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Guest Columnist: Fidel Castro

Responses to our 30th anniversary issue

Biocentrism & the wisdom of hippies



POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 31

FREE

NUMBER THREE JUNE/JULY 2002

YOUR LEADERS CAN'T PROTECT YOU



BUT THEY CAN GET YOU KILLED

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 Post benefit a success

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Copies of the Post Amerikan are now available for free at the following locations:

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Peoria
 Bicycle Bus
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In this Issue:

About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-4473 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while--we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the *Post Amerikan* are available for the low price of \$6.00 per year for six complete issues. Please send a check (made payable to the *Post Amerikan*) to: Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by...

DAVID, DEBORAH, FROG,
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Good numbers

Advocacy Council for Human Rights.830-2521
 AIDS Hotlines
 National.....1-800-AID-AIDS
 Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 Local.....827-AIDS
 Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092
 Amnesty International-ISU ...Miomi@ilstu.edu
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780
 Big Brothers/ Big Sisters828-1870
 Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022
 Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber...438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931
 Headstart.....662-4880
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790
 LIFE-CIL.....663-5433
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
 Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center....452-7324
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
 PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help)..827-4005
 Phone Friends.....827-4005
 PFLAG(Parents, Families & Friends
 of Lesbians & Gays).....862-1844
 Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
 (bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000
 Salvation Army.....829-9476
 Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service....827-6237
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Build.....827-7507

What's your new address?

When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail--no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

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Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.); or submit via e-mail at: pamerikanusa@netscape.net

JULY 15



Community News



GLT Presents Free Concert

GLT 89 FM together with the City of Bloomington, are sponsoring a free outdoor blues concert. The concert will be held on the square in downtown Bloomington next to the Old Courthouse, June 15, from 5-9 pm. The concert is free and open to the public.

GLT Summer Concert '02 will kick off with acclaimed Washington D.C. blues guitarist and vocalist Tom Principato at 5 pm. The night's headliner, Concord Recording Artist Karrin Allyson, brings her sophisticated brand of jazz to the stage at approximately 7 pm.

The Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist Allyson will appear with her quintet. Her most recent release, and 7th on the renowned Concord record label, *Ballads: Remembering John Coltrane*, has received rave reviews including 4 stars from the *Los Angeles Times* and the noted jazz magazine *Downbeat*. Guitarist and vocalist Tom Principato has been a fixture on the east coast blues scene for over 20 years. He has shared stages with Stevie Ray Vaughan, John Lee Hooker and Dr. John.

Plenty of free parking is available in the parking deck next to the Law and Justice Center and behind the downtown Bloomington Post Office. There will be a beer tent located with a view of the stage in addition to food and drink vendors. Don't forget to bring your lawn chairs and blankets.

In addition to GLT and the City of Bloomington, support for this concert is provided by WM Putnam Co. and Dunbar, Breitweiser & Co. Special thanks to Samuel Music and Yamaha Pianos, Ra-Jac Distributing Company, The Bloomington Bar Owners Association, Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department and State Farm Creative Services.

For more information, contact:
Steve Fast,
Promotions Coordinator, WGLT
(309)438-5083

ISU's Indy Newspaper Wins First-Place Prize in National Competition

In its first year of existence, the Indy, the independent student newspaper at Illinois State University, has won a first-place prize in a national journalism competition. The Indy received first place in the "Hellraising" category of the Campus Alternative Journalism Awards for its articles on the use of sweatshops to make ISU apparel and corporate hog factory farms in Central Illinois.

The Campus Alternative Journalism Awards are run every year by the Campus Alternative Journalism Project (CAJP), a national support network of over 100 social justice-oriented student publications. The CAJP is a sponsored project of the Independent Press Association, a nonprofit membership organization of independent publications committed to social justice and a free press.

Other cover stories in the Indy this past year included "Free Taye!" (2/22/02), about ISU alum Dr. Taye Wolde-Semayat, who was freed from prison by Ethiopian officials this month after a campaign by ISU students and faculty on his behalf.

The Indy was founded in August, 2001 to provide an alternative voice at ISU and in Bloomington-Normal. This fall, the Indy will continue to expand by publishing weekly, and increase its investigative reporting about ISU and the local community.

The Indy's website is <http://indy.pabn.org>

Contact:
Brian Edwards-Tiekert, Campus Alternative Journalism Project, 415/643-4401
x118, cajp@indynews.org
John Wilson, co-editor, the Indy, 309-452-2006, indynews@hotmail.com

IDOT to utilize minorities & women on local projects

On June 12, 2002, the Bloomington Human Relations Commission will host a presentation by Mr. Clyde Gulley of the Springfield Urban League. This presentation will outline the policy and procedures that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will be following to utilize minorities and females on road construction projects that will take place in the Bloomington/Normal area.

This meeting will give the community an opportunity to ask questions and gather information about the projects that IDOT plans to undertake in this area. It will also be a time to get information as to the procedures for possible employment opportunities on these projects.

The Bloomington Human Relations Commission is committed to their mission to educate and inform the citizens of any and all opportunities that might be available.

The meeting will be held at the Bloomington City Hall, at 7:00 p.m.. It is free and open to the public. As with all meetings, an agenda will be available to the press and the public no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

For information contact:

Ernestine Jackson
Equal Opportunity Associate
Community Relations
434-2218
TTY 829-5115

Surveys show strong support for gay-inclusive ordinance

Two independent, scientific surveys conducted by political science professors at Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State University reveal 57 percent of Bloomington/Normal residents favor a local human rights ordinance that includes sexual orientations.

The IWU survey, spearheaded by Dr. Tari Renner and administered by his political science students, consisted of a phone survey of more than 425 residents of Bloomington. They were surveyed on a variety of issues in addition to the human rights ordinance question.

The results of the survey show not only that a majority of residents surveyed support the amended ordinance, but a breakdown of the survey raw data reveals that respondents in six of the eight city wards favor it. This demonstrates that support for the ordinance is not concentrated to one segment of the city but can be found from the east side subdivisions to the city's western edges.

It is obvious that attitudes among the population have changed, especially when the survey results are compared to a similar survey conducted by Renner's class in 1995. That survey found only 43 percent support for a gay-inclusive ordinance.

Of course constituent sentiment is only one factor a council member uses when taking a vote, but these results are invaluable because they eliminate a common argument used by the opposition: That the public does not favor such an ordinance.

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights is grateful to Dr. Tari Renner, Dr. Alan Monroe and their students who coordinated these important, scientific surveys

--from The Rainbow Connection



Responses to 30th Thanks for the memories

Dear Sirs,

After a decade gone by with not one word passed between us, to learn that our little dustup could still be inspiring such determined self-congratulatory cluelessness as appeared on page 14 of your 30th anniversary issue, well, it simply warms the cockles of my spleen.

At your kind suggestion, "a look in the mirror" revealed that after six years of performing at *Post Amerikan* benefits, I've moved on to a real job and have been helping to raise up two wonderful children. Their mother, thank goodness, was not taken in by the slander, paranoia and threats of police action (and worse) directed at me after the last time a letter of mine appeared "in" your paper--a letter which yes, along with a handful of more constructive criticisms, did compare the *Post Amerikan*, as you said, to warm snot.

Much to your surprise, I'm afraid, I'm failing to lead the wasted life of malicious mischief and sexual predation predicted for me, but I guess that sort of thing, for me anyway, was just too much of a stretch once I became a guy who drives a minivan.

But enough of what I saw in the mirror. In your eyes, given that it was you who saw fit to dredge it up, clearly the most "all-fired special" thing I've done was to have bested you at your own subversive game, back in the day. You'll get over it eventually.

When you do, and let's hope, before you unleash your enforcers on the next "reader" who mocks Lefty Orthodoxy or otherwise fails to perform as your loyal tool (our falling out, after all, did not begin with my comment about snot), here's a notion you might want to contemplate.

When you oppose yourselves to Blind, Self-Justifying Power for so long, so earnestly, intently and religiously, you can yourselves, perhaps without realizing it, come to resemble that which you oppose. "Battle not with

monsters, lest you yourself become a monster," and all that.

Anyway, the way you carried on, you'd think I had knocked up some power-happy CEO's underage daughter, passing on my crabs, herpes and genital warts in the bargain--rather than having violated *Post Amerikan* vending boxes all over town, impregnating each virgin issue with my nasty little letter.

What's the difference between *Post Toasties* out to silence and discredit an unmanageable critic, and House Managers out to impeach and discredit a philandering president? Precious little--you've certainly shared the same sanctimonious lack of concern for, what was that word..."proportionality."

For all your fragile injured innocence (Oh, warm snot! Oh, the Horror!), you folks were still able to pull off a credible old-fashioned mafia whack. I slept with the fishies, anyway, for a good ten years, eh?

I was so sure that you of all people knew--because you've done it well enough, plenty enough, to others--that when you've lost your ability to laugh at yourselves, there will be others to do it for you. That in the end, you'd realize, along with Edward Abbey--and he saved plenty more of it than you--that "Saving the world," really, "should only be a hobby."

It's those wise old Hopis, you know, who have the Mudhead Kachinas, whose job it is to encourage the people to laugh at their authority figures. Those who like to lead others to "Question Authority," though, somehow never expect their own authority to be questioned. Great Goddess forbid.

Oh well. Learning, as the Hopi leaders have, to not just allow mockery of themselves, but to value and support it, is a high achievement. It's a level of achievement to which, say, our current presidential administration certainly hasn't risen.

So. Here's to the day, at least, when the *Post Amerikan* is able to rise above the level of Ashcroft, Cheney and Bush. Here's to the day

you can gracefully grin and bear it, and maybe (*gasp!*) even benefit somewhat, when you come under friendly fire.

Now, if you'll excuse me...I've typed in the *Post's* email address, logged on to send this...and now there seems to be some sort of...pale yellow "slime," seeping in from my modem connection. What ever could it be?

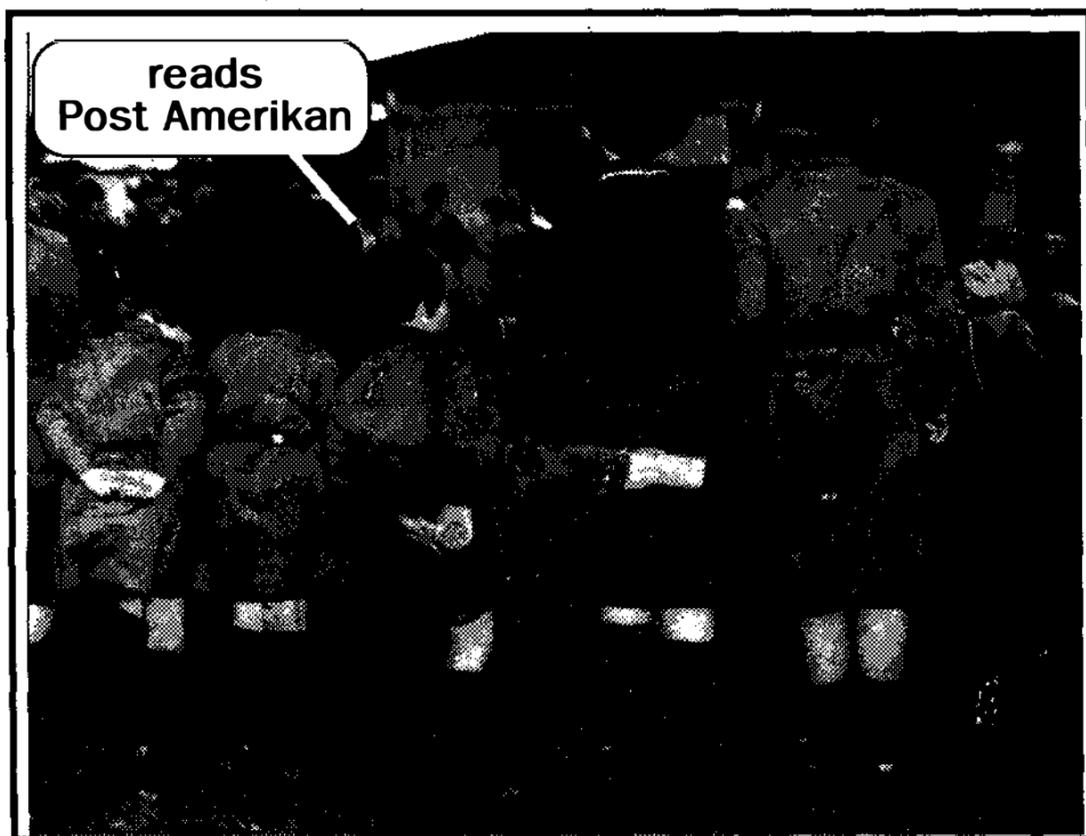
It's...it's so...disgusting...yet, somehow fascinating....

Signed,

--as usual, with my (real) name ('cause *pseudo*-names, Ms. Attitude, *pal*, are for cowards, fugitives and make-believe) --

Mark William Stairwalt

"To the reader who told LVD that she (and we) were lolling in 'warm snot,' if you want to see a navel-gazing solipsist, *pal*, I suggest you take a look in the mirror and ask yourself what you have done that's so all-fired special." -- "Dr. Attitude," *Post Amerikan* April/May 2002, p. 14



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anniversary issue

Well. Dr. Attitude, where do I begin?

Do I apologize for my rude comments and for being a "chief offender"? Do I give you a lengthy explanation of where my attitude comes from concerning the *Post*? Or do I just tell you that I think you have a wealth of valuable things to say and the day of the "chief offense," that was the compliment I was trying to give.

The image of the *Post* has always been, in my mind, that of a radical, in your face paper that often times prints things in a less than responsible manner. The one example of this that always leaps to my mind is the printing of pictures of undercover narcotics "agents." We may never see eye to eye on a lot of issues, but that sort of "expose" is totally unacceptable to me. There are ways in our society to deal with such matters. In this case, perhaps not participating in illegal drug activities may have been the most responsible. HEY! Put those ASSHOLES right out of a job!

The other article that has always stuck with me (I can't remember when it ran) had to do with women accepting responsibility for their own health. Well, that was right up my alley! I even had a fleeting moment when I thought that perhaps the *Post* had grown up some. This sounded like an article that could actually be useful. It was going along well until the author (I don't remember who that was either) suggested that one of the best ways to get to know about vaginal discharges and what diseases or disorders they might indicate were present, was to have group sessions with your girlfriends and everyone bring a hand mirror so that you could view your own vagina while observing and comparing the discharges from your female friends'.

I remember some disgusting, detailed descriptions of what to look for, but I must say I've tried to put the article out of my head. NOT because I don't think it's important for women to get to know their bodies, but there are better ways than pages of the *Post*. Try starting at the library in the medical, self-help books' sections. It's free, available to anyone and can be private and personal. Then consult medical advice, either at the local office of Planned Parenthood or the Community Health Clinic if you don't have an M.D. you can trust to tell you what's normal.

These are only two examples of articles that have helped to color my attitude towards the *Post*. I could go back and research back issues of the *Post*; can you get them at the library? Oh, well, I'm not going to do that anyway. I guess what bothers me most is that you, Dr. Attitude, don't sign your real name to the articles that you write. What I've read of your work, I would think that you would be proud to be recognized for it. The first article I read of yours was your view of Eastview Christian Church's bagel shop ["WWJS: What would Jesus say?" February/March 2000, 12-13]. It was wonderful. The comparison to the money in the temple during Jesus' day was right on the mark as far as I'm concerned.

Maybe I don't understand why you don't sign your articles. Maybe it's not because you're afraid of repercussions from the conservative society in Bloomington-Normal. Perhaps it's just the *Post* thing to do--a moniker to be known by, a pen name. I think that you have such valuable things to say that you should be credited for them. Your opinions could be voiced in other arenas where they would get more notice--have more impact--make people THINK!

If I sign this letter and ask you to print this, am I "busting out" Dr. Attitude? Will it give too much information and disclose who you are if the identity of "Boss Lady" is known? I'm not suggesting like the "narcs," but I think you should proudly put your name to your work.

The last thing I'll say, because I'm sure I'll get grief for this, is that I have a hard time respecting a publication that, after 30 years, still can't spell AMERIKAN!!

Signed,

Boss Lady
AKA Vicki Tilton
Fox & Hounds Hair Studio, Day Spa,
and The Store
Bloomington

Dr. Attitude replies

Dear Vicki:

"Radical, in your face paper?" Us? Aaaaww, go on, you're just saying that, aren't you? Or do you really mean it?

That statement comes as something of a relief. We're 30 years old now. My, but it's gratifying to know we haven't completely lost our youthful verve and vigor.

The only one of your charges that genuinely disturbs me would be that we "often times print things in a less than responsible manner," and you cite the MEG expose as an example. The MEG series was one of our earliest investigative ventures, dating from the early-to-mid 1970s. My own tenure on the *Post Amerikan* began in 1989, about a year after I first moved to Bloomington-Normal. Nonetheless, even 17 years later, any number of old *Post* hands--Marshall Law, Phoebe Caulfield, LVD, Ferdydurke--briefed me on the history of the glory days.

I inhaled, snorted, ingested, and imbibed. Next question?

As I understand it, MEG, an acronym for Multi-County Enforcement Group, originated as something of a regional DEA, ostensibly to bring down big-time drug dealers. Instead, MEG concentrated on entrapping and nailing college kids on simple possession charges, and by simple possession I mean *simply possessing* one joint.

During the early through late 1970s in Illinois, as in many other states, like Ohio, where I was attending both high school and college, possession of one measly doobie was a felony. In Illinois possession could get you 2-10 in a state penitentiary. By the way, that is precisely what happened to the *Post Amerikan*'s own Mark Silverstein, who ended up in Menard. Thankfully, 18 months into Mark's sentence, the State of Illinois came to its senses and knocked simple possession down to a misdemeanor. Mark got out, went to law school at the University of Illinois-Champaign, and now serves as Director for the ACLU in Colorado. In the interim, he came back to the *Post*, and conducted an investigative series on I.D.O.C. prison bus fires, and wrote other articles focusing on prisoners' rights.

Back in the day, Posters grew understandably annoyed over having big-time law enforcement officers going undercover to bust their friends and other hippie acquaintances. After all, these MEG narcs crashed private social gatherings, where folks were passing around a few joints just to be social, bothering no one. Maybe you can blame them when Posters took issue over some undercover narc with a Jack Webb complex yelling, "This is a bust, kid," mirandizing him to the tune of the Grateful Dead's "Truckin'," but I sure can't.

"One toke over the line, sweet Jesus!"

Mind you, these guys went into work every morning, pulled out their "hippie clothes" from their lockers, and then went about ensuring public safety by hanging around ISU's campus, asking around about parties, and where they might score a joint, or even a nickel or dime bag. In those days, "nickel" and "dime" meant, literally, \$5 or \$10. Flat out entrapment. Now, I ask you, Vicki, canny business woman that you are, does that profit margin conjure up images of Pablo Escobar and the Medellin cartel?

State correctional facilities all over Illinois--indeed the country--were quickly overcrowding with these menaces to society, but major importers of marijuana and much harder drugs, like heroin and cocaine, continued to stroll, effectively unmolested and untroubled. This criminal justice practice anticipated the current emphasis on busting mostly minority folks for \$5 worth of crack, and sentencing them to 5 years. The last decade of the War on Drugs succeeds most in tearing apart families and communities, setting in motion a tsunami of social consequences and burdens, but then, I digress.

In any event, MEG's undercover activities, as opposed to its stated mission, began to look suspiciously like political and social harassment masquerading as "being tough on crime." The *Post Amerikan* published MEG agents' photos "before and after" their hippie makeovers, advising readers that if any of these people shows up at a party, whether yours or someone else's, alert everyone else and politely ask him to leave. Given that MEG devoted its resources to such penny-ante busts, I



very much doubt that its detectives were in the remotest danger in the first place. The one taboo of hippie culture then was violence. Revelers at those parties were not likely to be packing heat.

So, detective, I take it Inspector Clouseau is your "rabbi"?

Again, this was an era when various government agencies--regional, state, federal--harassed and reflexively harried anyone seen as a "dissident," with wiretaps, mail interceptions, surveillance, and innocuous arrests. Arguably, these tactics frequently amounted to abuse of process and malicious prosecution.

Mind you, I am fully aware of how deluded much of the counter-culture's position on recreational drug use was. In the late '70s and early '80s, many folks seriously posited that cocaine wasn't addictive. Yeah, right. Cheese isn't fattening, either.

I saw the consequences of the "recreational" use of hard drugs every day when I taught in the I.D.O.C. The counterculture must shoulder its share of the burden for the country's burgeoning drug abuse over the last 40 years. On the other hand, as any DEA agent will tell you, our so-called "War on Drugs," whether *c.a.* 1972 or 2002, was and is a failure. A failure more costly in lives and resources than the Viet Nam War.

We waste our time going after low-level street dealers and addicts, mostly among the poor and minorities. The drug trade's just too lucrative and corruption too well placed for us to end illegal drug flow into this country through current police strategies. Thanks to the "War on Drugs," our prison population exceeds that of any first world and most third world nations. I think only China's incarceration rate exceeds the U.S'. However, once again, I digress.

"'C' Students run the world"

--Harry S. Truman

All movements, political and otherwise, have their excesses. Of course, we all flinch when someone digs up an old piece of personal correspondence that we signed "woman power!" Or "right on!" Then proceeds to read it on CNN, just as Congress considers our nomination for Secretary of Health and Human Services, or Attorney General, or Ambassador to Lichtenstein. The first decade of feminism's second wave was no exception. Still, even I, who made my way to Case Western Reserve University's Women's Center on my first day as a freshman, balked at the notion that my personal happiness hinged on an up close and personal view of my own cervix. It wasn't the idea of examining myself, or having someone show us all how to do so, that bothered me. The sad truth is I'm a cheapskate. I mean, a nickel bag was one thing, but speculums cost a small fortune.

Excuse me, Mr. President, but some might say that's the problem

I must further comment on those reference books you mention, most especially the ones focusing on women's health. Yes, they are readily available to the ordinary person through public libraries, Amazon dot.com, and your local Barnes & Noble. Yes, they are illustrated with frank, detailed, easy to understand information on various sorts of diseases, disorders, and their symptoms. I must, however, point out these references owe their very ubiquitousness, not to mention their reader-friendliness, to the women's movement rolling up its sleeves, scrubbing its hands to the elbows, and taking charge.

Remember, our generation can recall those absurd TV commercials for "feminine hygiene" products that simply showed a nubile young woman, usually in long shot, wearing some sort of floaty garment, strolling at a leisurely pace through a field of wildflowers. In the last few seconds, a product name would drift over the pastoral scene: "Kotex," "FDS," or "Summer's Eve." I tell you, I felt like an involuntary initiate into a secret society, because I understood the sponsors' code. A far cry from today's commercials, which explicitly and directly demonstrate the absorbent capacity of one brand of tampons over another. And thank God for it, too. As for consulting your gynecologist in that era . . . oh, please, don't get me started.

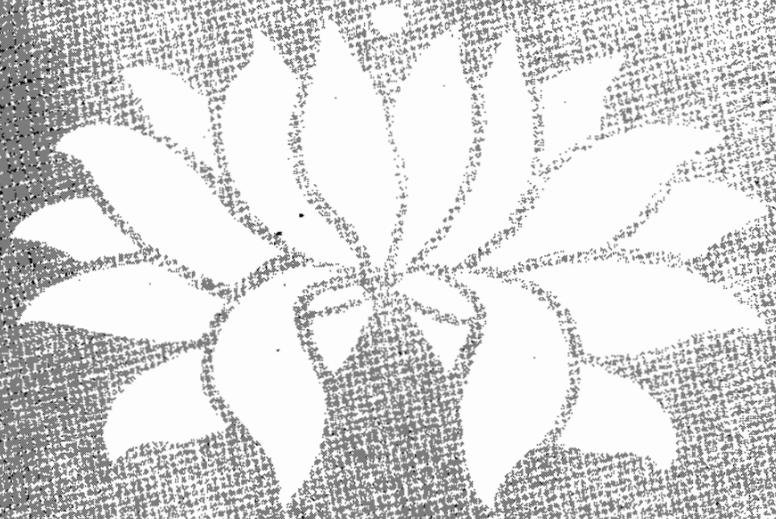
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At least gynecologists no longer store their speculums in the refrigerator, next to the stethoscopes

While I haven't come across the article you mention, I have no trouble crediting the *Post Amerikan* with having published something along those lines. More power to it, I say. I'll even go out on a limb and venture that it most assuredly did not purpose to shock, but to inform, certainly a valuable public service for 52% of the American populace. Friends, particularly women friends traditionally compare experiences of and information about relationships, sexuality, birth, movies, gardening, auto repair, and jobs all the time. Why not add women's health issues to the mix?

Although the idea of getting together with my girls for comparative notes on our reproductive parts never struck me as a roaring good time, I took to heart the message: Be responsible for your own health. Become an informed medical consumer. I don't know about your experience, in those bad old days, but my friends, acquaintances, and I typically found the doctors at the Student Health Service supercilious and condescending during "consultations." God forbid, you should question prescribed treatments. Presuming to ask about alternatives went over about as well as a fart in church.

Anyway, the Boston Women's Health Collective, whose landmark book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* should be entering its third decade in print (revised and updated, of course), couldn't do the job all by itself. Besides, I doubt the *Post Amerikan's* article was any less frank than a current issue of, say, for example, *Family Circle Glamour*, or *Rosie's*. Indeed, publications like the *Post Amerikan* blazed that particular super-highway. Incidentally, as I'm sure you're aware, you'll find the latest editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* at Barnes & Noble and the local public libraries.

"What's in a name?" the poet asks. Those pesky poets, always asking the hard questions

Pseudonyms date to the *Post Amerikan's* earliest days, when contributors concealed their identities to protect their jobs or avoid official harassment. As time passed, and the counter-culture faded, an eccentric handle simply became a convention, part of the furniture, an affectation meant more to be playful than anything else. When I started writing for the *Post Amerikan*, in 1989, I published a handful of my earliest pieces under my own name, Deborah S. Wilson, until I could finally come up with a really good pseudonym. I mean, not only were other Posters' pen names witty, but, once you knew the personality behind the moniker, incredibly apt and self-aware--Phoebe Caulfield, Virginia Girly, Major Drag, Marshall Law, Skeet Floyd, Soto Bioto, Isis, Ferdurdurke, the Balrog . . .

Breaking news! *Post Amerikan's* Dr. Attitude exposed as Deborah S. Wilson! Somebody call *The New York Times!*

When I first published in the *Post*, I was the only regular writer to use her own name. Eventually, I hit upon Dr. Attitude, generated by a snapshot of me, a friend's remark on it, and philosopher Kenneth Burke's insistence a writer's work comprised the "dancing of an [the writer's] attitude." Ever since, I've done my best to live up to my alias

Over the years, we have updated and reconfigured the *Post's* graphics. LVD, authentic historian that she is, went to the mat in favor of keeping the early '70s style lettering of our masthead, a tradition we still maintain. Now I'm the only regular *Post* Toastie who uses a funky handle. Deborah S. Wilson, lifelong rebel and non-conformist, upholding tradition. How is that for irony?

Pursuing truth, justice, and the *Post Amerikan* way

Anyone to whom my name means anything at all knows I'm Dr. Attitude. As for taking pride in my journalism, if anything, I'm inclined to be rather obnoxious when my latest piece hits print, cajoling friends and acquaintances into reading it, as you know from bitter experience.

I have always listed what I consider to be my more important essays on my *curriculum vitae*, under the category of publications, sub-category "journalism." Because of the "publish or perish" ethos that, unfortunately, rules the academy, at least in four year institutions, academics start listing their "publications" on their CV's first page. Even though I now teach in a community college, I'm no exception. I file my updated CV every year, as required, with both the department and Human Resources. Moreover, every time I apply for a teaching job, fellowship or grant, I have to enclose a copy of my CV. I made and make no deletions under "publications." Over the last 10 years or so, I've sent out my CV, *Post Amerikan* contributions continuously updated, in at least 1,000 application packets. No exaggeration.

You're right. I don't lie awake nights sweating out possible repercussions from the conservative Bloomington-Normal community. If I did, I wouldn't sign my name to petitions, nor would I express my views to reporters for the *Peoria Journal Star*, who recently interviewed me with other Posties for features on the paper, and tell them to use my name. To cite another example, I drafted a letter of protest with another *Post* staffer, expressing dismay over Governor Ryan's proposed budget cuts, cuts that would have eliminated educational programs in the I.D.O.C. beyond the G.E.D. level. We designed these as form letters, addressed to politicians at county, regional and state levels, all the way up to and including Governor Ryan, our congressman and senators, even Dubya himself.

We ran off and distributed these letters. Like-minded people could sign and mail them, as both of us had done. For good measure, I published a version of that letter in the *Pantagraph*, under my own name. Presumably, if the governor or a legislator was feeling sufficiently vindictive, I could lose my job. I am, after all, a state employee, in addition to being one of Fox & Hounds' massage therapists.

Step outside and we'll rock

While I am hardly combative or pugnacious, I have the courage of my convictions. The views I express in these pages most assuredly would not surprise any one who knows me--my students, my friends, acquaintances, and co-workers. I like to think of myself as direct, forthcoming and straightforward, though I also try to keep in mind two things. (A) Other people have feelings. (B) We rhetors consider name-calling and rank insults a logical fallacy, not to mention a fairly reliable indicator of arrested development. So, while I say what I think and mean what I say, I try to keep my swearing and ranting appropriately confined to a private corner. After a good vent, I am fairly certain I can keep my remarks civil enough for public discourse, yet state my position unequivocally.

Publish elsewhere? I have had some small success with academic work, but it's the offbeat publications like the *Post*, that keep the art of the familiar essay alive and kicking.

As for our spelling, keep it real! What sense would *Post Amerikan* make?

Thanks for your input.

Dr. Attitude
AKA Deborah S. Wilson

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Off the beaten path

Hello summer movie fans! Summer? Isn't that the time for outdoor fun, baseball, big bloated multi-plex mega hits? Well, yeah, but at the end of the day, wouldn't it be nice to turn on the air, sit back with a cool beverage and watch a movie that's not a testament to Hollywood greed and aesthetic bankruptcy? I'm Elizabeth and I've got some video suggestion for all you funky downstate types.

Calle 54 ***

Planning to buck the old cookout routine and throw a "claiente" summer salsa night? Imagine, the spicy snacks, all your friends in their sexiest threads... and the music. Ooh yes!

Director Fernando Trueba (*Belle Epoch*) offers one of the best films about Latin jazz I've ever seen. Often compared to *Buena Vista Social Club*, this film focuses less on the musicians' lives and more on the music. Enjoy the performances of Eliane Elias, Jerry Gonzalez, Gato Barbieri (my favorite!), Chucho Valdes and the late, great Tito Puente. It's exhilarating whether you choose to watch or just listen and dance. This film reminds us all that, unlike a certain PBS jazz special tells us, jazz is a Pan-American (and Pan-African) phenomenon.

Under the Sand***1/2

Follow the mourning process of Jean, a literature professor whose husband, while on a trip to the beach, disappears. Given the mysterious nature of his disappearance and her discoveries about herself and her missing husband, Jean's process is both haunting and beautiful. Charlotte Rampling (*Night Porter*, *Max Mon Amour*) is nothing less than stunning and the direction by French upcomer Francois Ozon is top-rate.

Live Nude Girls Unite!***

Entertainment Weekly billed this film a "Naughty Norma Rae." The film deftly balances the eroticized images of the dancers at the Lust Lady with their very real stories of financial exploitation, safety and privacy concerns, and unfair demotions. What comes across most is the bravery of these women as they struggle for their rights as workers. A healthy reminder that, in an age where sex seems easy, it isn't.

L. I. E.***3/4

Brian Cox offers, arguably, the most complex and difficult role of last year's offerings. Cox plays Big John, ex-Marine, all around nice guy, and unabashed pedophile. When he discovers young Howie trying to steal his gun collection, they begin a relationship that is both touching and chilling. Thirteen year old Howie, who lacks any parental supervision and has friends who would turn your stomach, is, likewise, played with tenderness and sincerity. This coming of age story is, perhaps difficult to watch, but it seems like one of the most honest films to come along in a long time.

Shoot the Piano Player and Rififi both****

With the emergence of DVD comes the rerelease of many previously hard-to-find classics. Other than American filmmakers, the French were the ones who really understood film noir (they named it after all!). Jules Dassin's *Rififi* and Francois Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* are both stunning French realizations of the noir tradition. Both are, no fooling, just plain stunning. When you get burned out from all the high tech madness of current cinema, take note of how the old

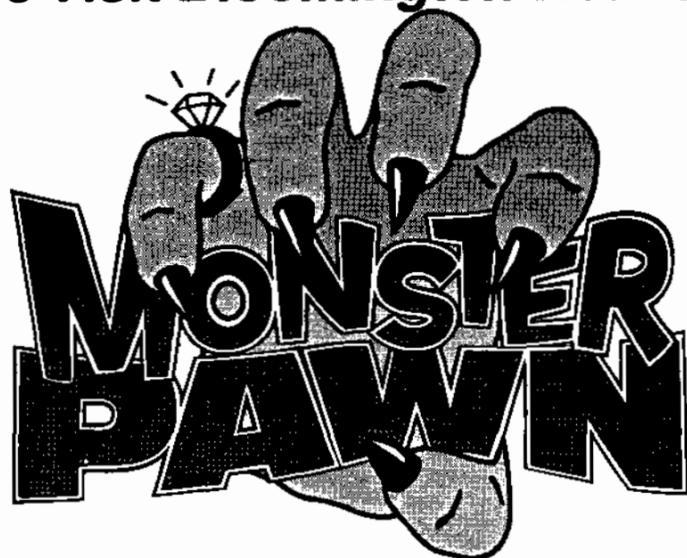
masters worked their magic. The DVD format is a plus.

Here are some other fun pictures you might enjoy:

1. Anniversary Party
2. Big Eden
3. Body Art
4. Bread and Roses
5. Business of Strangers
6. Center of the World
7. Criminal Lovers
8. Devil's Backbone
9. Element of Crime
10. Headless Body in Topless Bar
11. Innocents
12. Juniper Tree
13. Kurosawa: A Documentary
14. Lies
15. No Such Thing
16. Pinero
17. Princess and the Warrior
18. Slave of the Cannibal God
19. Tell Me Something
20. Two or Three Things I Know About Her
21. Venus Beauty Institute
22. Waking Life
23. Water Drops on Burning Rocks
24. The Well
25. Ginger Snaps

--Elizabeth

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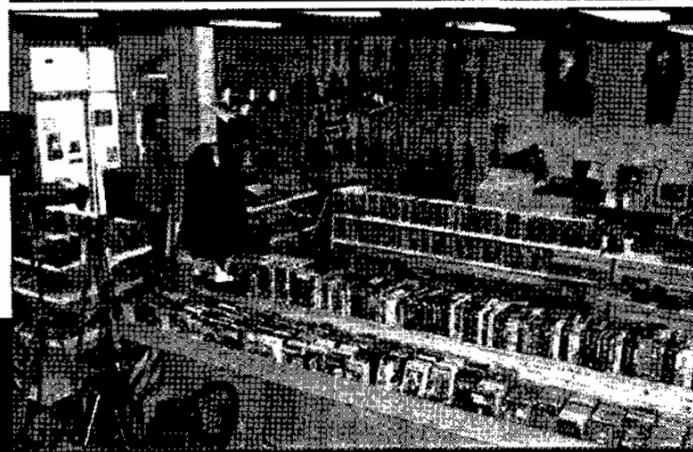


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Meat plant blues: *Fast Food Nation*

Want an instant recipe for vegetarianism? Try the book *Fast Food Nation*, by Eric Schlosser, now out in a paperback edition.

Schlosser diagnoses that all American institution, the fast food meal, from the cow in the feedlot to the underpaid kid on the greasy fryer, totaling up the real cost for a quick burger and fries.

A century ago Upton Sinclair turned the nation's stomach when he visited the Chicago stockyards to write *The Jungle*. The Pure Food and Drug Act resulted, even though Sinclair's aim was to improve workers' lives. That change only came with mass unionization in the packinghouses in the 1930s.

Schlosser's book should have the same impact today, as it examines a ruthless system of food production and consumption, where every penny saved turns into millions for those highway icons who feed us.

Like Sinclair, Schlosser pays particular attention to the workers. He visits the high school students who stumble through class so they can flip that burger late at night.

He visits the meat packing plants where immigrant workers sweat for low wages, in treacherous conditions, racking up an injury rate that surpasses any other occupation.

Meatpacking was always dangerous, but unionization helped smooth the rough edges and give workers a decent life.

Beginning in the 1970s the meat packers smashed their unions, either through slashing conditions and provoking strikes or moving to the countryside. The packers deserted Omaha, Kansas City and Chicago for small towns in the plains, promising jobs but instead delivering hungry immigrants, who work in substandard conditions and suffer incredible injury rates. A high turnover is the industry's key ingredient, discarding workers faster than they do gristle and bone. Meanwhile, the ranchers who once raised cattle are replaced by huge feedlots, where drug-pumped cattle are crammed together, their untreated waste equaling the output of a small city.

The final recipient, the customer, is part of an increasingly unhealthy nation, whose children are eating more starch and sugar and getting less exercise. Diseases like "mad cow" and e-coli lurk in the background, hidden predators who may yet haunt our future.

The meat packers and fast food chains pump dollars into Washington, thwarting minimum wage increases, health and safety regulations, and even minimal standards of regulations.

The fast food chains see their greatest growth not in the U.S. but overseas, as they spread their reach globally, changing diets and agriculture around the planet.

The picture is depressing but not without hope. Schlosser concludes with visits to ranchers who raise their cattle while respecting nature by

letting the animals roam and not pumping them with antibiotics or trapping them in feedlots. He visits successful family restaurants, some in multiple locations, where workers receive benefits and a livable wage.



He notes the quick capitulation of fast food chains to consumer demands. When environmentalists complained about McDonald's styrene clamshell burger containers, the firm quickly dropped them. When the golden arches said it would no longer accept genetically engineered potatoes for its french fries, sales of Monsanto's New Leaf, the nation's only biotech potato, dropped quickly.

What would happen if consumers demanded safe working conditions and decent wages at packing houses and for their kid behind the counter? Would the fear of customer distaste spur the fry kings to change their tune? The fast food chains are profit driven and will give consumers what they want, is Schlosser's final message, if only consumers demand it.

It's not an easy message but refreshingly the book doesn't end with hopelessness over corporate power.

Before your next visit to the golden arches, stop and read *Fast Food Nation*. It will hopefully not only turn your stomach, but also open your mind, and hopefully spur demands on restaurant chains to literally clean up their act.

--Mike Matejka
Livingston & McLean Counties Union News

Toy shop sweatshops

The kids all know the brand names--Barbie, GI Joe, Kids Meals at any fast food--but do they know the sweatshop workers who produce the childhood goodies?

The National Labor Committee, which exposes sweatshop conditions in the clothing industry, recently visited Chinese toy producers.

They found our children's playthings made by 16-25 year old young women, working mandatory 16 1/2 hour daily shifts, seven days a week, with one day off monthly. They work in 104 degree temperatures, handling toxic chemical paints, glues and solvents with no protection.

When the long factory shift is over, it's off to bed in a company dormitory, where 16 workers might share a small room.

A \$19.99 Sesame Street "Elmo's Count and Pop Game" equals ten cents in wages for the worker who produced it. Firms like Mattel are spending 30 times as much on advertising as they pay Chinese toy workers.

One Chinese young woman told the investigators: "I've been working since I was 15 years old. I've worked in the spray department for three years. I've always suspected the paints are poisonous. I've been sick ever since I started working in spraying, and they lie about the wages."

The NLC is encouraging letters and e-mail to American toy companies, encouraging them to do the following:

- Stop using toxic chemicals paints, glues and solvents;
- Allow independent, non-governmental monitors to watch health and safety conditions;
- Respect workers' and human rights;
- Publicly disclose factory locations, so monitors and advocates know the major brands have nothing to hide

The addresses to write are:
Alan G. Hassenfeld, Hasbro Inc.
1027 Newport Ave.
Pawtucket, RI 02861
ahassenfeld@hasbro.com

Robert A. Eckert, Mattel
333 Continental Blvd.
El Segundo, CA 90245-5012
mary.heyman@mattel.com

John H. Eyler, Jr., Toys R Us
461 From Rd
Paramus, NJ 07652
eylerj@toysrus.com

H. Lee Scott, Jr., Wal-Mart Stores
702 S. Eighth St.
Bentonville, AR 72716
hlscott@walmart.com

For more information, contact the National Labor Committee, 275 7th Ave., 15th Floor, NY, NY 10001 www.nlcnet.org

--Livingston & McLean Counties Union News



Working towards

Hey George, how about some peace?

After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, U.S. citizens can no longer afford to be ignorant of the details of U.S. foreign policy. Our lives are at stake.

The C.I.A. themselves have admitted that Osama Bin Laden was paid, armed, and trained through them. This is not an isolated incident--indeed, it is typical of U.S. foreign policy. Our government supplied the Iraqi government with military aid throughout the 1980s, only to kill over one million Iraqi citizens with bombs and sanctions a few years later. We still support dictatorships across the globe, and disregard the human rights of any who are perceived to endanger the profits of our corporations. Our government and the business interests it serves have created an atmosphere of international terror, which has finally reached our own shores. Hatred and violence like this do not just appear out of the air, as Bush's statement on the day of the horror suggested. They are encouraged by the arrogant and avaricious policies of our politicians and executives, whose wheelings and dealings abroad are now very much our business.

Bombings won't kill terrorists any more than they served to put Saddam Hussein out of a job; but they do kill people, whether or not you see them die on your television. Every innocent person affected by the bombs we drop, the aid we provide to oppressive governments, the injustices we condone, becomes another potential terrorist. Save lives, overseas and at home--take your power out of the hands of the politicians and the terrorists they raise. Let them know they can't count on your silence.

"It is the duty of the patriot to protect his country from its government."
-Thomas Paine

For further investigation: www.infoshop.org;
www.indymedia.org/peace;
www.crimethinc.com

--CrimethInc.

Local organization strives for peace and justice

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it"
--Eleanor Roosevelt

The Bloomington-Normal Citizens for Peace and Justice (BNCPJ) seek to promote peaceful solutions to local, national, and global conflicts and injustice. They sponsor educational presentations, forums for free and open discussion and political and community activities in order to foster debate and action, as well as engage fellow citizens in the challenging and continuing work of seeking justice and establishing peace.

The BNCPJ was formed shortly after September 11, 2001. Alarmed by the incessant beating of the drums of war in both the media and national discourse, a few individuals organized an open meeting for those who were concerned about the lack of discussion of alternative responses to the horrific acts of 9-11. The first meeting exceeded over 120 people. They came and shared their thoughts, feelings and ideas about our government's foreign policy, the ethnic and racial violence directed toward fellow citizens, and what they could do to protect both the Muslim community members and American values of peace, justice, civil rights, and equality. They decided that as concerned citizens they wanted to continue this dialogue among themselves and the community, thus the Bloomington-Normal Citizens for Peace and Justice was established.

The BNCPJ meets as a large group, usually at the Unitarian Church at 1613 Emerson Street the first Sunday of every month. Smaller groups that focus on specific activities and issues--political action, program development, etc.--meet separately as necessary. Speakers are occasionally brought in, and they share resources for education about the tumultuous political events beyond the 30 second sound bite of the six o'clock news. They believe it is their responsibility, as citizens of a democracy, to speak out against injustice, whether it exists here or abroad.

If you would like to join the Bloomington-Normal Citizens for Peace and Justice, there is a membership form that will get you on their e-mail list and/or phone list so that you are alerted to BNCPJ meetings and events. You can send an e-mail to peace61761@yahoo.com to request a membership form.

The truth about the "Patriot Act"

On October 26, 2001, in the midst of 9-11... the shock, despair, bonding, debris and patriotism, a 342-page bill was debated and passed. The "Patriot Act," as it is commonly called, contains a "sunset" provision for December 31, 2005. This means it goes out of existence at that time. However, not all parts of this law are covered by this provision.

The full name for the "Patriot Act" is: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. In its short time of debate, this new law has changed fifteen federal laws. Some of the contents of this law are:

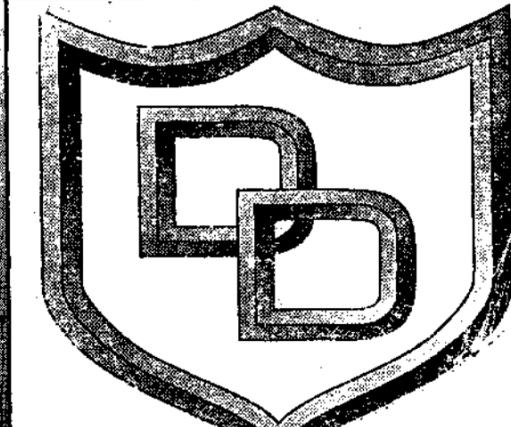
- Expansion of surveillance capacity of federal government
- Budget (\$200 million a year to FBI)
- Sharing of intelligence information among agencies
- Expansion of non-trade hostile countries
- Disclosure of grand jury testimony
- Detention of aliens
- Disclosure by financial institutions, employees, or agents--no notification of targeted person and can be included in employment references (may include possible involvement of party in potentially unlawful activity)--not liable except for malicious intent
- Expansion of definition of terrorism--two or more people planning bodily harm/any social or political group who endorses publicly acts or terrorist activity
- Enhance protection of northern borders
- Many provisions aimed at organized crime (money laundering and counterfeiting)
- Access to education records
- Sunset provision not comprehensive
- Airline security:
 - arming pilots
 - surveillance cameras in aircraft
 - passenger training
 - full body scanning

This act has exempted some information the government is collecting from the Freedom Of Information Act (F.O.I.). It is difficult for a judge to find out what is going on, and difficult for you to know if information is being gathered about you.

The weight of safety, versus rights and liberties is not an easy balance to maintain. The "Patriot Act" is very light on the latter. If enough voices are heard by our representatives and senators asking for the entire law to be placed under the "sunset" provision, and also the sunset date to be moved up ASAP, we can possibly reverse this decision.

More info may be obtained at www.thomas.gov and typing in "patriot act."

-LinFrog Simmons



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peace & justice

Budget cuts: What about the War on Drugs?

All of the talk in the paper daily about raising taxes or cutting mental health care or police and fire or roads or aid to seniors or closing prisons. . . . there is just no money. But one thing that seems to be a hands off subject is the Drug War. Some fear it is political suicide and some are misguided and think that arresting people for drug crimes will make the streets safer when it is actually the opposite.

The high price of drugs due to their illegality cause much of the crime on our streets. Check out property crimes in your paper. Shoplifting, burglaries, check forgeries, and many shootings and violent crimes are often caused by the high price of illegal drugs which endangers us and the people who have to fight this war.

The illegality of drugs also allows our children more availability to drugs. If you're licensed to sell alcohol you are less likely to sell to a child for fear of losing your license. However, many who sell drugs probably figure they are already breaking the law, so why not sell to children? In fact, in many cases it is the children selling the drugs! Yes, you have children actually running the drug trade! Just this year a Peoria police officer was killed in the line of duty chasing a young drug runner.

Lastly, the high price of drugs fund terrorism. It gives money to the cartels. In Afghanistan it has given the Taliban operating capitol. We have the police, the FBI, and many other agencies fighting choices that could have been fighting terrorism!

Watch the paper and see how many people are arrested for possession or these other possible drug related crimes every day and multiply that by the number of total cities in the U.S. and think of the cost. Ask yourself has the War on Drugs worked? If we had all of the money back that has been spent on the Drug War in the last thirty years, then would we need budget cuts?

Then call your representatives and tell them with their budget cuts they should be looking at the wasteful War on Drugs as a way to save money.

--Greg James

The flag and patriotism

Patriotism seems to be falling to whoever claims it loudest, an we're left struggling to find a definition in a clamor of reaction.

This is what I'm hearing:

Patriotism opposes the lone representative of democracy who was brave enough to vote her conscience instead of following an angry mob. (Several others have confessed they wanted to vote the same way, but chickened out.)

Patriotism threatens free speech with death. It is infuriated by thoughtful hesitation,

constructive criticism of our leaders and pleas for peace. It despises people of foreign birth who've spent years learning our culture and contributing their talents to our economy. It has specifically blamed homosexuals, feminists and the American Civil Liberties union.

In other words, the American flag stands for intimidation, censorship, violence, bigotry, sexism, homophobia, and shoving the Constitution through a paper shredder? Who are we calling terrorists here? Outsiders can destroy airplanes and buildings, but it is only we, the people, who have the power to demolish our own ideals.

It's a fact of our culture that the loud-mouths are saying now that in times of crisis it is treasonous to question our leaders.

Nonsense. That kind of thinking let fascism grow out of the international depression of the 1930s. In critical times, our leaders need most to be influenced by the moderating force of dissent. That is the basis of democracy, in sickness and in health, and bear grave consequences.

It occurs to me that my patriotic duty is to recapture my flag from the men now waving it in the name of jingoism and censorship. This isn't easy for me.

The last time I looked at a flag with unambiguous pride, I was 13. Right after that, Vietnam began teaching me lessons in

ambiguity, and the lessons have kept coming. I've learned of things my government has done to the world that made me direly ashamed. I've been further alienated from my flag by people who waved it at me declaring I should love it or leave it. I search my soul and find I cannot love killing for any reason. When I look at the flag, I see it illuminated by the rocket's red glare.

This is why the warmongers so easily gain the upper hand in the patriot game: Our nation was established with a fight for independence, so our iconography grew out of war. Our national anthem celebrates it; our language of patriotism is inseparable from a battle cry. Our every military campaign is still launched with phrases about men dying for the freedoms we hold dear, even when this is impossible to square with reality. In the Persian Gulf war we rushed to the aid of Kuwait, a monarchy in which women enjoyed approximately the same rights as a 19th century American slave. The values we fought for and won there are there are best understood, I think, by oil companies. Meanwhile, a country of civilians was devastated, and remains destroyed.

Stating these realities does not violate the principles of liberty, equality, and freedom of speech; it exercises them, and by exercise we grow stronger. I would like to stand up for my flag and wave it over a few things I believe in, including but not limited to the protection of dissenting points of view. After 225 years, I vote to retire the rocket's red glare and the bullet wound as obsolete symbols of Old Glory. We desperately need a new iconography of patriotism. I propose we rip stripes of cloth from the uniforms of public servants who rescued the injured and panic-stricken, remaining at their posts until it fell down on them. The red glare of candles held in vigils everywhere as peace-loving people pray for the bereaved, and plead for compassion and restraint. The blood donated to the Red Cross. The stars of film and theater and music who are using their influence to raise money for recovery. The small hands of schoolchildren collecting pennies, toothpaste, teddy bears, anything they think might help the kids who've lost their moms and dads.

--Barbara Kingsolver

from *Peace Resources*



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The Poetry Page

HE'S OUT THERE

(for Gregg Brown)

He's out there
 with the wild
 William Blake
 hair, preaching
 the virtues of hemp,
 save the earth, save the whale,
 with his small band
 of poster-makers, and
 courthouse marchers,
 an they chant all
 the things simple an
 true, such as,
 save the earth, save the whale,
 words that become
 cliches of parrot
 to the unthinking,
 platitudes of air
 to those that don't care,
 save the earth, save the whale,
 think about the virtues
 of hemp, the reckoning
 will be uh choking and
 uh darkened sky, as
 we quenchowwur
 thirst with rat poison,
 so if this little ecological
 poem tells you anything,
 I hope it's things simple
 an true, such as
 save the earth, save the whale,
 think about the virtues
 of hemp, an take uh peek
 behind the veil of fast food
 destruction, for there is
 styrofoam in hell, which has
 written on the side, Taco Bell,
 so listen to the man with
 William Blake hair as he
 marches to the courthouse,
 cause he ain't no square.

--John Firefly

On Finding the German Personal Ads To Be Full of Russian Women

Mother Russia now neglects
 her drugged dowryless daughters.
 Free now, held captive by thugmen,
 vodkaful and vile, dying earlier --
 They missed their prime. Grown-up girls unable now
 to love -- and so they climb
 And clutch to pasted airbrushed photographs and
 bullet-tins, hoping someone sends away
 To fetch and make good use
 of sturdy hands and hardened hearts.
 Die Partnersuchen sind dick und satz.

--Robert D. Day

Like Mother, Like Daughter

When she looks deep into her eyes, it is she that is reflected

Her sweet laugh, her own echo

The raise of her eyebrow, the same

sisters in the realm of women

understanding, beyond words

History beyond time

What is shared, can never be broken

Love that is sealed with the bond of spirit

the love of God, mirrored in the emotions between mother and daughter.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

on poor alabama's soil

you are a reminder
of my inability to hold you

you are
(as happiness):

the longing repetition

the joy of return

my propitious goodbye

you see my secrets,
memories of your hiding place

as these words will never forget
some intrinsic feminine power in your eyes
isaw

what these words can't say
my future memories of you
will

you now embody
in your fragility of flesh
in the heat of my thoughts

all my
bittersweet
farewell

--Filipe Campos de Pinho de Bessa



STARRY NIGHT 3

Starry Night,
 Vincent Van Gogh,
 lullaby to the cosmic,
 light of the stars heavy
 like ripe fruit bending
 the branch, evree moment
 begins the avalanche, preaching
 his message in the swirl of paint,
 he was sowing the seeds of stars
 on his trail, and evree-thing does
 haunt us, with the shadow of
 creating, and to have uh moment
 kiss me like the raining of stars
 in uh Vincent Van Gogh Starry
 Night, man, that's the shit, as
 evree-thing is burning all around me,
 and I feel like uh flame bitten moth,
 flapping heavy light wings of fire,
 in uh Vincent Van Gogh
 Starry Night, Om burning
 flapping falling, in swirls of paint,
 over uh hundred years old, with the
 kiss of camel hair, it's uh long slow
 journey when the flame takes you away,
 flapping falling still in uh swirl of paint,
 mirror,
 echo,
 dancing,
 Om flapping falling,
 burning the smoke an shadows
 of what you saw so long ago,
 in the dark wet paint
 of night, Vincent, flapping falling
 I will never let go.

--John Firefly

LIL' OSCAR

Got this seventeen pound cat
 I inherited
 Been trying to put Oscar on a diet
 Wish it was easier done than said
 'Lil Kitty may start a riot

I believe I'm easy to get along with
 Content in this life I know
 But Oscar's company can be less than bliss
 Sometimes friends do grow

In a way to become a part of your life
 In a unique atmosphere
 If Oscar was my wife
 Believe I may live in fear

For wondering as I sleep
 She'd sneak up on my resting place
 Make this home I keep
 An alien recreation space

But my mind wanders far
 Should not be afraid
 Of this Lil' Ol' Cat,
 I jar
 Mymemory
 I couldn't trade

This four legged toothed house mate
 For anything
 Our bonding
 it was fate
 Always unique discoveries
 our friendship brings.

--Lin Frog Simmons

YOUR POEM HERE.

The Post Amerikan is seeking poetry submissions for the Poetry Page.

If interested, please mail your poem to:
 Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452,
 Bloomington, IL 61702 or e-mail to:
 pamerikanusa@netscape.net

We have the right to reject any poem.

The Poet

I write poems to show
 bits of me to the world
 With languages I design
 the key to the emotions
 that are hidden
 behind the facade

I bring words that come from
 the depths of my soul
 I alert the senses

I reveal myself in code
 in the shape
 of a poem

--David Hall

Call-Girl

Ayn Rand would have approved.
 Ragged women, painted faces,
 Carnality with the scent of cash,
 A smile, a kiss, a hasty grope.
 Unwritten, binding contracts.

This free exchange, this chosen calling,
 That entry forced, that costly sore.
 Pay up now, go lock the door.

--Robert D. Day

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Poetry continued on back page



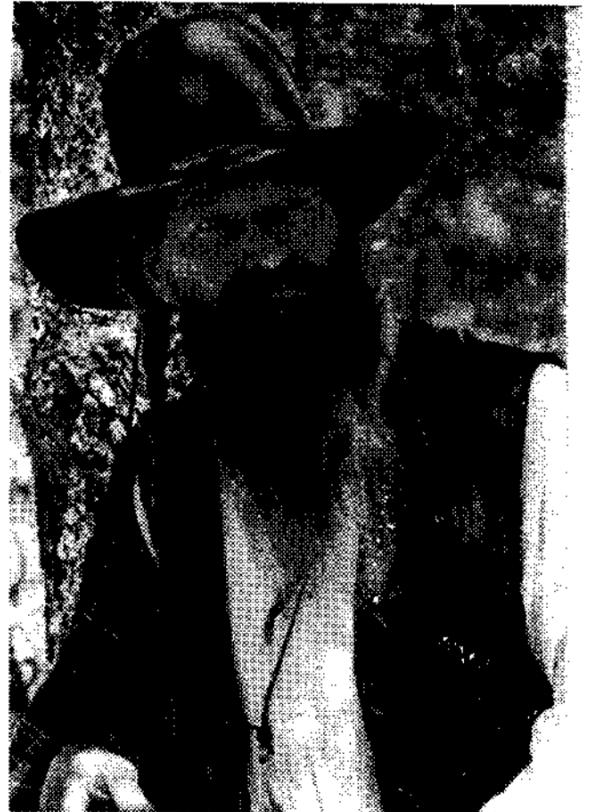
Biocentrism & the

At the beginning of the new century, identifying with the Gaian whole rather than some hominid affiliation is perhaps the most radical stance of any. Sometimes reviled by the anarchohumanist left and oppressed by the industrial right, ecocentrists are dismissed as recalcitrants and "hippies" by the former, and Luddites by the latter. For the masses whose politics is consumerism, panda bears and whales are a minor concern-- so long as their propagation doesn't appear to raise either one's income taxes or the market price of table tuna. Similarly, for many contemporary activists vanishing habitat and endangered species are at the bottom of a long list of subsidiary issues they support-- but only until the survival of some threatened plant or animal jeopardizes the jobs of the proletariat or some culture's "right to taking." In the social justice movements today being biocentric is considered selfish, wilderness restoration an act of "privilege," and work to affect the psychologies, hearts and spirits of our kind is either lampooned or criticized as counter-revolutionary.

A revolution is seldom more than a revolving door of power, its hinge lubricated with the blood of innocents. But whenever it works it's based on a sizable percentage of the population actually desiring and clamoring for change. This would seem to require that we make touching and opening the hearts of the masses a primary focus of our radicalism. Other front line activities may be worthwhile but have to be judged on a case by case basis, carefully measuring the reason, strategy, and likely result. Untimely illegal activities, for all their good intentions and romantic vibes, can trigger unassailable repression and justify the authorities suspending or abrogating our civil liberties and constitutional rights. Firm actions on many levels are essential, but must be fed, informed and impelled by an ecological sensibility that advocates deep relationship to

natural self and the still natural world. Only then can we avoid the common trap of elevating human needs ahead of the health and integrity of the ecosystems we ultimately depend upon. Only then can we find a language of the heart that may be heard by those who are complicit in the problem. And only when their hearts have opened, will there be a real chance for lasting social and environmental healing.

As someone conspicuously active in the radical environmental movement and Earth First! in particular, I'm disappointed over the transition away from ecofeminism, deep ecology, ecospirituality, personal transformation, responsible strategy, and biocentric priorities. In the rush to appear inclusive, it's easy to end up with a muddled secular monotheism. There is no more imposing thought system than political correctness, whether perpetrated by technologists and capitalists, or the erstwhile resistance. It is useful, in fact, to have a guide for telling them apart:



The Techno-Capitalist Status Quo

Lives in urban areas, in large buildings full of lots of people.

Wears a uniform of trendy suits, or new jeans and baseball caps. Others not wearing the same uniform are suspect.

Advocates for certain groups, races, etc. (usually their own) above others that they consider "inferior."

"Class Conscious": Wanting to improve their class and position.

Venerates money, distrusts those without it.

Suspicious of charismatics and leaders, but tends to conform to the group.

Acts like a purist, always trying to purge the ranks of deviants.

Thinks flags embody meaning, and sticks or hangs them at every opportunity.

Buys expensive food and drink, but then fails to fully taste, savor, appreciate or honor it.

Travels mostly in cars, that they own.

Poops in porcelain bowls filled with water. Occasionally goes to a state park to camp.

Neglects the senses in favor of constant mental activity and intellection. Neglects personal needs and growth in favor of busyness and obsession.

Considers ecospirituality nonsense, and talks a lot about dealing with "the real world."

The Politically Correct Resistance

Lives in urban areas, in large buildings full of lots of people.

Wears a uniform of surplus pants and black tee shirts, or ragged jeans and baseball caps. Others not wearing the same uniform are suspect.

Advocates for certain groups, races, etc. (often not their own) above others that they consider "elitist."

"Class Conscious": Wanting to improve their class and position.

Venerates labor, distrusts entrepreneurs.

Suspicious of charismatics and leaders, but tends to conform to the group.

Acts like a purist, often trying to purge the ranks of deviants.

Thinks flags embody meaning, and burns them at every opportunity.

Eats commodities, vegi-potlucks or dumpster dived food, and feels guilty about enjoying it.

Travels mostly in cars, that they don't own.

Poops in porcelain bowls filled with water. Occasionally goes to the woods to protest.

Neglects the senses in favor of constant mental activity and intellection. Neglects personal needs and growth in favor of busyness and obsession.

Considers ecospirituality nonsense, and talks a lot about dealing with "the real world."

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"...helps us see the world whole, even holy!"
 -Terry Tempest Williams



wisdom of hippies

I'm concerned that EF! and related movements becoming increasingly detached from history, ecosophy and practice. How else to explain the failure of the EF! Journal to run articles of ecopsychology and Earth-centered spirituality, the stories of the personal feelings and experiences that lead to insight and action? Or the pieces vilifying Ed Abbey, biocentrists, deep ecologists and "hippies"?

Contrary to what some may think, being considered a hippie has never been cool in this society. Long before Annamaria Floras' attack in the Journal, calling counter-culture kids "hippies" is how the police depersonalized them before the harassment and round-ups. "Hippies" is the word Nixon and Dupont used to marginalize the opposition to the Vietnam War. "Hip" was what the most colorful and flamboyant characters were called, by the "suits" who secretly wished they could break free of their office cubicles and too-tight ties. "Hippie" is what the girl's mother said, when she told her daughter she was too good for some guy. And it is what the aptly named Dave Foreman called the long-haired back to the land-ers that he dis'd, even though they swelled the front lines of the continuing environmental battle.

Before they were called hippies they were cave dwellers and druids, pagan pilgrims, peasants and serfs. They were the people of the land, not in control, but in relation. They were the celebrants of the spirit in all things, the artists and story tellers, dancers and bards. And they were the outlaws, Robin Hoods and accused witches, who set them self apart in both appearance and belief.

Living in collectives or on farms isn't retreatism as some suggests, but the practice of manifesting healthy alternative ways of living with each other and the land. If you want to really be a food activist, try growing enough food for yourself and some of the hungry you care about. Likewise, if you want to reduce support for the military industrial complex, strike for lower wages not higher, more meaningful and less environmentally destructive work, instead of just more work. Litigate and demonstrate, but if you want to be sure of long term protection of the natural world, set aside your revulsion over land ownership or hesitation about hard labor, and earn the money necessary to buy and restore a parcel of land. Being class conscious is one thing. "Ditching class" is yet another. And building a new world is every bit as important as deconstructing the existing paradigm of distraction and destruction. For that world to be more beautiful and balanced (forget about "fair"), it will have to be more artful, expressive, natural, native and wild.

When it comes to environmental issues and ecocentric values, we are sadly running behind. While the Rainbow tribe gets flack for not being socially and politically active enough, many environmentalist and revolutionaries have forgotten the importance of personal growth, laughter, art and the dance. Many activists are seeking financial parity and improved working conditions rather than a way out of the wage slavery system. Television is oddly more popular in low-income neighborhoods than in the homes of the CEO's, and the emphasis

among some protesters is on spreading the wealth rather than redefining what it means to be rich. To the contrary, it is depth of feeling and experience that makes life richer. Remaking human culture is not only the best chance for human survival, but for the survival of all other life forms. In the process we can be not just more "right," but more interesting, and interested, reimmersed in the texture and magic of unfolding destiny, primed for both pain and delight. Therein lies the only livable future, and the deepest livable now.

Dedication to the Mother Earth requires devotion, information, emotion, sensuality and spirit-- not just attitude. Restoration as well as protection. Celebration as well as defense. And not even Emma Goldman would come to a revolution where she can't dance! Trying to avoid looking like a hippie (or a Moslem, or Punk-Rocker, or Celtic Berserker) is a good move when passing through airport security, when trying to appeal to a sentencing judge, or

if you're serious about enlisting the understanding and help of your average citizen in the Earth's cause.... but not just to please the latest crop of P.C. fashionistas.

"Hippie" is not a "myth." It is and has always been both a misnomer, and a distinct possibility: the potential of being who we truly are, in full bloom, each as unique as a snowflake, acting responsibly not only for the good of human kind for the wellness of all life and the integrity of the living Earth. In this context being labeled a hippie, a luddite or a "throwback" is not only a privilege... but an honor.

Jesse Wolf Hardin is an acclaimed teacher of Earth-centered spirituality, living seven river crossings from a road in an ancient place of power. His latest book is *Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom* (SwaniRaven, 800-366-0264). Wolf and Loba share a riverside sanctuary where he offers men's quests and intuitive counsel, and she hosts women for quests, wildfoods gathering, and special resident internships. To sponsor Wolf for university or conference presentations, or for info on their many programs contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830 <www.concentric.net/~earthway>.

Sex

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A System of Plunder and Exploitation

Please welcome a guest columnist this month, someone often reviled by rarely read in the United States --the president of the Republic of Cuba.

Read the speech below and you'll be able to see for yourself why the U.S. Cold War against Cuba doesn't end.

The occasion was a UN-sponsored meeting in Mexico on the state of the Third World. True, some heads of states meeting in Monterrey issued protests of a sort about the situation faced by Third World countries, "but fiercest of all was Fidel Castro of Cuba," the *New York Times* reported, "dressed in battle fatigues, whose short but scathing critique of the world powers assembled before him led the American contingent to walk out of the closed conference hall." --Steve Eckardt

Speech by Fidel Castro, president of the Republic of Cuba, at the International Conference on Financing for Development. Monterrey, March 21, 2002

Excellencies:

Not everyone here will share my thoughts. Still, I will respectfully say what I think.

The existing world economic order constitutes a system of plundering and exploitation like no other in history. Thus, the peoples believe less and less in statements and promises.

The prestige of the international financial institutions rates less than zero.

The world economy is today a huge casino. Recent analyses indicate that for every dollar that goes into trade, over one hundred end up in speculative operations completely disconnected from the real economy.

As a result of this economic order, over 75 percent of the world population lives in underdevelopment, and extreme poverty has already reached 1.2 billion people in the Third World. So, far from narrowing the gap is widening.

The revenue of the richest nations that in 1960 was 37 times larger than that of the poorest is now 74 times larger. The situation has reached such extremes that the assets of the three wealthiest persons in the world amount to the GDP of the 48 poorest countries combined.

The number of people actually starving was 826 million in the year 2001.

There are at the moment 854 million illiterate adults while 325 million children do not attend school. There are 2 billion people who have no access to low cost medications and 2.4 billion lack the basic sanitation conditions. No less than 11 million children under the age of 5 perish every year from preventable causes while half a million go blind for lack of vitamin A.

The life span of the population in the developed world is 30 years higher than that of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa. A true genocide!

The poor countries should not be blamed for this tragedy. They neither conquered nor plundered entire continents for centuries; they did not establish colonialism, or re-established slavery; and, modern imperialism is not of their making. Actually, they have been its victims.

Therefore, the main responsibility for financing their development lies with those states that, for obvious historical reasons, enjoy today the benefits of those atrocities.

The rich world should cancel their foreign debt and grant them fresh soft credits to finance their development. The traditional offers of assistance, always scant and often ridiculous, are either inadequate or unfulfilled.

For a true and sustainable economic and social development to take place much more is required than is usually admitted. Measures as those suggested by the late James Tobin to curtail the irrepressible flow of currency speculation--although it was not his idea to foster development-- would perhaps be the only ones capable of generating enough funds, which in the hands of the UN agencies and not of awful institutions like the IMF, could supply direct development assistance with a democratic participation of all countries and without the need to sacrifice the independence and sovereignty of the peoples.

The Consensus draft, which the masters of the world are imposing on this conference, intends that we accept humiliating, conditioned and interfering alms.

Everything created since Bretton Woods until today should be reconsidered.

A farsighted vision was then missing, thus, the privileges and interests of the most powerful prevailed. In the face of the deep present crisis, a still worse future is offered where the economic, social and ecologic tragedy of an increasingly ungovernable world would never be resolved and where the number of the poor and the starving would grow higher, as if a large part of humanity were doomed.

It is high time for statesmen and politicians to calmly reflect on this. The belief that a social and economic order that has proven to be unsustainable can be forcibly imposed is really senseless.

As I have said before, the ever more sophisticated weapons piling up in the arsenals of the wealthiest and the mightiest can kill the illiterate, the ill, the poor and the hungry but they cannot kill ignorance, illnesses, poverty or hunger.

It should definitely be said: "Farewell to arms."

Something must be done to save Humanity!

A better world is possible!

Thank you.

[Note: The United States demanded that Mexico ask the Cuban president to leave the conference, a request Cuba complied with out of respect to the host country of Mexico. Go to <http://www.CubaSolidarity.com/foxies.htm> for a full account of subsequent revealing developments. - SeeingRed]

Write to Steve Eckardt at seckardt@aol.com.



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Mental illness awareness

Five facts about mental illness

The U.S. Surgeon General declared mental illness as one of our nation's leading public health issues. To better understand the illness, here are some facts you should know.

1) Mental illness is prevalent.

More than 54 million Americans have a mental disorder each year. Depression and anxiety disorder--two of the most common mental illnesses--each affects 19 million citizens yearly.

2) Mental illness can strike anyone.

Young or old, mental illness does not discriminate. One in five children has a diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder. On the other side of the age spectrum, at least two-thirds of elderly nursing home residents have been diagnosed with a mental disorder. Late life depression affects 6 million adults.

3) Not enough people seek treatment for mental illness.

While one in five Americans will suffer from some form of mental illness in their lifetime, nearly two-thirds of these people do not seek help. If treated, 80 to 90% of these people will improve.

4) The effects of untreated mental illness are devastating.

More than 500,000 Americans attempt suicide each year, and 90% of those individuals suffer from mental illness.

5) There is no cure for mental illness.

However, active intervention and medication can greatly control the disease. People with mental illness can lead productive and independent lives.

--from NAMI of Livingston/McLean Counties

How blessed are you?

If the earth's population were shrunk into a village of just 100 people with all the human ratios still existing in the world still remaining, what would this tiny diverse village look like?

That's exactly what Philip M. Harter, MD, at the Stanford University School of Medicine attempted to figure out. This is what he found:

- 57 would be Asian
- 21 would be European
- 14 would be from the western hemisphere
- 8 would be African
- 52 would be female
- 48 would be male
- 70 would be non-Christian
- 30 would be heterosexual
- 11 would be homosexual
- 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth, and all 6 would be from the United States
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be pregnant
- 1 would have a college education
- 1 would own a computer

The following is an anonymous interpretation: Think of it this way:

If you live in a good home, have plenty to eat and can read, you are a member of a very select group.

And if you have a good house, food, can read and have a computer, you are among the very elite.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more fortunate than the million who did not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, as more than three billion people in the world cannot, you are fortunate.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the people in this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare, even in the United States.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because you can offer a healing touch.

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.

--Ruth Mayfield, NAMITri County

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Animal rights news

PETA vs. U.S. Department of Agriculture: We file legal petition against factory farms

"Animals do not develop the capacity to suffer on the day they are killed; they possess that capacity their entire lives."

--from PETA's petition to the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Back in 1958, the U.S. Congress enacted the Humane Slaughter Act, which declared it to be "the policy of the United States that the slaughtering of livestock and the handling of livestock in connection with slaughter shall be carried out only by humane methods" (emphasis added).

That raises a very important question. If the animals bred, born and raised on factory farms have been brought into this world for no other purpose than to be slaughtered, aren't they, from the moment of their births, being handled in connection with slaughter? PETA contends that they are, and so we are challenging the limited application of the Act by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA is the federal agency responsible for implementing the Act but it has only enacted regulations that apply when the animals have actually reached the slaughterhouse, leaving them to suffer without protection for most of their lives.

With that in mind, PETA's in-house litigator, Matthew Penzer, has filed a unique rule-making petition calling upon the USDA to immediately implement rules that protect animals raised for food, leather and other commercial practices from abuse throughout their entire lives, from the moment they are born until the moment they are killed.

PETA's investigations, as well as the industry's own standards, reveal cruelty to animals in livestock production that almost defies belief and that goes unchecked because of the USDA's failure to designate humane methods of handling, as required by the Act. Among the common practices we cite on our petition:

--Cattle are castrated and branded with fiery hot irons, as well as having their nerve-rich horns cut off--all without painkillers. Pigs, too, are castrated and have their tails cut off, notches cut into their ears and the ends of their teeth cut off without any anesthesia.

--Animals sent from the factory farm to the slaughterhouse are often crammed into trucks so tightly that they cannot even lie down without being crushed. They are jostled, trying to balance, for long distances in open-sided trucks through freezing winter weather and searing summer heat without any rest, food or water for many hours. It is not uncommon to find, at the end of the journey, animals whose skin has frozen to the sides of the transport trucks.

--Bull calves in the dairy industry are taken from their mothers just days after birth and chained inside tiny stalls to be raised for veal. Fed a low-iron diet, they are weak and often suffer from painful, swollen joints from constantly trying to stand on slippery, water-covered floors.

PETA's filing seeks to force the USDA to set humane standard for care of animals in these and all aspects of their lives. We are demanding, as we contend the Act provides, that the government explicitly outline humane standards not only during slaughter but throughout the entire lives of animals who are bred and handled for no other purpose than to be killed for food.

A decision in PETA's favor would make a world of difference to animals who live miserably and are violently slaughtered by the millions.

Of course, the best way to stop the abuse is to stop contributing to the idea that animals are food instead of living beings with feelings, wants and needs similar to our own. But as long as others continue to eat flesh, PETA will fight to ensure that animal suffering is minimized.

--from PETA

Say "no" to Petco

Allegations of abuse pour into PETA's headquarters from across the U.S..

--Ann Arbor, Michigan: A delicate soft-shell turtle in a filthy cage without water develops a fungus that eats away his shell. Petco employees turn a blind eye.

--Elk Grove, California: Petco visitors find nine parakeets in one cage without food and water, eating their own feces through the grate.

--Des Moines, Iowa: A hamster with a severe ear infection and blood dripping from her nose receives no veterinary care. A Petco employee puts a sign on her cage: "Dying, just leave her alone."

--Round Rock, Texas: An unweaned baby caique parrot is seen crying and begging for food, unable to reach the feeder. The Petco employee claims that she has not been told how to hand-feed. She and other store employees refuse help offered by customers. After several days of ceaseless crying, the baby dies.

--Washington, D.C.: Customers return a parakeet after cutting off her toes and clipping her wings and tail close to her body. Even though they had maimed the bird, the Petco employees sell them another bird.

--Davis, California: Birds are found to have psittacosis, a disease that can sicken and kill both birds and people.

Birds and other small animals who survive are frequently sold to people who buy them on impulse and know little to nothing about properly caring for these animals. Often, birds are stuck in small cages where they go mad from loneliness and boredom, pecking frantically at cage bars, bobbing their heads up and down, shaking and even collapsing from anxiety.

One rose-breasted cockatoo with a \$3,000 price tag was passed from store to store three times before being bought by people who knew nothing about caring for these birds. Petco staff don't screen or educate buyers--whoever has the cash can buy a bird. When the lonely bird screamed for attention, his new "family" put him into a box in the closet. After six months, he ended up with another family, who in turn gave him to yet another. By the time he was rescued by Foster Parrots, a Massachusetts bird sanctuary, both his wings had been broken and he was terrified of being left alone in a lighted room. He is still being rehabilitated by the sanctuary's caring staff.

Non-native lizards are frequently placed in small cages that aren't properly heated and fed diets completely foreign to them. They sicken slowly and die little by little each day. Tiny hamsters and mice, who easily fall ill, are often sick when they are bought and die soon after.

Since the very first Petco complaint was called into our Domestic Animal Issues office three years ago, PETA staff have filed reports with local law enforcement agencies. We have also urged Petco, at a bare minimum, to train its employees, to provide veterinary care for birds and all animals in its care and to screen buyers. Yet, conditions at Petco have worsened. Now we're demanding that the chain stop selling animals all together.

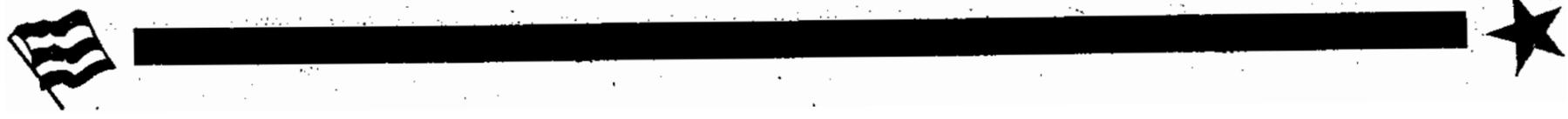
--from PETA

Karen Schmidt
Alderman ~ Ward 6

409 E. Grove St., Bloomington
home: 829-6318
work: 217-244-2070
e-mail: karen@uiuc.edu

Representing citizens' ideas, interests, issues & concerns to Bloomington city government.

Ward 6 is roughly downtown Bloomington and all parts of its surrounding neighborhoods. You need not live in my ward to call me.



Deborah Wiatt kicked ass!

30th anniversary benefit a success

As a former staff contributor to *The Post Amerikan*, and long time reader, who had worked in the basement newsroom of Deborah Wiatt's, I was very, very sad to have read of her death during one of my last visits back to Bloomington/Normal.

Deborah and *The Post Amerikan* always gave to me a sense of great importance to Bloomington/Normal, injecting in them a much needed shot of truth, liberty and a strong reliable voice for non-conformists or free-thinking types of individuals.

I always looked forward to seeing *The Post* and am happy you are still carrying on Deborah's tradition.

Deborah once gave me some good advice when Grady's Pizza called my parents' home at the time I was there and threatened to sue me for libel for telling the TRUTH of how pizza makers had let bugs land on food and cooked it and didn't wash their hands after using the toilet.

She said to me: "Don't publish anything unless you are ready to stand by it, no matter what the cost." It was with that faith and conviction Deborah lived and she helped many who had no voice, in a small, often repressive community, find and have one.

In those early days, *The Post* and *SUBNORMAL* supported each other with ad trades and such and I took my fanzine around the country and later the world. Deborah Wiatt and *The Post Amerikan* were always a catalyst to see it could be done and that I could succeed at it.

Deborah, I know you are still with us in spirit, and you are not forgotten. You kicked ass!

Sin-cerely,

Bruce Edwin
Editor *SUBNORMAL Magazine*

Everybody at the Post Amerikan would like to thank everyone who made our 30th Anniversary benefit a success. Through the money received from the \$5 cover at the door, the few buttons and cards sold, and some generous donations from supporters of the Post Amerikan, we cleared over \$500! That's enough to keep the Post Amerikan alive for a little while longer to fight the good fight.

But we couldn't have done it without the talented musicians who donated their time to help support the Post. To Andy Balance; Wilhelm; The Sediments; Rob, Bob, and Throb; and Super 88, we at the Post Amerikan are grateful that you played at our benefit and we hope that if the opportunity ever arose, that you would play again. But what good would it be if you played and there was no where to play? That is why we would also like to thank Mike Manna of Lizard's Lounge for supporting the Post by letting us have the benefit there, as he has done many times before. Thanks again, Mike.

Who knows when the next benefit will be, but we'll be sure to keep you posted (no pun intended).

--David Hall

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The Cafe of Lost Souls

The Cafe of Lost Souls
 Where coffee is a dollar and a dime
 and your cup is never empty
 The waitresses are middle-aged and plain looking
 and they each wear a different colored t-shirt
 that says "The Cafe of Lost Souls"
 Only paying customers can use the bathroom
 at The Cafe of Lost Souls
 Nobody talks
 The cooks make the specials
 for breakfast, lunch, and dinner
 and they never complain
 People sit at the tables and look at the menus
 that never change
 They always order the usual, anyway
 At the counter lonely old men sit--one stool apart--
 and drink coffee, smoke cigarettes, and read the newspaper
 The waitresses serve the coffee
 At The Cafe of Lost Souls
 the waitresses have been serving coffee
 for a long time

--David Hall

How long may a poem be!
 How sweet may a syllable be?
 How grand may NOTHING be?

I embody vastness
 as a poem unfolding biographically
 of lines and meters through the larynx
 of breath arising from a great lung capacity...
 to steps long and short...
 from hugs and sweet kisses upon gentle and rough lips...

You see a poem maybe any one or two
 measured in so many ways
 pronounced but not spoken totally...
 I see everything as a poem essentially
 even the body, mind, soul and persons around me
 however distant they may be...

You see...
 a poem is more than words on a page itself
 in those neat little lines such as these
 but the whole sphere, total existence,
 and this is close to the origin of all poetry!

--Matthew Dobrowolski

EARTH DAY 1998

I believe the Earth was born
 a long time ago
 Somewhere
 in the sky
 And in the fields
 did grow
 Trees and flowers
 above the birds did fly

Everyone took
 their place
 In this
 nurturing land
 Each one found
 their space
 On this Earth
 to stand

Harmony
 the planet knew
 Biodiversity
 kept it in balance
 Clean water flowed
 the Wind it blew
 Tall trees
 did stand

Then along came
 Homo sapiens
 Equipped with
 intricate brains
 They found a way

to fend
 Against the
 Wind and Rain

But comforts
 they have their price
 We took away
 from other species
 Some decisions
 not so wise
 Inconsiderate
 of their feelings

But today we try
 to give back to other inhabitants
 Of this
 Ol' Mother Earth
 Hard to break
 our old habits
 But we are beginning
 to see it works

Eagles
 who were once endangered
 Are now protected
 moved up to threatened
 So many laws
 have been arranged here
 Believe if we try
 we can form a pleasant

World
 in which we all can live
 If everyone makes
 a sincere stance
 If each person
 alone does give
 A happier Earth
 will soon dance

And on this Earth Day
 1998
 As we children
 of the Earth
 Gather
 to celebrate
 We join to care for
 our place of birth.

--LinFrog Simmons

Jazz is Didactic

Do you feel the jazz?
 Can you sense the riffs crab-walking into your ears?
 Does the rhythm make you twitch?
 It should.
 You should.

--Robert D. Day