a chapter is a member of national), so it is also important for council to facilitate action by individual members. Balancing national with regional actions, and individual with chapter involvement, will be a challenge.

Important functional features which AfD has developed are absent from the CBL. National campaigns, for all practical purposes, are autonomous. With the disappearance of issue networks (mentioned in CBL), organizational collaborations are established ad hoc by functional campaign leaders, and only endorsements in the name of AfD are referred to council. (Campaigns do report to council on their request, for council information and advice.)

Chapter projects are the bread and butter of the Alliance, but are omitted from formal consideration by AfD, except for news submitted voluntarily to the newsletter. CBL is silent on AfD interest in chapters other than compliance with an affiliation agreement, and on relations with or among chapters and regions.

CBL is silent on publications and interactive member communications, except in provision V.5 which requires council to keep members informed of council actions—a one-way process. CBL is silent on any office of editor-in-chief or a national newsletter, web sites, listservs, and their relations with other AfD components.

Altogether, CBL seems concerned more with authority than functioning.

NOTES FROM MIAMI

Fighting FTAA, Defending Our Water

By Ruth Caplan

The week started out auspiciously. I boarded an American Airlines flight out of National Airport (never Ronald Reagan Airport) Monday evening, November 17th. Walking past the first class rows, I gasped with surprise, "Are you Robert Zoellick?" (U.S. Trade Representative)

"Yes," he evenly responded.

So I, sounding the fool, said "Well, I work a lot on trade issues too."

"And so do many people," he responded.

Engaging the Man

Midway through the flight, I made my way back to the first class section to continue the conversation. Getting Zoellick's attention by first thanking him for not agreeing to the European request that the U.S. include water for human use in the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), I went on to point out that public services are not protected despite claims to the contrary by WTO staff. He had asked Pascal Lamy, the European chief negotiator, about this he said and had been reassured. "But the EU's request proved otherwise," I responded, for in fact, if the request were to be accepted by the U.S., the European giants, Suez, Vivendi (now Veolia) and RWE/Thames would have had a much easier time taking over municipal water and sewer systems in the U.S.

Now we were engaged. I pointed out

the weakness of GATS language intended to protect government services and Zoellick asked about the FTAA (proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas). "Same language there," I responded. He took out a small note card from his vest pocket and made a note. A few more words and I returned to my seat.

Repression and FTAA Lite

Later in the week, as I looked at the tall chain link fence and felt the oppression of the cops protecting Zoellick and the other negotiators from the likes of me, I felt sadness. Sadness became rage when after the peaceful march, the cops charged protesters who had lined up in front of them. Yes, a smoke bomb had been lobbed toward the police, but with police dressed as anarchists in the demonstration, I wondered who had thrown that smoke bomb. How could a peaceful march justify the \$8 million for Miami defense included in the \$87 billion Iraq aid bill? Now they could show their stuff.

But this show of force could not bring Zoellick what he had come for, what the U.S. corporations wanted. The meeting of trade ministers ended after just one day. All that Zoellick got was an agreement to negotiate "FTAA lite," without even any negotiating guidelines to start the process. Brazil, which co-chaired the ministerial with the U.S., insisted that countries should be able to decide what parts of the FTAA they would sign on to. Zoellick tried to divert attention from the failure by announcing that bilateral trade agreements would be initiated with several small economies, a consolation prize which was brushed aside by the Business Roundtable.

Circles of Inclusion

Following the WTO failure in Cancun



US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and the near failure of Miami, there is some opening for all of us who believe "Another world is possible," but taking back our country will require courage. Where do we begin? There are many beginnings. One was across the bay in a Miami Beach hotel immediately following the FTAA meeting where water activists gathered in an open circle.

People came from Laredo, TX where the colonias settlements have no water and people have to drive many miles and put quarters in a meter to get city water; from tribal lands in Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico and Minnesota; from the Mexican-American traditional ejidos and acequias of New Mexico; from the front lines in Detroit fighting water shut-offs; from rural NH threatened by USA Springs; from Lawrence MA where the people overpowered Suez SA.

People of many colors and cultures gathered to listen and learn from each other, to begin the process of building a movement to fight the water profiteers and protect indigenous rights to water. This grassroots movement will be built on trust, mutual support, and dispersed leadership through working groups. A coordinating group was selected made up of 50% people of color. No tokenism here. We'll try to model in our organizing the kind of society we want to build. It's one beginning.

This Article first appeared in BCA Dispatch Dec. 2003



AfD Member Harold Stokes waves his flag of justice in Miami



Two concerned citizens welcome social justice activists to Miami

BATTLE LINES DRAWN IN MIAMI

*Lines of cops all in black.
Pepper spray, tear gas, billy clubs
All at the ready.
Cops on horses. Cops on bikes.
War zone.
Fascist state?*

—RC

Is this what we have come to, we Americans who pride ourselves on democracy? What kind of economic system requires such repression?

One where corporations rule the world, David Korten would say. One where power is held by the wealthy. Where the Bush patriarchy proclaims an inalienable right to our "lifestyle." Where these realities make the U.S. government, once the angel for the oppressed and guardian of freedom, into oppressors around the world and on the streets of Miami.

Nancy Price noticed the repression beginning a week before the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) meetings began. Police began shutting down Miami's central core days before any del-

egates arrived. They cordoned off the Bay-front luxury hotels for the delegates, scared the citizens of Florida from coming to permitted demonstrations and shut down public transportation. They aimed their efforts at oppressing citizens and their legal right to decry the injustice of the FTAA.

Such a show of force, financed by federal funds meant to extend imperial domination, only indicates that the Bush brothers understand that there is a global uprising against their money powered policies. George W. Bush authorized the funding of the Miami effort and his brother, Governor Jeb Bush, militarized Miami and implemented an aggressive stance to control political discourse. For a week police harassed those trying to make a political statement. In a final imperious and arrogant display of dictatorial control, police stopped up to 185 busses entering Miami to reach a permitted rally in the city center.

Despite the repressive efforts of the black uniformed army, people power shown through. Rebellious Latin American governments, supported by the 20,000 demonstrators that did make it to

downtown Miami, forced the acceptance of what one observer call FTAA Zero. Thousands of people attended workshops around the city despite police harassment and a transportation shut-down.

The people and insurgent governments in Miami forced the Bush administration into retreat. Halfway through the meeting U. S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick, called it quits. He closed the conference and withdrew with his army of trade lawyers back to Washington DC.

The 20,000 people that came to Miami to oppose the FTAA watched in amazement. "The fact that they could not arm twist Latin American countries into accepting their policies represents a sea change," exulted Severina Rivera, director of the Campaign for Labor Rights. Venezuelan labor organizer Pedro Eusse agreed, emphasizing, "the fact that the empire did not expand is a victory."

Ruth Caplan, Nancy Price and Jim Tarbel contributed to this article.





Warren Felts



Nancy Price



Jerry Krantman



Rita Huppe



Jim Tarbell



Dolly Arond



Rick Lamonica



Lou Hammon



Ruth Weizenbaum



Richard Leamon



Vikki

SUCCESSFUL IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETING

Dolly Arond proclaimed it the most successful meeting she has ever attended. Looking back on the AfD compared the initial Texas convening as the birth of the movement. Twenty-one AfD members spent at least two days in mid-November, the other ten were members from various chapters in California as well as St. Louis. The striking feature of the four-day conclave was the degree of unanimity expressed by all members. The Council stalemated on at least one critical decision. Such broad consensus was no doubt helped by the fact that last several months, Stephanie Scadding was laid off and the office is now run by a staff of unpaid volunteers. The cohesiveness of the group became particularly apparent in the heart of the meeting when even the most vocal opponents of the social justice movement that is sweeping across the planet. Attendees also looked at what role the national office should play. Everyone agreed that the mission was still to inject a corporate analysis into the movement. There was a lot of discussion about the umbrella for the social justice movement, it is now apparent that the Alliance is part of a mosaic of entities including local chapters and several vital national campaigns.

The remaining questions dealt with whether the structure was facilitating the Alliance's effectiveness in the future. It was decided that the national office along with the Council should coordinate, educate and fund-raise; and the Alliance should support many organizations the Alliance was due for a structural change and that it appeared that the Alliance was in need of a national Council. (see page 10). Rita Huppe presented a plan/chart for a new way to select the national Council from the bottom up: chapters elect members to a national Council.

There was also discussion on how the role of the National Council could be changed into becoming a coordinating body to show that individual members would support their own causes and there would be different responsibilities at the regional level, administrative positions elected by the membership and campaign chairs. The national office of the AfD and deciding to coalition with other groups on national issues. The national office will be responsible for the various national campaigns.

Everyone recognized that such sweeping changes in the operation of the Alliance need to be implemented. Representatives as distant as Gettysburg, Chicago and Mendocino, California, a decision was made to attend the Boston Social Forum and the Democratic National Convention in July. (see page 10)

After taking a wine, food and singing break at Nancy and Don's home on Sunday morning. These included: setting up a website task force, creating a coordinating body; creating new modes of AfD communication; and organizing around issues involving elections.



Steve Scalmanini



Sue Wheaton



Peter Mott



Tom Wodetzki



Cal Simons



C J Jones



Toni Rizzo



Jo Seidita



Mary White



Ted Dooley



Savee

SFUL NG LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

ed. Sue Wheaton agreed calling it a "great meeting" and then, reflecting on a new baby and saw the Alliance now moving on to the next stage of development at the Sacramento, California meeting. Eleven of the attendees were Council

members. This stood out in stark contrast to a meeting ten months earlier in which a divided fact that Vikki Savee had started out the meeting with a stabilized financial report. In the end, due to this cutback in expenses, the Alliance is now operating in the black.

The meeting broke into five groups to consider the nature of the AFD's mission and how it fits with the rest of the world. The groups discussed the role of the Alliance in the movement, whether that role had shifted, and how well the Alliance was fulfilling its general observation that whereas initially it may have been anticipated that the Alliance would be an organization to create a more just and sustainable planet. The Alliance has evolved into a collection of vibrant

groups under social justice movement. There was consensus that chapters should be the foundation of the Alliance; use strong chapters to help organize other chapters and a speakers' bureau. C.J. Jones observed that like the Alliance had entered into a phase as a horizontally structured organization rather than a more centralized hierarchy. The groups would select representatives to a regional Council, and they in turn would select representatives to

the national Coordinating Council, with responsibilities shared by all members. Rita's chart was expanded to include all regions. The Coordinating Council would be composed of representatives chosen from all regions. The national coordinating committee would include guiding the national focus on education, information dissemination, maintain membership records and provide a national

agenda for the concurrence of the membership at a national convention. After debating alternatives, the group decided to investigate the possibility of holding a convention in Boston before the

meeting at the home on Saturday night, the group divided up future tasks on establishing a pilot project to turn the Council into a coordinating committee (see page 4); and forming a committee to investigate electronic voting machines (see pg 14).

SURVEY RESULTS ILLUMINATING

The results from last summer's survey of Alliance members provides an interesting view of member concerns. Composed by Steve Cheifitz, the survey polled members for (1) issues of importance to them and (2) suggestions for better service to them by regional representatives and the national office. There were 103 surveys returned and compiling the results took over 40 hours. There was an average of 4.3 "concerns" per person. The following table lists all the topics submitted by respondents. The topics have been categorized by Sue Wheaton under the existing Alliance campaigns.

The order of response incidence gave the environment, government, health-care, election reform, corporate domination and education the most emphasis. The next level of emphasis was civil liberties, employment, overdevelopment, campaign finance reform, justice, George W. Bush, and sustainability. Close behind those were militarism, housing, democracy, transportation, water, media, and foreign policy. Finally there were trade, social services, energy, coalition building, population, apathy, and vision.

Jim Tarbell, Ruth Weizenbaum and Sue Wheaton contributed to this article.

Campaign/Concerns Responses

Campaign/Concerns	Responses
Environment and Globalization 116	
(Corporate Globalization)	
The environment	42
Over-development	15
Militarism	11
Water	10
"The commons"	9
Foreign policy	9
Trade	8
Energy	7
Over-population	5
Democracy 103	
(Campaign Finance Reform)	
Government	30
Election Reform	23
Civil Liberties	16
Beat Bush	14
Democracy	11
Campaign Finance Reform	9
Domestic Social, Economic 61	
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AfD TAKES ON VOTING ISSUE

Part of Resolution passed at AfD In-person

WHEREAS grassroots democracy, fair and verifiable voting procedures are essential elements in reclaiming democracy and ending corporate rule;

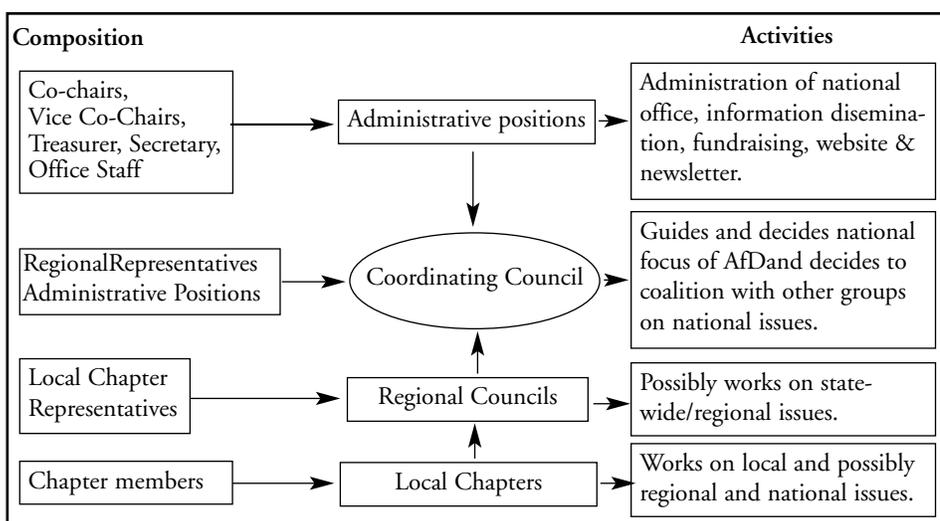
WHEREAS, the integrity of the vote in the United States is threatened by the new touch-screen voting technology and in particular the Diebold brand which has shown numerous security vulnerabilities to programming and human errors, malicious tampering, and equipment malfunction;

WHEREAS, the Diebold Election Systems has demonstrated blatant conflict of interest and ethical lapses given that 23 senior managers have contributed to the Republican Party and to the Bush presidential campaign and that the CEO has directed employees to lie;

THE ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY RESOLVES to support the emerging movement of citizens in demanding a firm requirement of voter-verified paper audit trail for all touch-screen voting machines installed in the United States. This means a permanent paper record of each vote

THE ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY FURTHER RESOLVES to initiate contacts with recognized voting rights and citizen advocacy organizations to seek the establishment of a national program that would promote the firm requirement of a voter-verified paper audit trail for all electronic voting machines.

NEW AfD COORDINATING COUNCIL MODEL?



This model developed by Rita Huppe is a potential pattern for a newly envisioned AfD structure. A coordinating

council is made up of national administrative positions and regional representatives.

(Contact Ben Kjelshus (Bkjelshus@aol.com) and see page 14 for more information on this new AfD campaign.)

AfD Convention

Continued from page 1

the Twin Cities' corporate TV news stations actually referred to the Bush drug prescription-relief farce as "Corporate Welfare"! That is an amazing change!

The Alliance has been an organization of large themes and a shared vision. Now our question must be, on the road ahead, what's next? We are all believers or we'd not be here. But still, on this road, what's next?

We believe we now need to develop the roadmap itself. We need to learn and create the tools and vehicles to travel the road.

We suggest that our convention,, and our organizational energy focus on enabling members and the recruitment of membership to carry out our mission to "end corporate rule and domination."

The Boston Social Forum will take place at the University of Massachusetts

Boston campus in the three days after the Alliance Convention. The Democratic National Convention at the Fleet Center in Boston will then take place from July 26-29. We need not, and as a practical matter, cannot, duplicate the issues the Boston Social Forum itself will address.

At this time in our development and that of the progressive movement, it is crucial that we leave Boston with particular skills, knowledge and training in the areas we need: grassroots organizing, education and outreach to all kinds of communities and peoples, the magical skill of learning from the very people we seek to educate, chapter-building for local action, conducting meetings in a democratic fashion, and more. We cannot learn it all in a few days but we must begin now!

We must empower our chapters and members, not just with a great dream, but with the skills to build a strong orga-

nization to realize that dream.

The national council's in-person meeting in Sacramento last month was one of the best overall meetings we've had the pleasure of attending in the last four years. We focused on the Alliance itself. The Alliance's mission, The Alliance's chapters, The Alliance's administration. We focused on the Alliance doing Alliance business. We sought opinions from each other and we listened.

The one overriding passion from the people at that meeting regarding our convention, and regarding the work of the Alliance, was that we must continue to focus on our mission.

Which brings us back to our road... learning together the skills for the work ahead. This road requires your attendance, your hard work and your hearts.

See you in Boston!

July 20 - 22

AfD CONVENTION IN BOSTON, MA

Save the dates – make plane reservations now!

Where:

Simmons College, a small campus near Fenway Park and Museum of Fine Arts. Approximately 30 minutes by public transportation from Logan Airport.

Go to www.simmons.edu/visit/directions.shtml for directions and campus map.

Estimated Costs:

Three nights double-room, \$30.00 per person per day; \$40.00 with linens. Rooms are non-air conditioned, still negotiating for AC rooms; dorms have elevators. Meal plan, \$25.00 per day. We hope to keep the registration fee at about \$65.00 for members, but that is still to be determined.

Program:

We invite you to suggest skills workshops or submit a proposal to lead a workshop. Send suggestions or propos-

als to the AfD office: peoplesall@aol.com and write "Convention Program" in subject line.

The Boston Social Forum: Another Boston is Possible (www.bostonsocialforum.org), a regional social forum within the World Social Forum process, takes place, July 23-25. We are negotiating with Simmons College for rooms from the 23rd-25th; if you think you may want to continue your stay to attend the BSF, please email the AfD office promptly at peoplesall@aol.com and write "Convention Reservations" in the subject line. If enough people reply, we may be able to extend reservations.

Make travel plans now! Register later.

With the Boston Social Forum and the Democratic National Convention in Boston, bargain plane tickets and convenient flights will not be available for long.



On July 23-25, 2004 at the University of Massachusetts at Boston—just before the Democratic National Convention—progressive community organizations, non-profits, and unions will be hosting the Boston Social Forum (BSF). A regional forum within the World Social Forum process, the BSF has been called to help progressive activists answer some basic questions: What kind of future do we want for Boston, our region, our nation, our world? What is our vision of a better society?

Through a series of workshops, cultural events, plenary sessions, and giant convocations we are encouraging progressive organizations to showcase their best analysis of the present, and their best ideas for the future, across the breadth of human knowledge—politics, economics, science and technology, culture and faith—in the context of corporate globalization.

CHAPTER REPORTS

Birmingham Alabama

The Birmingham chapter is hosting a public viewing of *Uncovered. The Whole Truth about the Iraq War* coordinated with MoveOn.

We have recruited George Seidenfaden from the United Food and Commercial Workers to be the organizer of a *Rolling Thunder Down Home Democracy Tour* in Birmingham. George is retiring as the president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local Union 1657, and as a vice president of the International Union. He brings great energy and organizing and administrative skills that will be more than valuable in such an effort. We have not yet contacted Jim Hightower, but we are very confident we will be able to draw a large, diverse group of progressive organizations that are hungering for an outlet for their hoarded energy and a venue to gain positive recognition of our goals for our country, state and community.

Al McCullough, mmc@highway.net

Rochester New York

One very handy way to get the AfD known around town: We lead the community in celebrating Human Rights Day—the anniversary of the 1948 signing of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Starting with a candlelight vigil with any co-sponsoring group reading their choice of lines (eg, "everyone has the right to a job"), then a potluck supper, then discussion of more human rights which we don't have. The first year we got 60 co-sponsoring groups. This year, the fifth, we got 100. We announce the AfD purpose is to support the coming together of all progressives, and so far no one worries about turf.

We also share a progressive listserv, a web site, and next will be a community calendar. We don't know yet how many new members these efforts have added to the national Alliance. And we haven't yet started to form a progressive coalition.

Peter Mott, interconnect-mott@juno.com

Redwood Coast, CA

We co-sponsored (with Coastal Alliance for Peace, and the Dorothy King Young Chapter of the California Native Plant Society) a program by Emily Roberson, California Native Plant Society's Senior Analyst, on the Bush administrations assault on the environment.

We are planning to present the film - *Uncovered: the whole truth about the Iraq War* at the Point Arena Theatre.

AfD members are working closely with a group that is planning on making bio-diesel fuel locally available in Point Arena and possibly outlying areas.

Jon Thompson, robajon@mcn.org

Massachusetts Bay South

At a late summer meeting we held a very lively "caucus" on presidential candidates. Only Dean and Kucinich had proponents present, and their passionate supporters are working for them, eg visiting nursing homes to explain Dean's stance on medicare etc.

Since then we have decided that we can best contribute by helping uncover the truth to a fearful and misinformed public via letters to the editors of our local papers. (Getting a letter in the Boston Globe is like winning the lottery.) We represent a number of small towns, and are sharing our texts.

Our late December meeting was held jointly with Boston/Cambridge. We heard a member of Boston's new Social Forum tell of plans for diverse education ideas before and during the Democratic Convention, rather than confrontation. We also shared reviews of books important to the movement, from *The Populist Moment* to Schell's *The Unconquerable World*.

Jean Maryborn, maryborn@earthlink.net

San Fernando Valley CA

The San Fernando Valley Chapter of the AfD still has good energy and showing constant growth. Chapter elections will be held next month. (Jan) Members have been alerted about membership renewal and have been responding on a steady basis. The SFV/AfD by-laws require membership in the national organization in order to join our local chapter. Based on this, there

will be some additional monies in the national coffers over the next few months.

The chapter meets at least once a month and tries to present programs that relate to the AfD mission. Most recently we had a programmer from the local Pacifica station, KPDK, give us a report on the media conference held in Madison, WI. We were able to get a lot of publicity for the program, and even though it was the Thanksgiving weekend, we had about 70 show up to hear her. We were able to gain a few new members from that program.

Because so many of our members expressed the desire that we be more action oriented, we have developed a chapter email list for action alerts and information to educate ourselves about various issues. This has been very well received. Because of the need to focus on actions, the SFV/AfD voted to endorse several local protests. We were also asked and have voted to endorse SB 921 which is a single payer health bill, and SB 917 which deals with corporate reform. The bills only pertain to California, but certainly fall within the mission of the AfD.

Our December meeting was devoted to our annual pot luck and to discussion around the questions Ted posted in the last issue of the *Alerts*. There were some concerns raised about actions on the national level. People wanted more specifics as to what they thought was going on. There was a strong interest in the clean money campaign and questions about the AfD's role re "clean money".

People also wanted to focus on local issues, voting machines, etc.

Dolly Arond, djarond@earthlink.net

San Diego CA

The San Diego Alliance is completely focused on getting an initiative for clean money for the city of San Diego. They are getting as much exposure as possible and building up a strong corps of volunteers to get ready for signature gathering. They seem to be gaining much momentum and hope to be successful in their efforts.

Dolly Arond, djarond@earthlink.net

SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE IN SONOMA COUNTY, CA

By John R. Shearer, M.D. AfD, Sonoma County, CA

The Sonoma County (California) chapter of AfD has initiated and participated in a program that will result in a significant step forward for justice in health care in our community. In the fall, the Children's Health Initiative of Sonoma County (CHI) will begin enrolling youngsters in a health insurance program, designed, ultimately, to assure that everyone from birth to age 18 will have access to adequate health care in our county.

We are communicating this to the AfD membership for 2 reasons. First, with all the effort AfD chapters across the nation devote to social justice, it's good to share the story of our successes with one another. Second, this particular pro-

ject again underscores the value of coalition, networks, public outreach and education, all of which the AfD uses to move its efforts forward.

In November 2000, and January 2001, the AfD in Sonoma County organized and held two public meetings in response to the local, state, and national crisis in health care. Initiated and planned by our Health Care Action working group, the first meeting attracted over 200 concerned citizens who heard a talk on Universal Healthcare, and listened to a panel discussing impacts on local health issues. The second meeting consisted of a focus group of 65 people, who felt that our efforts should be an attempt to address health care problems at the local level. People from this group were the nucleus of a coalition that was soon to form.

With the exciting example of the recent Santa Clara (CA), Children's Health Initiative as inspiration, we decided, also, to pursue a county-wide program with a goal of health insurance for 100% of our children. The evidence was clear that children with no regular access to health care did worse in school, often developed chronic impairments, and risked failure to reach their adult potential. We ultimately did a study showing that about 8,000 of our children had no health coverage.

A local children's advocacy organization, Family Action of Sonoma County,



Universal Health Care float, "We're all in the same boat."

quickly took the lead and was joined by representatives of state and local government, hospital systems, community clinics, Department of Health Services, providers, and others. The group was called Children's Healthcare Access Coalition (CHAC). Community outreach was then begun. Public talks were presented, and hundreds of endorsements were gathered from individuals and groups, including city governments, and our medical association. We promoted CHAC at Health Fairs and other events, and had a float in a local parade viewed by 30,000 people. In March, we presented the 1,000 dolls of "The Doll Project" to the County Supervisors. Each decorated clothespin doll represented 8 children in Sonoma County with no health insurance. Then, CHAC formed a partnership with Sonoma Health Alliance (SHA). SHA had been formed to address the larger healthcare crisis in the county, and some of us had also been members of SHA's Equal Access to Healthcare Committee. CHAC and SHA formed a working group, and using a \$50,000 grant, commissioned a feasibility study. The Pacific Health Consulting Group found that the children's Health Initiative was in fact feasible, and could be started without the necessity of public funding.

On January 26, the first meeting of the new CHI steering committee met. It is comprised of community leaders in health, education, community funding, and others. We are moving forward with the operational plan with the help of additional grants. CHI should be enrolling children by November 2004.

ATTENTION ALL CHAPTERS

By Peter Mott, Chair, Membership Committee
interconnect-mott@juno.com

Every day the news shows more need for national progressive movement organizing. Every success of the AfD—in the courts, in regional and local actions—shows more need for us to increase our momentum.

What we need most right now is MORE NATIONAL MEMBERS. As we gear up for a general membership campaign, would each chapter please start in with checking which of your local Alliance members—or those interested—have not yet joined the national organization. The national office has the current data base for your zip codes. Some people may have enquired from your area without you knowing it. Forms are available in this issue of AA (membership \$35 or \$50, reduced dues \$25)

THANKS, WE NEED YOUR HELP!



RT UNIVERSAL HE
Butter & Eggs Day Parade, Petaluma, CA, 4/28/01.

VOTING FRAUD: THE AMERICAN EMERGENCY

By Nancy Price

The January in-person Council meeting launched a "Voting Fraud" project to educate AfD members and the public about the threat to democracy posed by the new direct recording electronic (DRE) touch-screen voting machines. These machines leave no paper trail. In the event of machine or system failure or suspected fraud there is no printed paper ballot to allow for proper audit and hand recount. No one can verify that every vote has been recorded correctly and counted accurately.

Nothing strikes at the heart of democracy more than erosion of confidence in our electoral system. With barely 30% of registered voters going to the polls and candidates elected by little more than 15% of votes cast; every vote does count! The anger and lawsuits over the Florida 2000 debacle would seem mild if, in the future, the public did not accept election results and took to the streets.

After the Florida problems of badly designed ballots, punch-cards and "chads," the 2002 Congressional "Help America Vote Act" was passed to fund states to upgrade punch card and lever machines with the new integrated electronic voting systems, including optical scanning enabling blind and disabled voters to vote secretly and without assistance.

The Act says that voting systems must

have a "manual audit capacity" with a "permanent paper record," but some vendors argue the record can be printed after an election. This assumes the votes were accurately recorded in the first place.

Even if vendors agree to provide a printed ballot at time of voting for later audit and recount, far more troubling is the research of computer scientists that electronic voting machines may not be as secure and reliable as the corporate vendors claim. Researchers point out that machines are vulnerable at any stage of manufacture to tampering and the systemwide state network is vulnerable from local voting sites to county and state offices. Even more troubling is the evidence that the software development is inadequate. There has been no third-party verification of source code, and cryptography is incorrectly used.

(For thorough research reports see <http://avirubin.com/vote.pdf>; also Black Box Voting, Ballot-tampering in the 21st Century, at www.blackboxvoting.com; also www.VerifiedVoting.org, and the extensive site of e-voting expert Dr. Rebecca Mehuri, www.notablessoftware.com. Materials will be posted to the AfD website soon.)

At the in-person, the council approved the resolution proposed by Ben Kjelshus of the Kansas City, Missouri, AfD (see page 10). Members and chapters can use this to:

1. Local: a) Host an informational meeting with your local election officials to

learn the status of your voting system; b) Introduce a resolution to your city council and county supervisors in support of a paper ballot; c) Work with your local League of Women Voters and inform them of the crucial nature of the electronic voting issue and to challenge the national LWV, which has the position that electronic voting machines without a paper trail is acceptable.

2. State: Be sure that the DRE machines conform to the election rules in your state. Ask your Secretary of State and State Legislators to demand a paper record be produced at time of voting to insure a "manual recount" is possible.

3. Federal: Contact your US congressional representatives and urge them to sponsor Rep. Rush Holt's bill Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act (HR. 2239) which demands a paper record for voters to check; also contact you senators and urge them to support Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's bill that would also require a paper trail and security standards of electronic voting machines.

Finally, insist on an immediate moratorium on paperless, unverifiable electronic voting machines in the 2004 election, and, if necessary, support any legal injunction that might be filed.

We have nothing more precious to lose to "corporate rule" than our secret and verifiable vote, the principle tool in the practice of democracy.

CENSORING POLITICAL SPEECH

By Robert McChesney

If you are concerned about the state of the union, you should be concerned about the state of the media.

Last month, CBS television censored free speech by refusing to sell airtime to the MoveOn Voter Fund for a political ad during the Super Bowl. The ad was critical of the Bush Administration's run-up of the federal deficit.

CBS—owned by media giant Viacom—says it doesn't run "controversial" ads during the Super Bowl. But it aired a



White House drug policy spot during the game.

The last such ad linked marijuana smoking to terrorism—hardly uncontroversial.

It is no coincidence that the White House and the FCC are pushing through new media ownership limits at the behest of CBS—efforts that activists and public interest groups have been fighting. CBS/Viacom spent over \$4 million lobbying Congress in the last four years alone.

We need your help to spread the word about CBS and the



growing media crisis. First, send this article to everyone you know who cares about free speech and democracy. Next, go to www.mediareform.net/media to learn more and sign up to be a Free Press E-Activist.

Free Press is a national nonpartisan organization working to increase public participation in media policy debates, and to generate policies that will produce a more competitive and public interest-oriented media system.

Many members of Congress continue to fight further media consolidation because millions of Americans have pressured them to do so. This recent insult proves that we need millions more.

DEMOCRACY CARAVAN REVS UP FOR CAMPAIGN TOUR

After a successful fall and winter venture around the country, a radiant Ben Sher reports that the Democracy Caravan is ready to hit the road again. The second leg which begins with the primary season will concentrate on the primary states in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern regions. Then, after a three to four week break in May, the summer leg will cover the Upper Midwest and the Northwest. The fourth leg will concentrate on the presidential election, registering voters in the swing states and visiting the presidential debates.

The Democracy Caravan sets out to bring people together to actively participate in the democratic process. Rather than just sitting around in our homes and complaining that many politicians in Washington are busy dismantling the federal government and giving away the shop to their corporate sponsors, we

want to get out in the community and do something about it.

Do you feel your elected leaders in Washington are not listening to you and your fellow citizens? Do you want to make them listen? Then come out and join us for the long haul, or hop on the Caravan for a day or a week and then help us network in your community. Begin a caravan in your state—we'll support you from our home base. Help bring hope and long-range thinking back to the political dialogue in this country.

Democracy Caravan is a non-partisan group that believes in cooperation between people regardless of party affiliation. There is too much emotional baggage associated with our two-party system.

Democracy Caravan strives to change how we speak about politics in America. We want to listen to what Americans have to say about their lives and their country. We believe that once we learn



The caravan in front of Union Station in DC. To communicate with one another, we'll see that we share many of the same goals.

Whether you are a student taking a break from school, an unemployed software technician, a poet, retired teacher, inveterate traveler, elderly couple touring the country in an RV, war veteran, or a pioneering soul intent on self-discovery, we invite you to join the Caravan.

Check out the website at www.democracycaravan.org. Email us at benjmshe@yahoo.com, or dschwenk2004@yahoo.com. Write us at 1500 McClaren Drive, Carmichael CA 95608. Or call 916-798-1072.



ALLIANCE FOR
DEMOCRACY

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

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- Monthly sustaining member @ _____/mo.
- I want to be a member but can't afford a donation now.
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MEMBER-RUN NATIONAL OFFICE

By Mary White, AfD National Office Co-ordinator

The Alliance for Democracy National Office is now a member-run operation. With some preliminary training by, and a sad farewell to Stephanie Scadding, our former full time staff member, six North Bridge chapter members and one at-large member took over operations. Our first staff meeting was on Wednesday, December 3rd when we decided on our schedule and division of tasks. Each volunteer is working a four-hour minimum day, with regular hours Monday through Friday, from 10 am until 2 pm EST. The tasks have been divided according to talents, background, and interest. Our two computer professionals, Lora Saltis and Mary White, manage the technical aspects of the computer and the database. Financial wizards, Mary Van Vleck and Barbara Clancy, take care of the financial end of things and fax all records to our national treasurer, Vikki Savee, in California. A team of three wordsmiths, Lois Voltmer, Lynn Gargill and Cynthia Ritsher handle the outgoing regular mailings and keep the office supplied. All answer the phones, respond to email, pick up and sort mail, handle problems when they arise, and do what we can to make the office a clean and homey place.

So how has it been going? We are gradually learning what a big job Stephanie had; more, we find, than our brief training with her could include. We are still trying to catch up with everything. Our first improvement was to get a P.O. Box. The post office being right next door made getting the box an easy decision.

Please send future mail to us at P.O. Box 540115.

And we have been busy! There has been a constant stream of responses to the 2003 End-of-Year mailing that has put us to the test. We have run out of thank you cards and are having to learn the ropes of having more printed—who, where, with what copy? Thanks to all of you for your generosity! It has also been encouraging to see the positive response of folks around the country to the Alliance with messages such as "It sounds like you folks are doing really good stuff!" and "Keep up the good work!" It has been a pleasure to talk to those of you who have called and to respond to your incoming emails.

Our future hopes for the office are practical and sublime. After this long and extremely frigid winter lets up we plan to have a few office cleaning, organizing and redecorating days. We would also like to find ways to serve chapters and members better. Send us your ideas. Already we have suggested offering materials for tabling to members and chapters through our web site. If there are ways we could be of help to you let us know. After all, this is a movement of members. Our phone is (781) 894-1179 and the email peoplesall@aol.com.



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Cynthia Ritsher, Mary White and Barbara Clancy, three of the dedicated members staffing the AfD national office. Mary Van Vleck, a fourth volunteer, took the photo.