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10 worst corporations of 2002

The bloody fall of Baghdad & illusions

Gun paranoia



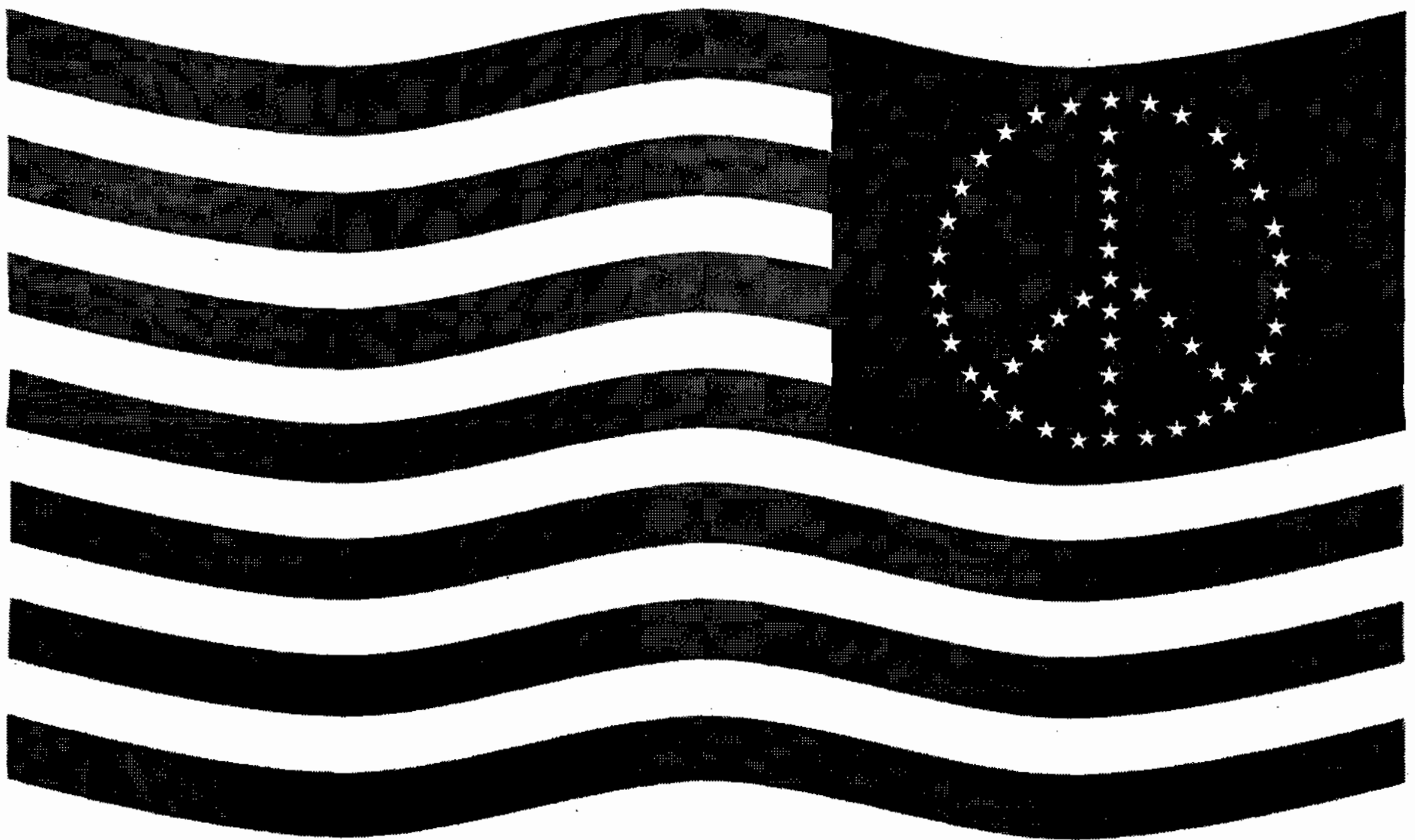
POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 32

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BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 32

NUMBER ONE APRIL/MAY 2003

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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, Julie,
Linda, Peter & Sherrin

Good numbers

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 - Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 - Local.....827-AIDS
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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 email at pamerikanusa@netscape.net **May 15th**



Community News

Slab

March 4th - April 9th, 2003
opening reception: Tuesday, March 4th from 5 to 7 PM
lecture by Scott Richter: Wed, March 5th at noon

High school science books provide tantalizing diagrams with multi-colored cross-sections of the earth's crust, mantle and core that neatly condense such stratigraphic complexities into a kind of geological pastry stuffed with filling and topped with icing. The only part of the world that we experience directly is, of course, the crust—a monosyllabic, Neanderthal of a word somehow intended to illustrate a complex environment teeming with life. Replete with culinary reference, crust is a word perhaps inept for the weight of all its implications, but perfect for illustrating a world designed to be consumed.

In this exhibition, slab, another monolithic word and essentially a section of the crust, becomes a kind of platform for life, and metaphorically a table for investigating death. We dig into the "carcass" and bury our dead inside it in awe of the magnitude of what lies beneath our feet and mystified by what it might contain. We imagine civilizations, creatures, and even the Devil himself in the molten, cream-center.

By building miniaturized environments, many artists are incorporating an Erector Set sensibility to create three-dimensional worlds of fantasy and folly. slab combines the work of six artists whose work probes the subject of environmental replicas. Duncan Mackenzie's photographs situates toy people within disembodied chunks of dioramic landscape. Mindy Schwartz's quirky three-dimensional vignettes draw from fairy-tales and childhood fare. Both artists treat the "slab" as a stage for life's theater using toy figures-human and spectral-as inhabitants.

Manufactured products and their packaging, like the residue of our culture, are simply manipulated by both Yuken Teruya and Bill Davenport into witty *arte povera* objects. Though strategically similar, Teruya's origami-like tree forms, which emerge from common "to go" bags, provide a delicate alternative to Davenport's funky dialectic of poetically combined refuse.

The works of painter Scott Richter and installation-based artist Won Ju Lim both abstractly emulate aspects of the environment. Richter's paint-laden palette/tables reference geological layerings and sweeping skyscape vistas, inviting moribund reflections on the subjects of painting and landscape. Won Ju Lim's installation of simple, foam-core boxes illuminated by projections are at once reminiscent of Bauhaus utopias and towering, urban congestion. Calling to mind

notions of modernist progression, Lim's constructions illustrate our defiance of gravity through man-made industrial and metropolitan structures.

Curated by Bill Conger.

Saturday-Monday 12:00-4:00
Tuesday 9:30-9:00
Wednesday-Friday 9:30-4:30

Bill Conger, Curator
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110 Center for Visual Arts
Campus Box 5620
Normal, IL 61790
tel 309.438.8191
fax 309.438.5161

gallery:
<http://www.universitygalleries.com>

YWCA Women of Distinction Award

Nominations are now being accepted for the 14th annual YWCA Women of Distinction Awards, which recognize local women for their contribution in arts & entertainment, business, education, professions, social service and volunteer service.

Nominees are women who have demonstrated qualities of leadership and excellence in their personal and professional lives, as well as a commitment to improving McLean County through work-related and volunteer activities. Previous nominees may be re-nominated.

The awards, in the six named categories, will be presented Thursday, May 22 at the banquet held at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington.

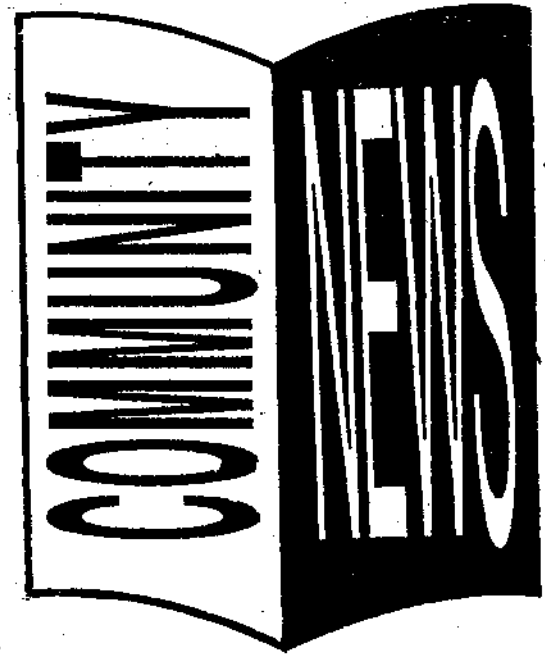
Nomination forms are available at the YWCA, 1201 N. Hershey and on the Web site, www.ywcamclean.org/wod. Nomination forms will be accepted through April 4, 2003. If you need additional information, please contact the YWCA at 662-0461.

Letter to the editor

The Bush War on Iraq is an absolutely classic example of engineered consent.

The Bush administration and others have brilliantly engineered the "consent" of an extremely reluctant public (through an extended barrage of propaganda and false or misleading statements.)

--AHK



YWCA WINGS AWARD seeks applicants

Applications for the YWCA Women of Distinction WINGS AWARD are now being accepted through April 4, 2003.

This financial award of up to \$1000, sponsored by past Women of Distinction recipients, is awarded annually to a Woman to Improve her skills for a Notable purpose, which allows her to Grow professionally and to achieve Success. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to professional and personal growth, and demonstrate a commitment of service in McLean County.

For additional information or application form, call (309) 662-0461, stop by the YWCA, 1201 N. Hershey Road, Bloomington, or visit the YWCA Web site at:
<http://www.ywcamclean.org/wod>.



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Harmony & peace:



As I write this we are on the brink of yet another in what seems like an endless series of wars, apparently with the support of the vast majority of our citizens. Unlike every other justified or unjustifiable conflict, it will be the first time this country has openly acted out a preemptive "first strike" policy.

Rightly or wrongly, the entire rest of the world feels threatened by our uncompromising posture and unilateral moves, and it is only the desire to protect their American aid and investments that keeps these countries from speaking out more forcefully against us. We will inevitably cause the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians, directly and indirectly, in replacing a despotic but largely contained and defanged regime.

In the process we will surrender even more of our personal rights and liberties to an administration we hope can "make us safe," and incur the lasting envy, anger and spite of millions of once friendly or at least ambivalent Moslems.

And as a society we continue to wage war on the Earth, as we wage war on each other. Europeans "discovered" in America a continent already inhabited by millions of indigenous peoples and billions of non-human species. They proceeded to "pacify" the native populations in deadly earnest, "capture" the mountain peaks, "tame" the rivers, and "conquer" the "virgin" wilderness.

The analogy of an environmental war zone is all too real seen from the center of a devastated Oregon clearcut, listening to the blast of high explosives at yet another dam site, or witnessing the Forest Service's bombardment of Vietnam-vintage napalm on East Texas forests to "save" them from insects. Even our pastoral road system is a veritable tomb to the community of life it encrusts.

As an empathic I can't help but recoil from violence committed against anyone or anything, and I go out of my way to seek accord or accommodation... but I must confess I am not a pacifist per se. I would surely and violently resist an attack on my life, the lives of my loved ones, or perhaps even the natural systems we and evolution depend upon.

While I can sense and understand the internal anguish and suffering of my attackers, I invariably value my life more than I do theirs. Nor is my opposition to the latest flexing of military might based on any idealization of what we commonly call "peace." The concept of peace is too often used by the powers that be to disguise placation or control, conformity or stasis, tranquillity or acceptance.

In many ways peace is a false ideal, which is why we find it so easily enlisted and promoted by warring states. Peace becomes their excuse, the resolution all wars are ostensibly fought for. Armies "fight for peace." And peace is the way some describe those times of pacification between conflicts, when control and aggression are internalized by the populous, when bribery and coercion stand in for raw force-- and therefore when power over the individual is complete. Like it or not, peace has been co-opted by the very interest groups who make political and financial gains off the suffering and subjugation of others.

My dictionary defines "peace" as "free of conflict or disturbance." But those of us involved in New Nature Spirituality know that there is no such peace anywhere in the natural world. The ocean we named "Pacific" is anything but tranquil. What appears as peaceful is the occasionally calm surface, concealing mighty currents underneath.

Nature's diverse expressions are the result of determined individuation. Life's many shapes are formed by the tension between opposable forces. Life exists by feeding on life, the aggressive act of predation. Scientists have demonstrated what primitive people long ago knew, that even plants experience pain. Vegetarianism seems peaceful largely because we fail to hear their screams.

In the Gaian world redtail hawks feast on scrambling cottontails, buck deer crash into one another during rut, trout chase other fish well away from their spawning grounds, and squirrels defend their nests with vicious bites and a furious stamping of paws. Aggression provides a service for the natural world, earning for each species the food it eats, the certain passing down of the strongest genetic traits, the survival of their young, the inviolability of their niche, and the integrity of their life's unmanipulated dance.

Other than hunting for sustenance, aggression in the animal world seldom results in death. Wolf packs do not form alliances to drive their prey to extinction. Even among tribal peoples, alliances were limited to shared bioregions, and the greatest honor in a conflict was to shame the other warrior by touching him without killing him: "counting coup." Modern warfare, on the other hand, is depersonalized aggression-- institutionalized violence on a massive scale.

The development of awesome new technological weaponry parallels the dehumanization of aggression and the devaluing of life. We have thermonuclear warheads with the power to destroy every living thing on the planet many times over, poised to strike people we will never know well enough to find a reason to hurt.

Civilization has debased our animus, robbed us of our true nature. It has led us to fear without understanding, consume without hunger, lust without loving, and kill without passion.

Indeed, modern war is founded on and fed by alienation and abstraction, not anger. Soldiers are taught to feel no emotions as they "neutralize" their targets. Mass genocide is a product of our depersonalization more than wrath. And the anger of its victims and witnesses can fuel compassionate but forceful resistance to the ponderous machinery of destruction.

Getting mad is a valid and perhaps crucial response to the cutting of the last ancient redwoods, the obliteration of the last wild wolf, or missile attacks on any smaller state our president decides to label a threat to business-as-usual.

Imprisoned for beating on live warheads with carpenter's hammers, The "Plowshares" defendants function not just as consciousness raisers, but as counterbalances to the state of repression. The hundreds of conscientious protesters arrested each year for trespassing at the Nevada Nuclear test site are honorable antidotes. Surely in the looming shadow of Armageddon, it is feeling nothing and doing nothing that is most wrong of all.

The Hopi have a word for the current separative, technological age: "Koyanasqaatsi," meaning "world out of balance." War will end not when we "establish peace" but when we return to life-in-balance, to an equilibrium not only between each other but between human kind and all other elements of nature as well.

In dance we'd call it choreography. In music we refer to this balancing and cooperating of differing tones as "harmony," searching out sympathetic pitch and vibration. Harmony between people would mean humanity's diverse voices somehow learning to perform together for the greater good.

A Gaian perspective

And unlike what we may hear touted as "inner peace," inner harmony is not so much an end to contest or ambivalence as the successful orchestration of our own contending voices, of our competing priorities and sometimes contradictory needs.

Separative acculturation removes us from the natural composition. As a society we are increasingly segregated from the tonal symmetry, the congruity of contiguous elements in perfect balance with one another.

The aim of New Nature Spirituality is not only to find peace--those moments of quiet between notes-- but also to guarantee human reapportionment within life's "movement." It can be our minstrelsy, a contribution to balance within relationship, and a melodious resistance. As we transition from the scorekeeping of war to the musical score, we fulfill our rhythmic purpose, reintegrate in the greater "arrangement" of indivisible nature.

In times of unparalleled destruction, the last thing we need is more simple acceptance, misspent tolerance, or pacification. The peace we believe in is proactive not passive, dynamic not static. It is a condition of active cooperation between different parts of the self or between different people, groups or nations.

We are each called to reawaken and redouble our efforts, to reorchestrate the madness our civilization has wrought. In this heroic service our maestro's baton doubles as a magic wand.... insistently invoking a return to the balance of a dynamic, heartfelt and harmonic whole.

--Jesse Wolf Hardin

Jesse Wolf Hardin is a teacher of Gaian (Earth-informed) spirituality, and author of Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom (Swan•Raven, 2001). Wolf and partner Loba present at various pagan, spiritual and environmental events, and host seekers at their enchanted riverside sanctuary. For information on books, presentations, wilderness quests and retreats, or resident internships contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project & Sweet Medicine Women's Center, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830 <www.concentric.net/~earthway>.

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The Poetry Page

Fresh new eyes

To see the world with fresh new eyes
eyes that really see
see and only see
so lo and behold

A wonderful world of abstract visions
shapes and colors
depths and textures
moments of frozen motion

Eyes without ideas or beliefs
eyes that do not pass judgment
eyes that don't decide
eyes without value systems

To see what is real
without having to feel
that everything you see
must have some meaning

Eyes that never have to cry
eyes that never even lie
eyes that always see the truth
eyes that don't require proof

Eyes that stare into the sun
until that blessed darkness comes
but fresh new eyes cannot overcome
blindness of the mind

--Peter Elvidge

Afghanistan

This blustery warm December day
Conjures sickness from the sky
Blows of evil winds into this house
And whispers, suicide.

Death and war and celebration
Flicker endless from a tube
The sick and poor the innocent
Yesterday's news ñ forgotten.

Blood spills flows pours o'er
fallow fields
As farmers kill for peace
To rid the world of wrongs.

Children, psalms and prayers forgotten
Dream heroics wit each blast of rocket
bombs
Learn power comes from armaments
See glory in exalted tombs.

Holy mothers know despair
As years of teaching wash away
And learned men confirm once more
That men must bow to men, not God.

--Urban Frost

Roots of thanks

I extend my hand in thanks to you
For the Friendship we have grown
Reach to where Love knew
Toblossom,
from the seeds we've sown

And in that place of nourishment
Where our Spirits found
Hearts together, so content
And harmony, the sound

I find the rhythm of comfort
With serenity in each beat
From the beauty that set
Roots of deep

Love . . .
and Thanks I extend
To you on this day
With these words to send
The verse our hearts display.

--Lin Frog Simmons

Popery

The fools wallow
amongst bickering Popes discussing red-faced cardinals
until drunk on intoxicating orthodoxy
As the argument peaked the apex,
The SUV chugged its last gallon of gas and sputtered with a limp
to the side of the road
The Popes pointed toward each other and said, "Your curse is upon us!"
But then the driver spake, "Dear wretches, behold, we do have a backup tank."

there was silence

then they said, "really?"
The driver said, "No, you both actually need to get out and start pushing..."
So they pushed for about an hour until one noticed the other was only pretending to push;
"You heathen! The wrath is upon you!" And with that he brought down a heavy chop to the
spine
It wasn't a crippling blow, it really didn't even hurt, but a deep chord was struck.
"Very well swine," he said as he rolled up his sleeves, "I always knew it would come to blows."

and hats flew, robes were torn, there were a few excommunications, and then the driver sped
off.

"Damn Satan and all his allies," they both cursed...

and the driver smelled the world and said, "what an ill potpourri."

--spiff spony

**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.



Smoked To The Filter

Your taste left me first
 The cigarette butt mountain in the ashtray
 indicating the charge of the smokes brigades
 triumph over the uncivilized tribes of my tongue buds.
 Palate eroded and erased until only the memory of your skins salt remains,
 your seawater body ebbing and flowing,
 slave of the moon.

Now I can't remember your smell,
 the aroma of sex,
 your perfumes allure,
 pulling my nose across the room with hazy hooks
 ala Pepe LePew,
 sweeter for the stink.
 only the smoke remains,
 burning nostrils.
 I've heard that taste and smell are pretty much the
 same thing,
 but not always.

Sometimes I rub silk across the cheek
 to recreate what it felt like to
 dance with you.
 I bought a body pillow and dressed
 it in the shirt you left behind because
 anything is better than the void
 that's in my bed,
 and then sometimes
 I bring someone home and try to ignore
 that their touch does not feel like butterfly antennae,
 their kiss doesn't remind me of caramel,
 and that sometimes,
 something is worse than nothing.

In these late night early morning rituals,
 I try to remember the rhythm of your snoring,
 the midnight moans of yesterday,
 your terrible singing voice,
 your beautiful whispering,
 the indifference of humming,
 the way your voice in concert with your fingertips
 erased pain and guilt.
 I try to remember the tone and pitch of forgiveness,
 the melody of love's sonata.

Your image is the last thing to go,
 lost in a blur of smoky nights
 whiskey driven hallucinations of
 shadows on the wall
 shadows on the ceiling
 shadows behind my eyelids
 shadows that have left cause
 the lights are out.

The groupthink of my senses
 wish I could remember the phenomena of you,
 what your essence tasted like
 smelled like
 felt like
 sounded like
 looked like

The things that memories are supposed to be.

--Aaron Matthew Enskat

Why I Write

People often ask why I bother with writing.
 Why write words about the blessings of wordlessness?
 Why write tales of heart, body and soul
 for folks trained from birth on to live their lives in their minds?
 And why write,
 when I could be playing by the river instead?

Easy:

I write out of love and anger,
 the desire to disrupt and the need to comfort.
 I write because the mountains and rivers burn within me,
 and this is one way to let a little of them out.
 And I write because
 I have to.
 I write for those on the edge
 of a more intense experiencing of their own existence,
 those ready for personal transformation
 as well as those insistent on preserving something, anything
 against the forces of often ugly and ignoble change.
 But I must admit, I also write for those
 who are likely to put it down after the very first paragraph,
 or else never pick it up at all.
 Those who read financial reports
 and the lines on subdivision maps,
 gun magazines and the labels on designer suits.
 Those who would tear down the mountain,
 and not just those who would walk it, hug it, protect it.
 I want, yes, I pray
 to be read by everyone.
 I can't help but write poems
 that are like bag-ladies carrying their world in a basket,
 looking into the eyes of an indifferent audience
 for handouts of recognition,
 for signs of a light that can be shared.
 I can't help writing essays
 that are like the wild country itself,
 full of thorny briars
 and swift currents that can sweep the unsuspecting away.
 Poems that make casual hikers nervous about entering,
 that drive academics into the tops of trees
 with the first rustling of their stanzas,
 that won't go away
 no matter how loudly one shakes their can of rocks.
 I can't help but write
 words like grains
 that feed the joy of madfolk,
 inspire activists and affirm the people of the land.
 That offer solace to the most sensitive,
 as they face honest reflection
 in this writing's bottomless,
 wilderness spring.

--Jesse Wolf Hardin



Sacred indulgence:

Properly loving each other--and loving this Earth--may begin with deeply loving and tending our own beings and bodies.

When people write Loba and I about their experiences here in the canyon, they may or may not mention the power of these Gaian insights or the impact of my counsel.... but they seldom fail to thank us for the food they ate and the attention they got. To the extent that any teaching is cloaked in words, it can't be expected to make as much of an impression on us as those naked communications and revelations garnered through the five awakened senses.

The talks I give suggest the importance of fully tasting the passing moments of our lives, while Loba's meals fairly demand it: "Pay attention!" cry the sweet n' sour stir-fry, the home made chili and creamy sweet potato pie. No treatise can compare to the evocative gestures of a juniper limb, to the living text of mountains and rivers, or the murmuring and cooing of the canyon wind. I may wax eloquently about sensuality and bliss, but sometimes more is imparted by a single touch, a warm hug or tender kiss.

It would be easy to pass this off as a human tendency to avoid deep spiritual or existential questions. Indeed, pleasure is often reduced to the level of vicarious, objectively experienced "entertainment" that distracts us from the immediacy of our personal feelings, needs and dramas.

On the other hand, indulging in deep conscious pleasure assists our reinhabitation of our sensate bodies, our communities, and the land we live in and on. Like pain, pleasure can function as a delivery system, catapulting us into the vital present moment and all it contains. Rather than isolating us, it dissolves boundaries, and heightens our sensual, visceral, emotional connection to the whole.

Furthermore, because it requires a degree of self love, opening up to pleasure can help mend any schism between the spiritual and the physical, ease our fear of our bodily needs, and end the self-criticizing of our bodily forms. We have to accept that we are worthy, in a sense, in order to really give pleasure to ourselves, or to unselfconsciously accept pleasure from the people and places around us.

We treat other people, and the living environment so much better once we've done the practical magic of properly treating ourselves, or of letting others treat us really, really well! It's far less likely someone will hurt another or wage war, overpopulate or overcompensate, become a drug addict or alcoholic, cut down the last old growth forests or neglect their spouse when they've learned to truly notice, tend and honor their sacred selves. Their sacred bodies. Their holy mortal days. In this way, our indulging in pleasure is not only a means of feeling, but of dealing.... and healing.

Indulgence is neither tolerance, license nor excess. The word means literally to "satisfy one's innate hungers," and to "allow oneself to follow one's will." Society teaches us not to trust our feelings, and indulgence is our response: listening to our bodily desires and needs, the pleadings of intuition and instinct, and our heart's fateful call.

Indulgence is a high-dive into the intimacy of sensation, pulling the universe closer where we can touch and taste it. It is manifest in a baby's wanting to put everything in its mouth, to taste, test and perhaps savor. It is our acting out of the will and wisdom of the ancient knowing beings within us. It's both connection, and reward-- not only eating what's good for us, but eating meals that taste good.

Indulgence isn't about quantity. People may have sex with dozens of partners without truly indulging in the grace of each. Many consume quantities of food in an attempt to fill an emotional emptiness, or substitute for the nuances of flavors, smells, temperatures and textures they fail to notice.

True indulgence requires rolling the food around on our tongue, eating our toast butter side down and giving its oils time to saturate the taste buds before commencing to chew. Eating slower and more attentively, the indulgent diner actually consumes less than the inattentive, and the indulgent lover is more intensely focused than libertine.

As with sexuality, pampering the body can be either sacred or profane depending on the energy and intention we put into it. We can make either of these sacrament by focusing on our connection to the sacred whole, recognizing all actions as interactions, and approaching these vital exchanges as opportunities to give more than to take. We affirm all of life, as we affirm and tend the sacred nature of our beings and bodies.

When we honor our mortal forms as evolving extensions of Spirit and Earth, every bite of precious food becomes a form of communion, and every stroke of the hair brush or deliberate rubbing of a muscle turns into a benediction of love. We are indeed the sensory organs of Gaia, and she yearns to feel pleasure through us. It is then no longer just a "meal," a "back scratching" or a "soak" that we undertake-- but homage to the body that is the house and shrine of our souls.

When committed to deeply and wholly, every washing functions as absolution, every group hug as a circle cast. Any night's bath can serve as a Wiccan water-sharing.... or a baptismal into the ecstasy-- and duties-- of the mindful spiritual path.

There exists a potential for both enchantment and sacrament, every time we soulfully tend and nourish the sacred body. This is true whether one is talking about conscious cooking and eating or ceremonial bathing.... whether rubbing and oiling ourselves after a hard day at work, or getting together with friends to wash each other's hair with a play of herbal shampoos.

We're enchanted, teased into an altered state by this most intentional application of pleasure. These are divine moments, born of love? intensely present, focused yet relaxed-- folding us into a timeless experience of oneness. We're transported by the diverse flavors of our just deserts, and by the purposeful bath with its trance-dance of touch, a bewitching of suds and the stimulation of fairy-dust powders.

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Pleasuring self & other

Imagine if you will, turning out the lamp and lighting the candles next to a heated tub, opening our nostrils a little wider at the scent of grapefruit and orange, a bouquet of lavender billowing out of blooming steam.

Or picture, perhaps, an antique clawfoot like ours-- perched outdoors overlooking the river, fire-lit beneath an impossibly star-filled sky. On a nearby rock lies a small cobalt bowl of creamy truffles to be savored, once submerged in the mind altering suds.

The aroma of almond and orange draws attention to an open container of luxurious body scrub, and a celebration of grapefruit hints at the healing salts so lovingly added to the water. We ease our entire beings into the experience.... and with the slow washing of the skin, we find it is the mind that is wiped clean? temporarily unclothed of both its worries and words.

And too, our slow and grateful approach to the sweltering tub would in itself be ceremony. Noticing the soft texture of the preheated towels as we set them out: praise giving. Quieting the mind before first deciding on a soak: contemplation. The sensual mixing of oil and essences, in the days before the bath: a stirring of a cauldron of love. Selecting the herbs or gathering and drying the flowers the long Summers before: meditation. And previously planting the seeds that grew those flowers: promise and prayer!

There is perhaps no more urgent duty than the understanding and tending of self, so that we might best understand and tend our species, the rest of creation, and this living Earth! In the course of sating and nourishing our whole selves, we become adepts in what is the ancient art of sacred indulgence.

We evolve as alchemists of our own existence through the mindful practice of preparing our meals, rubbing our own stiff neck or drawing a luxuriant bath. We truly "come into ourselves" by satisfying our authentic creature needs, and ceremonializing every intentional act.... by taking responsibility for adding aroma and flavor, depth and meaning, beauty and magic to what has surely become the meaningful ritual of our lives.

Jesse Wolf Hardin is a teacher of Gaian (Earth-informed) spirituality, and author of *Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom* (Swan•Raven, 2001). Wolf and Loba present at various pagan, spiritual and environmental events, and host seekers at their enchanted riverside sanctuary. For information on books, presentations, wilderness quests and retreats, or resident internships contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project & Sweet Medicine Women's Center, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830
<<http://www.concentric.net/~earthway>>.

Zwan--Mary Star of the Sea

Everybody sit back and take a deep breath. After a decade of making music that rivaled Lifetime movies as the number one source of teary-eyed teenagers in America, former Smashing Pumpkins mastermind Billy Corgan is--gasp--happy.

Or, at least, that's what *Mary Star of the Sea*, Corgan's first outing with his new band Zwan would have you thinking. It's a record of three to four minute pop gems, steeped in themes of true love and, perhaps more strikingly, Christianity. And that isn't to say that Corgan has never tackled religion before--quite the opposite is true. "Zero," from The Smashing Pumpkins' *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, found Corgan musing that "Emptiness is loneliness/ And cleanliness is godliness/ And God is empty just like me." Fast forward to 2003, and the opening line of "Lyric," the first track on *Mary Star of The Sea* is "Here comes my faith to carry me on." A bit later in the album, Corgan repeats the chorus "I declare myself of faith, in the aptly titled "Declarations of Faith." What a difference a decade makes.

The album's first single, "Honestly," proves that Corgan hasn't lost it as a tunesmith, as the song features one of the most gorgeously upbeat melodies that has penned since 1995's "Muzzle." It's Corgan singing about true love: "There's no place that I could be without you/ It's too dark to discard the life I once knew/ Honestly." Ironically, it's as honest as Corgan has ever sounded. "Honestly" is the song of a man who spent his whole life longing for love, and now that he's found it, he is going to do whatever he must to hang on to it.

Corgan recruited Smashing Pumpkins' drummer Jimmy Chamberlin (the two of them were the half of the Pumpkins that mattered), as well as A Perfect Circle bassist Paz Lenchantin, who also contributes some of her backing vocals to

several tracks. Also in the lineup are former Slint guitarist Matt Sweeney. The chemistry between the new band members is fresh, free of much of the tension that dominated the Pumpkins' last years together, and it comes across in the performances on the album. It's the sound of five people having fun making music. Before, Corgan would never have released a song titled "Baby, Let's Rock!" or "Yeah!" (the latter featuring a guitar riff that wouldn't be out of place on an Allman Brothers' album).

Despite all the sentiment, it's probably the purest rock record that Corgan has made since 1993's *Siamese Dream*. The new songs are played with a sort of reserved energy. Chamberlin and Corgan both show off some chops, but not to the point of ridiculousness. But due to lack of album credits, we never really know from which of the three guitarists the solos are coming, as they are all noted as simply playing "guitar." Still, pop in a Pumpkins' record, and it's pretty evident that the bulk of instrumentation on *Mary Star of the Sea* is pretty classic Corgan.

If *Mary Star of the Sea* stumbles, it's in its inability to change pace. We only get treated to two real ballads--the breathtaking "Of a Broken Heart," and the vocally adventuresome "Desire." We also get the epic "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken." These songs manage to balance it out a little, but the stripped down sound of the album allows it to be haunted by a bit of redundancy in the middle.

But make no mistake, whatever shortcomings the album exhibits are easily forgivable. *Mary Star of the Sea* is a solid testament to Corgan's ability as a songwriter, and displays a great amount of promise in Zwan as a band. And if Zwan's career is anything like the Pumpkins', we can assume that it is only going to get better.

--Kevin Davis

Karen Schmidt
Alderman ~ Ward 6

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The bloody falling of Baghdad and illusions

PHILADELPHIA -- Less than six weeks ago, on a fine February day, millions of people jammed the streets of cities round the world, protesting Washington's threatened war against Iraq. It may well have been history's greatest mobilization of humanity, and spirits were high. People --many of whom who'd never demonstrated before--brought both dogs and children, often draped with clever and humoroussigns.

It seemed an international festival of the people, the whole world standing up to oppose the breathtaking U.S. assertion of the right to kill anyone, anytime, anywhere--should it deem them a possible threat in some undetermined future.

Such a doctrine would allow me to slash the throat of my neighbor's six year-old boy in the belief that he might molest my daughter when he gets a little older.

And so unprecedented millions filled the streets to say "no" to a concept that could only lead the world into a bloody madness, sure that world opinion's overwhelming opposition these people --and the countless larger millions they represented--were truly decent.

Unfortunately most of them were also clueless.

Just begun

Truth is that world opinion means nothing to Washington or any of the world's other imperialist powers. One week into the war --began despite overwhelming world opposition--what will be has only become to be glimpsed.

"Marines shot everything that moved, leaving behind dozens of dead, how many were civilians unknown," reported the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in its 26 March issue which headlined another story, "Hundreds of Iraqis Killed in Major Battle."

Losses of U.S. soldiers --killed, wounded, or captured--approaches 100.

Now all talk is whether the battle plan was working, troop numbers adequate, and just how long the war would last.

The promised outpouring of Iraqis welcoming U.S./British invaders as liberators was nowhere to be seen.

Leveling Baghdad

The once-prevalent idea of a one-week war that could be handled by 35,000 troops with overwhelming air support has already collapsed as over 250,000 soldiers have failed to Saddam Hussein's putative house of cards, or to take a major city.

More troops --an additional 120,00 announced as this is written-- are needed to fight what soldiers are already calling the "Black Pajamas," while Washington declare -- despite a top military commander admitting that "we never expected the resistance to be this strong" - that the light at the end of the tunnel, is clear and certain.

But don't think for an instant that all this means that the U.S. is about to waver.

Look instead at what is already happening in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, where over two million people are slowing starving and dying of thirst or disease inside the iron ring of British armor.

Believe instead the words of the American Commander-in-Chief: "we will win. No matter how long it takes--No matter how long it takes."

And believe it -- they will do anything to win this war, including using nuclear weapons.

The deliberate Pentagon leak that 15,890 body bags have been sent to Iraq--these of course only for Americans--gives another idea of Washington's determination. Fifteen thousand dead GIs --and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis--are already in its calculations, long filed under "acceptable."

Military strategy

The central question is how to take Baghdad, not to mention other cities. The current illusion is that Washington will simply surround the city, to avoid suffering large U.S. casualties in house-to-house combat, or (oh heavens no) carpet bombing the city.

But is there any reason to think that Washington cares one whit about massive casualties, either U.S. or Iraqi civilian?

Fact is that the U.S. government has easily spent the lives of both natives and GI's countless times before. How about Allied incineration of over half a million civilians in its bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki? Or America's slaughter of over six million Koreans and Vietnamese? Or its human wave attacks on D-Day (where the 20,000 soldiers were sent only to give enough dead meat for succeeding waves of troops to hide behind)?

Ever talked to a veteran about the casual spending of GI's lives on senseless missions?

And so a semi-peaceful siege of Baghdad is not in the cards. After all, the Germans subjected Leningrad to Nazi siege for 900 days, to no avail.

The U.S. government's total commitment to victory leaves only one option --leveling Baghdad and then fighting house-to house amongst the ruins.

Washington could care less

And so what if the likely cost will be hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead, along with enough U.S. GIs to fill at least a goodly portion of the 16,000 body bags?

Ask yourself -- do worldwide demonstrations or tens of thousands of grieving Americans present any obstacle to military victory?

If not, why would Washington care?

International protests or 'excessive' U.S. casualties have never been a real consideration before.

Why should it be now?

Vietnam and Iraq

A lot of today's protesters look, not surprisingly, to the anti-Vietnam war movement for inspiration. Washington's defeat there --driven at least partly by a revolt of U.S. soldiers and civilians--is one of humanity's great achievements of the 20th century, though over 3.5 million people were killed before the U.S. was forced to cease.

The people of the United States --acting as human beings, not 'Americans'--have every reason to be proud of their role.

But the key ingredient was the military defeat of Washington's forces by the people of Vietnam, not the protests.

France was driven out of Indochina without a wisp of protest against its colonial war. Thank instead its military defeat by the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu.

Likewise with Washington's dropping of total war against Korea.

But Saddam Hussein --a lifelong CIA asset put in power by a U.S.-backed coup and given U.S. intelligence and chemical weapons to use against the Iranian revolution--is no Ho Chi Minh or Kim Il Sung (not that either was a Fidel or Che).

Don't count on him and his Stalinistic regime providing the leadership necessary to mobilize the Iraqi people to defend their country.

Meanwhile, as the bloodbath begins, the most important thing we can do is shed our illusions.

And join with the rest of humanity --including our Iraqi brothers and sisters--in opposing imperialism, no matter what its flag.

--Steve Eckardt (Steve@SeeingRed.com) produces the website SeeingRed.com and welcomes comments.



Music of her soul

My heart wildly beats
 To the music of her soul
 I can feel you right beside me
 But this present I can't hold.
 Your whisper is my favorite tune
 Your passionate touch my song
 As our lives endure this madness
 We'll play on and on and on !
 Kindness softens hardest cry
 Friendship fills the air
 Living a steel jungle
 But with the comfort that you care
 Astounded by the brilliance
 Of our loves continuing light
 The symmetry of our movement
 And the toughness of our fight
 The drums still celebrate our meeting
 And keep our time alive.
 Sounding out our memories
 Until our touch arrives.

--Maurice Bush
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Bad Haiku

Lady of the lake
 such an intriguing creature
 stand holding a sword

Princess of the night
 with all the style of a star
 see, she be shinin'

Blooming by moonlight
 bejeweled cactus flower
 magical laughter

Dances with dolphins
 the smile that brightens a world
 she's sweetly singing

--Peter Elvidge

Beautiful Ballerina

Beautiful ballerina
 dancing through the city
 Dance ballerina
 and leap to the place
 where the music
 makes you forget the noise
 Dance beautiful ballerina
 to the beat
 of my heart.

--David Hall

Deep in the garden of
 My heart
 There grows a
 Flower
 A flower that
 Grows
 and is shaded with
 Love
 Love and happiness for
 You

--Ervin Leroy Myers
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Trapped

I lie in humbled misery
 in this world of overwhelming apathy.
 Trapped like a lion who wandered
 into the city of man;
 and them humans ain't gonna let him go
 back to where he came from
 without a little somethin'
 to remember him by.

--David Hall

Since when is skepticism un-American?

Without the protester...the American Revolution would have never occurred

Without the protester...the American worker would have no rights

Without the protester...women would not have the right to vote

Without the protester...Jim Crow laws would still be in effect

Without the protester...the war in Vietnam would have claimed more lives



Mental illness awareness

U.S. Mental Health System "In Shambles"

On the morning last spring when President Bush gave Michael Hogan the Herculean task of fixing the nation's mental health system, the president told Hogan a story the gave him faith that the job can be done. Bush said he had always believed that "if you have personal problems, you suck them up and take care of them," Hogan recalls the president telling him.

But after watching the decline and then recovery of a close friend who suffered from clinical depression, Bush continued: "It became clear to me that this is a medical illness. It is just not right to treat some illnesses well and neglect others."

Decades after the nation stopped keeping the mentally ill in hospitals and released them into the streets without adequate provisions for their care, mental health providers, patients and their families are hoping that Bush-with Hogan's 22-member commission- will finally initiate long needed fixes. But Hogan, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health, cautions that the federal government's changes are unlikely to be sweeping.

An interim report the commission delivered to Bush last month bluntly declared the system "is in shambles." It noted that mental illness is the top cause of disability in the United States and concluded that programs designed to help the mentally ill are scattered among too many agencies. People who need help are forced to navigate bureaucratic mazes at a time they are least able to do so, the report stated.

Half of all Americans who need mental health treatment don't get it, the interim report noted, either because of barriers to getting treatment, such as a lack of insurance coverage, or because they fear being stigmatized. The report found problems are especially severe among members of minority groups and older Americans.

It traced problems to a shift in the mental health system that began in the 1950s. Before then, many people with serious mental illnesses were housed in government-run hospitals. Although

hospital care was expensive, ineffective and often led to neglect, the report said patients at least were able to get all their services under one roof.

As the system disbanded and patients were released into their communities, a complicated maze of programs evolved to meet their needs. Many were fragmented across different levels of government and multiple agencies. For example, people who have a serious mental illness along with a substance abuse problem usually must go to separate programs for each.

"Our nation needs to replace the institutions it began to empty 50 years ago with efficient and effective community services that people can count on," said the report, which singled out programs around the country that work, such as an Air Force initiative that cut the service's suicide rate in half.

Mental health care experts and advocates say they agree with those conclusions. But some are skeptical any recommended improvements will take root.

Although Bush announced his support for a bill requiring insurance companies to provide equal coverage for mental and physical maladies, the legislation has been mired in negotiations over which mental illnesses will be covered. Insurance companies say it is unfair to make them put minor problems like jet lag on an equal footing with serious diseases like schizophrenia.

(Editor's note: the story above was based on the National Commission's interim report in which the report pronounced the mental health system as "in shambles." The Commission's final report could determine the framework for the policies governing the treatment of persons with severe psychiatric disorders for the foreseeable future. We must make sure that they hear our opinions.

The Commission conducted a few public hearings, but you can still submit your opinion by submitting them to [HYPERLINK "http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/comments/addcomment.asp"](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/comments/addcomment.asp)

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-Newhouse News Service and NAMI Madison County

Medicaid mental services threatened

Several economic forces are in play that are likely to impact the financing and delivery of needed services for people with serious mental illness. At the core of this tension are deteriorating economic outlooks and declining revenue which have strained state budgets.

State fiscal conditions have been hit hard over the last 12 months, with revenue losses not seen in at least two decades. In response, states have been forced to implement numerous cuts to public services and slashing growth in spending to levels far below historic levels. But these measures are colliding with another economic front.

Due to the sputtering economy over the last 18 months, the number of people who have become eligible for Medicaid has dramatically increased which has placed more pressure on state policy makers to implement short-term solutions to control Medicaid costs.

The threat to mental health services is beginning to play itself out at the state level with a tidal wave of initiatives to limit Medicaid spending for prescribed drugs. It is likely that medications for people with severe mental illness are going to be targeted through several cost utilization control strategies employed by Medicaid.

Unlike FY 2002 when Illinois and many state mental health budgets avoided the budget knife, upcoming fiscal years may hurt persons with mental illness. Advocates must fight hard, so that people with mental illnesses are not sacrificed in the budget funding crunch.

Keep in touch with your elected officials

Track the state budget process and hearings as well as Medicaid pharmacy committees that may impact access mental health care.

Work with the Illinois Mental Health Coalition NAMI's Policy Research Institute will provide timely information through regular fact sheets and bulletins on state budget and Medicaid issues that could negatively impact the delivery and financing of services for people with severe mental illness.

-NAMI of Livingston/McLean Counties

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Perhaps you're wondering where we've been . . .

Lord, how time flies when you're broke, demoralized, and just generally burnt-out. In our frantic efforts to keep the *Post Amerikan* alive, we seem to have misplaced February and March.

Those of you on the subscription list will recall a recent *Post Amerikan* letter begging you for a little help in getting us out of the hole with the printer. We had a whopping \$700 tab, and he wouldn't take any more issues from us until we anteed up. Thanks to your generous contributions, we made a significant dent in the bill, to the tune of \$500 to \$600.

Even as we made post office runs, dropping off letters pleading with all you poor souls on our subscription list, we were planning other fund-raising activities. Local *Post* readers may have dropped by our benefit last February, held at **Crazy Planet Kitchen**. Thanks to Leslie and Rick, CP's generous owners, we raised an additional \$280.00-some and change. That took care of the printer's bill, and left a little over. So with advertising revenue, what's left from the benefit proceeds, and a recent, additional donation of \$95, we should be able to clear this issue, financially.

Yet just another crisis in the *Post Amerikan's* *sturm und drang*-ridden history? Well, not exactly. Between scrambling for money, planning benefits, and generally putting out the paper, we're all pretty fried, particularly our stalwarts of the last 9 or 10 years, Sherrin, David, and Linda.

We called a community meeting at the Coffeehouse during this same period, and a few bright shiny faces turned up, full of youthful earnestness. Unfortunately, we haven't seen hide nor hair of 'em lately. So how much longer we at the *Post Amerikan* can carry on remains an open question.

Perhaps continued on p. 15

SEX

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Gun paranoia

I would like to respond to the article "Liberals & gun control." In it the author states that "one key reason Al Gore lost the presidency was because of the gun control issue." A key reason? Maybe in Tennessee but the real reason he "lost" would be the fiasco that happened in Florida, (i.e. the barring of many African Americans, many democratic, in that state from voting). That's just one example. By all accounts Gore should have won but alas.

Why worry about a coup by the government? Why worry that the government will rile up the troops to come in shooting unarmed Americans when we seem to be killing ourselves just fine without them. In the U.S where private citizens own a quarter billion guns, around 15,000 people are killed, 18,000 commit suicide and another 1,500 die accidentally from firearms. A study of 743 gunshot deaths showed that 84% of these homicides occurred during altercations in the home. Only 2 of the 743 gunshot deaths occurring in the home involved an intruder killed during an attempted entry, and only nine of the deaths were determined by police/courts to be justified.

But if we take away guns the only people that will have guns are the criminals. But when 300,000 guns are stolen annually from gun owners we are only helping in the proliferation of guns. Where do you think the criminals get guns? Do you really think they can saunter into Wal-Mart whip out an ID, and purchase a gun? Not if he's a "hard-core criminal." If 300,000 guns

were never sold there would be 300,000 fewer guns on the street. Speaking of "the street" if you are walking down streets and get a gun drawn on you by a criminal your gun will not help you because in many states it is illegal to carry a loaded firearm.

If you possessed one that would make you the criminal.

If you have your gun to stand up for "Freedom of speech, press, religion and assembly" you have been slacking. Fewer and fewer people are controlling the information we hear. Much of what we hear is propaganda perpetuated by those whose interests are invested. Whose interest is invested? The people with the cash. Who has the cash? The people in power. It's a nasty cycle isn't it?

The only way to get unbiased reporting is to work at finding those few alternative outlets and after busting your ass working those two jobs just to keep your head above the poverty line who has time to filter out the bullshit?

Freedom of assembly? Would you like a list of how many times this has been violated? How many heads have been busted during peaceful assembly? Would it have been better for those in attendance to have brought their hand cannons and started firing away? If that was the case how would that situation be covered by our media? Would it portray the individuals in an unbiased way or would they be portrayed as zealots? If it was a stand against the ones with the power--well you know how it would swing.

Finally the author says, "On the other hand, it might not be difficult at all to get a consensus for a takeover when it was obvious that there could be no real resistance." There is no real resistance now (albeit a few pockets). Why use force when you can repeatedly tell the general population that the ones you need to fear are your neighbors or a peasant in a third world country and people will practically give you their rights. More time and money is being spent on building prisons, expanding our army and generating an overall sense of fear then what we need the most.

Education.

So instead of sitting in your house white knuckling your semi automatic waiting for the coming coup, why don't you arm yourself with a cause to fight for, verbally, and get changes made, legally, before "it's too late."

--Philippe Orlando

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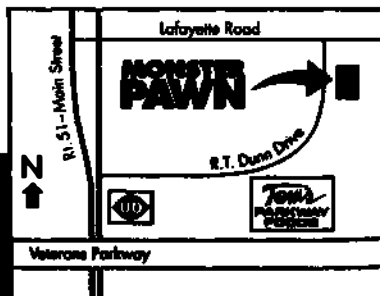
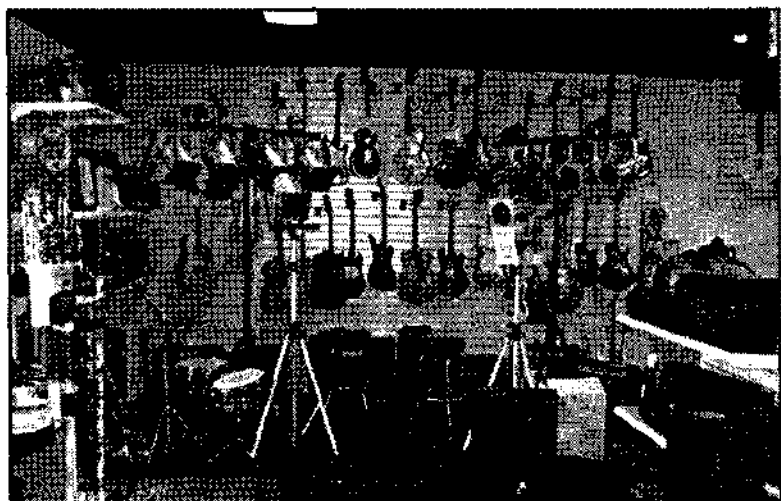

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Wal-Mart not worth the trip

There is no good reason to spend even one hard-earned dollar at Wal-Mart and Sam's Club. Most Union members know this company does not deserve your business and your shopping trip won't benefit the workers or the community.

Picture yourself in need of some items for a family gathering. You're out running errands anyway, so you think "What's the harm?" and you stop at Wal-Mart. There's one in nearly every town, even if residents spent months or years trying to keep it out of their community. It's not hard to find a Sam's Club either, which is another non-Union Wal-Mart owned chain.

You pass the shuttered downtown area, where once thriving businesses that served local customers for generations now sit silent and empty. They were driven out by Wal-Mart's deep discount pricing, due to its powerful control over suppliers who must cut prices to the bone . . . or else! You recall the huge tax breaks Wal-Mart demanded and received from your elected officials. Your schools have fewer tax dollars, but Wal-Mart is doing fine.

Why, you wonder, did the world's richest company receive a tax break? As predicted, traffic and crime have risen since Wal-Mart opened, requiring more time and effort by your local police. As you avoid potholes, you wonder why Wal-Mart won't pay a share for road repairs and increased patrols. Some neighbors and friends have lost jobs since Wal-Mart came in, and you think back on a UFCW (United Food & Commercial Workers Union) member explaining how research shows that for every two jobs created by Wal-Mart, the community loses three others.

The jobs lost to Wal-Mart are often Union jobs with benefits, security, a pension and more. To make matters worse, Wal-Mart, in recent years, has hired non-union contractors right here in Illinois to renovate and construct several of its stores. Another insult to America's working families! It's starting to hit home now.

Inside, you go to the clothing aisles to see where the items were made. Unlike their "Buy American"-themed TV ads, you find coats, gloves, shoes, shirts and more made in China, Bangladesh, and other foreign lands. You've seen the "60 Minutes" and "20/20" reports exposing Wal-Mart as one of the largest importers of goods often from nations associated with sweatshops, child or forced labor. You find many more foreign labels in the toy, auto, and housewares sections. Finally, you go get the items you came to buy.

You come to the checkout with your paper plates, film, batteries and candles, with more in your cart. You stopped at the meat case for prepackaged meats (since the meat-cutters in Texas voted to organize, Wal-Mart did away with in-store meat cutting and wrapping). You've also picked up detergent, light bulbs, oil, toothpaste and pop--all of which could have been bought instead at a union store.

The cashier is a woman, as are 80% of Wal-Mart employees. She earns an average of \$3.00 less per hour than UFCW members at Union supermarkets, even though Wal-Mart is the most profitable retailer. Your open wallet reveals a Union prescription card, which you close when you realize that over 60% of Wal-Mart workers can't afford the company's expensive yet meager health plan, despite Wal-Mart's ability (but refusal) to offer decent insurance that working families badly need.

Nearly half of Wal-Mart workers turnover each year. The \$17.58 you spent here won't be around long either, because each day Wal-Mart sends all deposits from all stores to its Bentonville, AK headquarters. None remains in the local economy.

You leave the store, assuring yourself that "it was only a few items." Who got hurt? That's what you ask yourself as you pull out from the Wal-Mart lot. The answer suddenly comes to you as you meet your own eyes in the rear view mirror.

As a Trade Unionist and a working person, if you think Wal-Mart is not your problem, please think again. Wal-Mart (and Sam's Club) do not deserve the business of Union members until every worker in these stores is covered by a Union contract of her/his own. Help Wal-Mart workers rise up to UFCW standards by encouraging them to organize as Union members. But in the meantime, please don't reward Wal-Mart (and Sam's Club) with one dime of your business.

--Terry Kramer, Secretary / Treasurer--UFCW Local 1546
(Chicago Illinois)


reprinted from *Union News*

Perhaps (continued)

Thank you all very much for your support--your musical talents at the benefit, your money, your space. But we need your energy in other ways--writing, typesetting, layout, art work. You name it. Or the *Post Amerikan* will very likely disappear, and for more than just one issue.

Oh, and if any one runs across the stray months of February and March 2003, give the *Post Amerikan* a call. If not, we can only hope they found a good home.

--Dr. Attitude



McLean County Voice for Choice

"No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her own body."
Margaret Sanger

McLean County Voice for Choice advocates for reproductive choice and provides assistance, when needed, to women making reproductive choices whatever the choices may be. All contributions made to the address below go to the assistance fund.

Stop Bush's War Against Women. Visit the following websites: www.ProChoiceAmerica.com, www.saveROE.com, www.Million4Roe.com, www.populationconnection.org.

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Bloomington, IL 62702-0905



Get a life

Among all the most amazing people I've met, read about, heard about and learned about, a significant number of them were and are Americans. But alongside this amazing minority whose actions shine and reach out all over the planet, a good chunk of the American population is made up of people who don't really give a damn about their country. All they do is enjoy the ride on an amazing wave that started to swell a long time ago, created by a whirlwind of exceptional human effort they surely did not help originate. They would love any country or system that would let them indulge in extreme selfishness and complacency.

How does that type of person show his or her love for their country? By actions? Surely not. The preferred way is display of the flag. And that's about it. The only manifestation of nationalistic affection is summed up in a few squares inches of blue, white and red material. A piece of fabric is not even a meaningful symbol when it is not backed up with an understanding of and active commitment to what it stands for. Just hanging on your porch it means absolutely nothing. To display a flag is *literally* the least you could do, and the least is not enough.

Most people who have a life do not have a flag on their car. I've noticed that my wife's orthopedic surgeon doesn't have one. Most of the teachers at the school where I work don't have one I bet Stephen Spielberg, John Irvin and Noah Chomsky don't have one.

Who else but real underachievers could hide behind a country, behind a flag they don't even understand? It seems that if you have nothing real in your life, nothing to take pride in, no direction whatsoever, you still feel you can walk with your head up, be proud of your country by riding on the coat tails of those who truly created what's great about America.

So, if you were elsewhere, in some country a little less achieving, less powerful than the US, what would you do? If you were not able to derive pride from achievements of your fellow citizens, from past or present days, what would you do?

To be "proud of your country" seems noble at face value but it doesn't mean anything unless you can be proud of something you've done to contribute to the greatness that is the source of that pride. You can be proud to have survived ten years of medical school, to have written the novel of the decade, or have the world record in the 100 meter dash. You can be proud to speak your mind to preserve the environment at a town meeting or clean up a vacant lot in your neighborhood or join your kids when they do their American History homework lessons. But you can't be proud of anything you didn't work to put together.

America was here before you arrived, right? If I'm not mistaken it was just a fluke of fate that you were fortunate enough to be born on the shores of such a great land. Your citizenship was automatic. It came with the first breath you took. You didn't have to earn it. So don't just paste on bumper stickers that say "Proud to be an American." Do something to contribute to the America you are proud of. Feed the machine. Don't just use it, oil it. Then make a bumper sticker that says "Proud to Help America Be."

Honestly, each time you have an opportunity to participate in building or improving it, you try to escape, don't you? You don't want to pay taxes, do you? You wouldn't welcome an additional tax on gasoline, let's say 10 cents per gallon, to help create a national health care system, would you? Would you welcome more tax on gasoline or cigarettes to improve public education? We could generate billions with 10 cents per gallon or per pack. Think about what it would mean for schools all over the country! Usually, don't you vote for the guy who promises to cut taxes?

Oh, you don't like what they *do* with your taxes? That's why you don't want to pay any? That argument is unacceptable. This is a democracy. If you speak up, nothing bad happens to you. So go ahead. Say something! Do something! You may. And you can. People in Iraq and in many other places in the world cannot. They'd be shot or imprisoned.

We don't need people who are just proud. We need people who do things. Tiny little things like walking instead of driving. Buying a gas-saving hybrid instead of a Hummer. Shopping downtown instead of at Wal-Mart. We don't need people who "love it" because it suits them; we need people who show their love by trying to make it better. "Yeah, I love America because I can have guns and I can drive the most humongous car I can buy and I can shave a swastika into the back of my head. It's a free country!"

You're just praying for the orgy to keep going on and on, right? One way among many to take care of American is not to drive a 5000 pound vehicle that pollutes your country's air and barely covers 15 miles per gallon. And yet, most of those flags I see are on very heavy gas guzzling vehicles. Why don't you just buy a sticker that says "I'm proud to pollute and participate in making your son's asthma worse"?

China and India together have 2 billion people. Within the next 20 years everybody there will be driving cars like us. For the well being of the planet and eventually the well being of America and the air you breath here at home, do you want them to start driving Ford Navigators or hybrids? Why don't we set the example? How is the planet's air going to be when we have 500 million more Ford Navigator running on gas?

If you love your country, why don't you walk those two miles to work instead of driving? Don't cut those few square yard of lawn with a gasoline mower. Get a push mower and lose a few pounds. Don't use a leaf blower to push leaves "elsewhere." As far as I know they're still in America, that country you love. They're just on someone else's lawn down the street.

Instead of just staring and smiling and drooling passively at what your country is or has done and may or may not do without you, jump in with both feet or your brain or your voice or your hands and become a real thread in the red, white and blue fabric that hangs on your porch. Get a life.

--Philippe Orlando

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Beware & be prepared: Patriot Act

The following analysis of the proposed Patriot's Act 2 exposes the most chilling gutting of the Bill of Rights and U.S. Constitution ever imagined. This could affect anyone the government deems a threat to the status quo, including environmentalists, pagans etc. Unless this is somehow defeated, it will redefine what it means to be a "free American" for all time.

The currently proposed Domestic Security Enhancement Act 2003, also known as the Second Patriot Act, is the very definition of dictatorship. I invite you to study it and to compare it to the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. It is important to note that no member of Congress was allowed to see the first Patriot Act before its passage, and that no debate was tolerated by the House and Senate leadership.

Ninety percent of the new act has nothing to do with terrorism and is instead a giant Federal power-grab with tentacles reaching into every facet of our society. It strips American citizens of all of their rights and grants the government and its private agents total immunity. Here are just a few of these frightening provisions:

SECTION 501 (Expatriation of Terrorists) expands the government's "enemy combatant" definition to all American citizens who "may" have violated any provision of Section 802 of the first Patriot Act. (Section 802 is the new definition of domestic terrorism, and the definition is "any action that endangers human life that is a violation of any Federal or State law.")

SECTION 201 states that federal law enforcement does not even have to tell the press who they have arrested and they never have to release the names.

SECTION 301 and 306 (Terrorist Identification Database) set up a national database of "suspects" including anyone deemed to support any domestic group that the government doesn't like. These sections also set up a national DNA database for anyone on probation or who has been on probation for any crime, and orders State governments to collect the DNA for the Federal government.

SECTION 312 gives immunity to law enforcement engaging in spying operations against the American people.

SECTION 103 allows the Federal government to use wartime martial law powers domestically and internationally without Congress declaring that a state of war exists.

SECTION 106 states that government agents must be given immunity for carrying out searches with no prior court approval. This section throws out the entire Fourth Amendment against unreasonable searches and seizures.

SECTION 109 allows secret star chamber courts to issue contempt charges against anybody who refuses to incriminate themselves or others. This section

annihilates the last vestiges of the Fifth Amendment.

SECTION 122 restates the government's newly announced power of "surveillance without a court order."

SECTION 123 restates that the government no longer needs warrants. Note that the government has already announced in Section 802 of the first USA Patriot act that any crime is considered domestic terrorism.

SECTION 126 grants the government the right to mine the entire spectrum of public and private sector information from bank records to educational and medical records. This is the enacting law to allow ECHELON and the Total Information Awareness Network to end all hopes for individual privacy in this country.

SECTION 127 allows the government to take over coroners' and medical examiners' operations whenever they see fit.

SECTION 128 allows the Federal government to place gag orders on Federal and State Grand Juries and to take over the proceedings. It also prevents individuals or organizations from trying to quash a Federal subpoena.

SECTION 129 destroys any remaining whistleblower protection for Federal agents.

SECTION 205 allows top Federal officials to keep all their financial dealings secret, and anyone investigating them can be considered a terrorist.

SECTION 303 sets up national DNA database of suspected terrorists, and will be also to be used to "stop other unlawful activities."

SECTION 311 federalizes your local police department in the area of information sharing.

SECTION 313 provides liability protection for big businesses that spy on their customers for Homeland Security.

SECTION 321 authorizes foreign governments to spy on the American people and to share information with foreign governments.

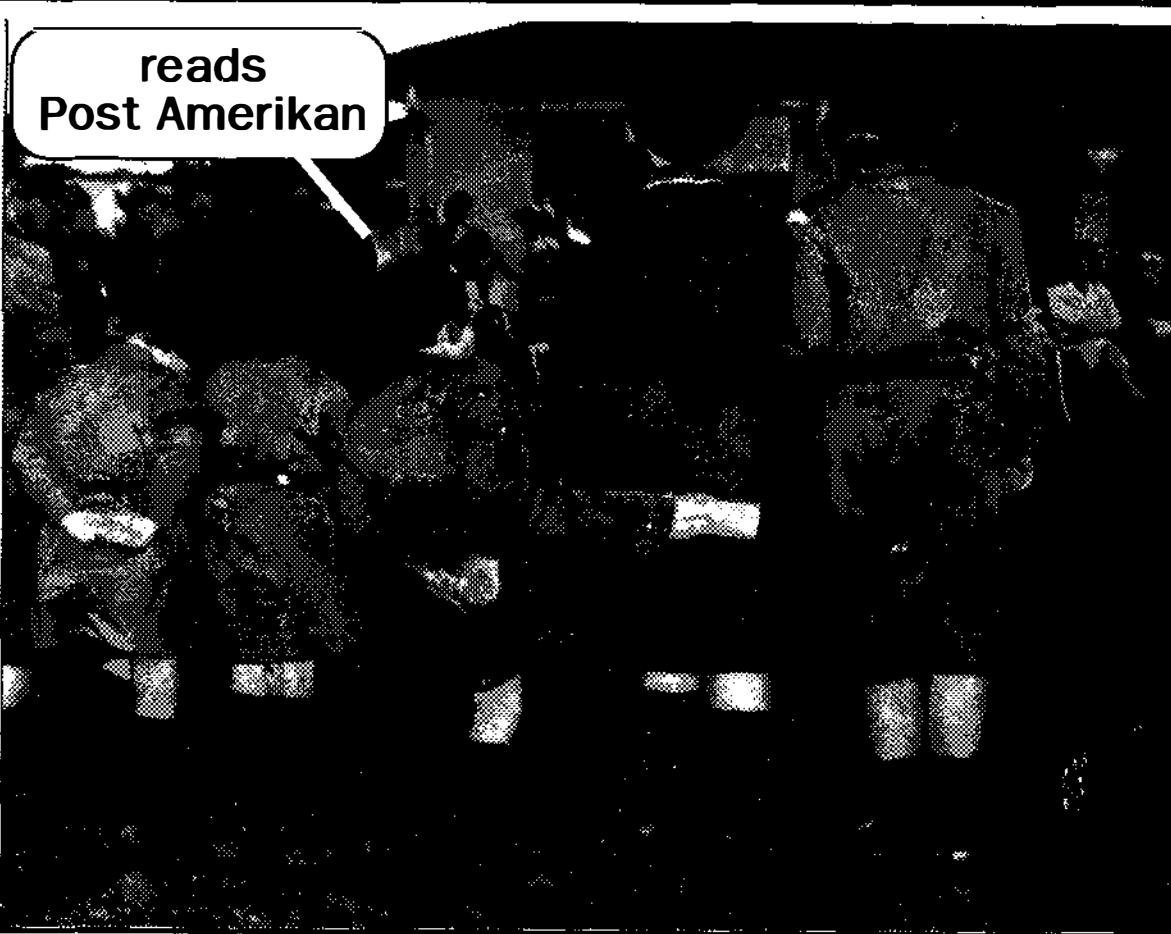
SECTION 322 removes Congress from the extradition process and allows officers of the Homeland Security complex to extradite American citizens anywhere they wish.

SECTION 402 is titled "Providing Material Support to Terrorism." The section reads that there is no requirement to show that the individual even had the intent to aid terrorists.

SECTION 403 expands the definition of weapons of mass destruction to include any activity that affects interstate or foreign commerce.

SECTION 408 creates "lifetime parole" for a whole host of crimes.

Beware my friends, and be prepared.
--submitted by Jesse Wolf Hardin, adapted from an analysis by Alex Jones
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Legalized murder takes on an international flavor

On the unlucky morning of November 13th, 2002, the Greensville Correctional Center's parking lot was filled with the hum of generators from a myriad of television satellite uplink trucks. News networks from around the world had come to cash in on the newest tragedy.

On this fateful night Mir Aimal Kasi, a so-called terrorist from Pakistan would be executed. The execution would take place using a three-staged lethal injection in the cold windowless house of death just a mere few steps from one of my flower gardens.

Mr. Kasi flipped out one day and went to the C.I.A. headquarters, not far from where he would meet his fate, and shot five people, two of which died. For those crimes, rightly so, he should meet some sort of punishment, atonement, and correcting. Yet murder is murder, and it's no solution. Just because the government sanctions it doesn't make it right.

Virginia has a long history of turning executions into heinous circuses, yet this particular lynching was under the international microscope. To many people in the Middle-east Mir Aimal Kasi was not a terrorist but a freedom fighter and now a martyr. Hence riots occurred on the days preceding and after his execution. The United States State Department, fearing retaliation, issued warnings to American citizens abroad and security was tightened up throughout Virginia and the nation's capitol.

Kasi was quite busy on the days before his last night. He held a plethora of telephone interviews and he made it clear that he certainly didn't regret his actions. Although he did express remorse for the families of the victims, he considered the victims casualties of war against the U.S. policies that he perceived were/are against Muslims. Indeed the policy of Virginia's Department of Corrections to schedule his execution during the month of Ramadan was obviously insensitive at best.

Due to the high profile of Kasi's execution and the terrorism alert, the prison was "locked-down" earlier that day, as compared to run-of-the-mill, matter-of-fact, ho-hum executions which dot the calendar of this nation's deadly assemble line like death row. The Virginia house of death is an efficient killing machine. Charting out the last dozen executions, they all ran within a few minutes of each other. Practice makes...

The human sacrifice of America's injustice is brought in days before the execution date. Last moment visitors are paraded in. The media gets their final tidbits and usually religious rights are given and perhaps, if the poor lost soul hasn't been shunned, they might shed a tear with someone close to them. The prisoners who watch the goings and comings make uneasy nervously spoken jokes. Mayhap to mask their inward fear, or as a sigh of relief because they know they were just a gavel away from being on the hot seat (no pun intended).

The witnesses to the executions and the flurry of support personnel generally arrive around 8:20 p.m. Sometimes the number of people that come is many, sometimes not. Although oddly enough there is a mandatory amount of witnesses, generally chosen, or volunteers from regional law enforcement and the media.

On this night there were lots of vehicles going back and forth. The guard tower made quite a show with their searchlight, pouncing it on any crunch or crinkle of leaves in the beautiful treeline adjacent to the death house entrance. The noises probably were made by the herd of deer that ironically found safety in this colony-like prison where they graze nightly joined by wild turkey who gobble as they gobble gobs of grubs. Earlier that day Mir Aimal Kasi gobbled and grazed on his chosen last meal of fried rice, wheat bread, boiled eggs, and bananas.

The fatal injection was administered at 9:04 p.m. His spiritual advisor chanted throughout the sad doings. By 9:07 p.m., just three minutes later, the chants were heard no more by Kasi's corporeal being. Kasi, who many people in Pakistan say was kidnapped out of Pakistan after being on the F.B.I.'s most wanted list, was now wanted back in his home country. His body was taken out at 9:19 p.m. and driven to Richmond, then transported by his brothers where it laid in state in a glass coffin, viewed by thousands who tore out hair, gnashed their teeth and practiced religious flagellation. This all added to the cacophony of emotional fervor, as if the Pakistanis and their neighbors didn't like us enough, their dislike has now brewed into hatred.

Executions accomplish nothing, yet this one added another straw to the Middleeast camel's back. The eye for an eye concept only make us blind. When yet another report of execution is panned across the media, it slowly etches away at our individual and unified sense of mortality because we know it is intrinsically wrong. Life in prison is certainly a harsher punishment if it's retaliation and revenge that society is craving. It's more severe.


Some people are fundamentally flawed, evil in fact, and prison can't rehabilitate them, yet, miracles do happen, rarely, yet they do happen and even the worst monsters can turn their life completely around. That is not saying they deserve a molly coddled life. Yet, many of them humans have never been treated as such. On the remote chance that they may atone, isn't it worth the opportunity to give hope a chance?

Case in point is young Mr. Malvo one of the so-called D.C. snipers, a boy of 18. Who is to say that in a decade he won't be a completely different person? Yet the powers that be were disgustingly quick to scramble to see who would be the first to kill this boy. Virginia won the chance to murder him, so again the deer in the woods will be disturbed by the ambulance-like brown hearse carrying away yet another pawn of the injustice of the American justice system.

Should we be bitter? No! Saddened, and questioning the current precepts that have smothered the original precepts of this beautiful country. The land of milk and honey is flowing an ever increasing down pour of shame.

How do we correct this insanity? Prayer, love and by creating perdurable solutions that will heal this little blue planet; to add our voice to the voice who peaceably speaks out against injustice. Perhaps one of the finest examples of non violent action was just a stone's throw from the house of death that dismal night. It was a 20 year traditional candle light vigil called "Fill the Field." Love is the only answer; the amaranthine, eternal and universal love that awaits us all and bathes those that tap into it.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick



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10 worst corporations of 2002

2002 will forever be remembered as the year of corporate crime, the year even President George Bush embraced the notion of "corporate responsibility."

While the Bush White House has now downgraded is "corporate responsibility portal" to a mere link to uninspiring content on the White House web page, and although the prospect of war has largely bumped the issue off the front pages, the cascade of corporate financial and accounting scandals continues.

We easily could have filled Multinational Monitor's list of the 10 Worst Corporations of the Year with some of the dozens of companies embroiled in the financial scandals.

But we decided against that course.

As extraordinary as the financial misconduct has been, we didn't want to contribute to the perception that corporate wrongdoing in 2002 was limited to the financial misdeeds arena.

As for the rest, we present a collection of polluters, dangerous pill peddlers, modern-day mercenaries, enablers of human rights abuses, merchants of death, and beneficiaries of rural destruction and misery.

Multinational Monitor has named Arthur Anderson, British American Tobacco (BAT), Caterpillar, Citigroup, DynCorp, M&M/Mars, Procter & Gamble, Schering Plough, Shell and Wyeth as the 10 Worst Corporations of 2001.

Appearing in alphabetical order the 10 worst are:

Arthur Andersen, for a massive scheme to destroy documents related to the Enron meltdown. "Tons of paper relating to the Enron audit were promptly shredded as part of the orchestrated document destruction," a federal indictment against Andersen alleged. "The shredder at the Anderson office at the Enron building was used virtually constantly and, to handle the overload, dozens of large trunks filled with Enron documents were sent to Andersen's main Houston office to be shredded."

Andersen was convicted for illegal document destruction, effectively putting the company out of business.

BAT, for operating worldwide programs supposedly designed to prevent youth smoking but which actually make the practice more attractive to kids (by suggesting smoking is an adult activity), continuing to deny the harmful health effects of second-hand smoke, and working to oppose efforts at the World Health Organization to adopt a strong Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Caterpillar, for selling bulldozers to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), which are used as an instrument of war to destroy Palestinian homes and buildings. The IDF has destroyed more than 7,000 Palestinian homes since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967, leaving 30,000 people homeless.

Citigroup, both for its deep involvement in the Enron and other financial scandals and its predatory lending practices through its recently acquired subsidiary The Associates. Citigroup paid \$215 million to resolve Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charges that The Associates engaged in systematic and widespread deceptive and abusive lending practices.

DynCorp, a controversial private firm which subcontracts military services with the Defense Department, for flying planes that spray herbicides on coca crops in Colombia. Framers on the ground allege that the herbicides are killing their legal crops, and exposing them to dangerous toxins.

M&M/Mars, for responding tepidly to revelations about child slaves in the West African fields where much of the world's cocoa is grown, and refusing to commit to purchase from Fair Trade providers.

Procter & Gamble, the maker of Folger's coffee and part of the coffee roaster oligopoly, for failing to take action to address plummeting coffee bean prices. Low prices have pushed tens of thousand of farmers in Central America, Ethiopia, Uganda, and elsewhere to the edge of survival, or destroyed their means of livelihood altogether.

Schering Plough, for a series of scandals, most prominently allegation of repeated failure over recent years to fix problems in manufacturing dozens of drugs at four of its facilities in New Jersey and Puerto Rico. Schering paid \$500 million to settle the case with the Food and Drug Administration.

Shell Oil, for continuing business as usual as one of the world's leading environmental violators --while marketing itself as a socially and environmentally responsible company.

Wyeth, for using duplicitous means, and without sufficient scientific proof, to market hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to women as a fountain of youth. Scientific evidence reported in 2002 showed that long-term HRT actually threatens women's lives, by increasing the risks of breast cancer, heart attack, stroke, and pulmonary embolism.

What's the lesson to draw from this year's 10 worst list? Not only are Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia, Tyco and the rest indicative of a fundamentally corrupt financial system, they are representative of a rotten system of corporate dominance.

--Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman, *McLean & Livingston Counties Labor News*



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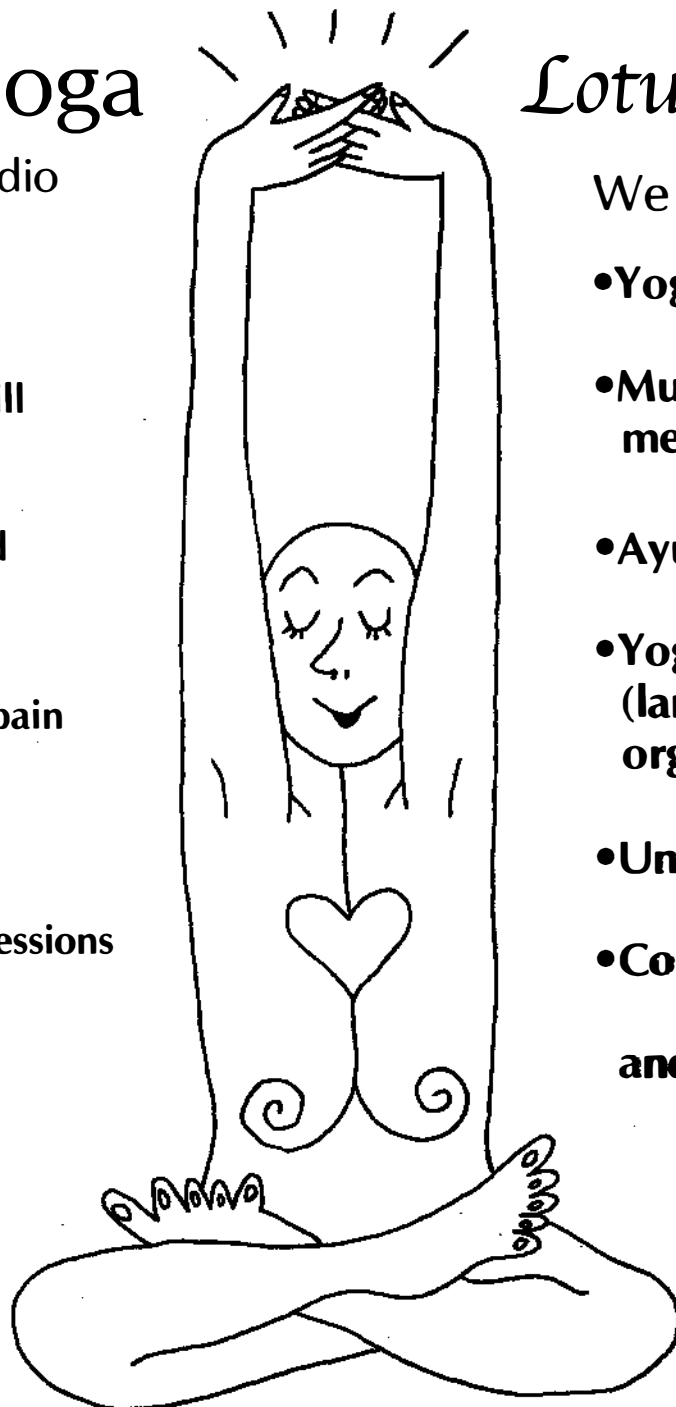
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