

# MARYLAND UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, INC.

Fall 2004

NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Number 4

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**Note: All opinions expressed in this publication are those solely of their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of MUPJ and/or its members...as usual! Many thanks to Carol Solomon, Ron Solomon, and Paulette Hammond for helping with this issue.**

### Highlights of 7-17-04 Coordinating Body Meeting

**Present:** Nil Deo, Chuck Frascati, Ruth Bronstein, Tony Langbehn, Bert Donn, Carol Solomon, Paulette Hammond, and Ron Solomon

**Introductions were made.** A. Nil Deo, a new member, is interested in peace & non-violent conflict resolution, founded a non-profit organization in Boston, which has developed educational games. He is also a writer on several websites & visits schools as part his organization

### Financial Reports

**MUPJ, Inc.:** Chuck reported that we have \$2435 minus the amount we owe ASTT for the fundraiser. Our expenses for copying the calendar and newsletter will be greater, now that Ron is retired. Carol will write to the corporate headquarters of Office Depot, Kinko's and Staples to see if we can make a deal with them.

**Institute for Positive Action:** Ron reported we have \$1725 minus \$200 that goes to the Benjamin Peace Awards. Carol will check to see how much interest we've received from the Fred Benjamin bequest investments in the Domini Fund and the PaxWorld Fund (the original bequest was \$10,000, of which we invested \$5000 in each socially responsible fund.)

### Brainstorming session: Topic for Peace Essay

Nil will be able to advertise the essay to home-schooled students.

Institutionalized racism, the divide in salary between entertainers, athletes, etc., fairness in the media, the role of schools in teaching peace, conflicts of interest, what can we do after the election? threats to peace, should peacemakers be regarded as heroes?, , talk about these heroes or heroines, what is your opinion of the government's response to 9/11?, how is the war on terrorism changing us? explain what makes you feel safe or unsafe at school or in your communities, what do you think can be done about it? What do you think about budget priorities (Ron thinks that there is an online way to do this)? Nil suggested that we specify that they need good arguments.

### Committee Reports

**Newsletter:** the deadline for Fall submissions is September 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Membership:** TIME FOR RENEWALS & some have already done it. Tony is doing outreach & will have names of organizations to give to Ron to put on the mailing list & send them the calendar. Tony will follow up with a phone call to ask them how they liked it.

**Peace Conference 2004:** We sent \$75 to the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church.

**Peace Conference 2005:**

Title: to be determined later

Date: Saturday, April 30th

Location: Frederick? Tony will follow up.

Workshop Ideas: Palestine, corporate power, justice for women (Ellen Barfield will work with us), death penalty (Quixote Center wants to do that), fairness in the media, dealing with difficult people in voluntary organizations (Maryland Association of Non-profits might be able to help), dealing with disillusionment (Joanna Macy?), poverty, Africa, institutional racism

**Benjamin Peace Awards 2005** (see discussion above) Topic: Explain what makes you feel safe or unsafe at school or in your community? If you were a leader in your school or community, what recommendations or advice could you make to benefit others? We should mail this out the end of August. Tony's bother-in-law works for public TV & might be able to promote it. Ruth asked if we could acknowledge the teachers that send in their student's essays or artwork, by giving a certificate, as well as a thank you, regardless of whether one of their students won. We will ask that if a computer was used to create the artwork, explain the process so the judges know.

### Caucus Reports

**Prince George's County:** voter registration, editorial meeting with the Journal newspaper, perhaps with McCaw. Bowie City Peace monument (Tony)

**MoCo County:** McCaw is still active and sending us emails periodically. Global Coalition for Peace is applying for a Peace March with Dennis Kucinich as keynote.

**Baltimore Area:** Baltimore Coalition to End the War in Iraq: Forums on parallels on the war in Iraq & the Vietnam War & Torture, Terrorism & Weapons of Mass Destruction. Planning a film series on Sunday evenings SEIU Union Hall in downtown Baltimore. (Ron) United Religions Initiative: Karzai Family came to talk. (Chuck) Buffano Garden at JHU on Hiroshima Day: hoping to get a plaque relating to his pacifist stance in WWI (he cut off his thumb and sent it to Wilson.)

**Western Maryland:** they are active (see above)

### Unfinished Business

**Legislative Issues:** Forest issues in Tsongas Wildlife Refuge. And much more

**NGO representative:** Ron is the new rep & Chuck will be the alternative.

**Meeting frequency:** Tony suggested meeting twice a month, except once during the summer. Put on agenda for next meeting.

### Announcements

**Moveon.org:** "Outfoxed" at homes around country, 7 pm.

### Highlights of 9-26-04 Coordinating Body Meeting

**Present:** Nil Deo, Bernie Brown, Ruth Bronstein, Ron & Carol Solomon, Tony Langbehn, Phil Chenoweth, Esther Webb, Bert Donn, Mary Chenoweth, & Paulette Hammond

### Financial Reports

**MUPJ, Inc.:** Ron: we need to keep our dues coming in as we are now paying about \$130 per month to copy & mail the calendar.

**Institute for Positive Action:** Carol: about \$1300

**Brainstorming session:** Nil asked if we should change to an electronic version of the newsletter? We need to have at least 200 to get the bulk mailing, but if only about 10-20 people want the hard copy, it would save money. Carol will put a notice at the top of the next calendar.

### Committee Reports

**Newsletter:** The Fall issue will be included in the November/December calendar, which will be out around the 10<sup>th</sup> of November.

**Membership:** The renewal notice has gone out, with red dots on the address label for those who have already renewed. We always get a few resurrections when Ron sends them out to "old" members.

**Peace Conference 2005:**

Date: Saturday, April 30, 2005

Location: Hood College or St. John's Episcopal Church. Tony called Barbara Allen, administrator of the Unitarian Church (office@frederickuuc.org) & they (Social Action Committee) might be interested. Paulette will follow up with Barbara & St. John's. Tony will contact the Frederick Peace Resource Center.

Theme: Beyond the Election: Challenging the Power [Structure] (Tony). We decided to wait until after the election to finalize this.

Keynotes: Suggestions include Amy Goodman, Dr. Helen Caldicott, Media Benjamin (Global Exchange), Arundhati Roy, author *Dil* will contact Amy and Arundhati)

Entertainment: band: KIVA: a mix of Celtic, Native American, Chanting, and Jazz. They will donate their time and talent. They will need help with their equipment. Give then 30-45 minutes. [www.kivasong.com](http://www.kivasong.com) is their website. Diana McFadden is the member Tony contacted at the Greenbelt Festival.

Display: A man in Chicago from AFSC told Tony he would bring part of the soldiers' boots (who have been killed Iraq) display. Mike McConnell also does street theatre.

Workshops: Friends of the Earth: "Safe Cosmetics", Lisa Archer will do it

Benjamin Peace Awards 2005: The letter is almost ready to mail out. Theme: "What steps can High School students take to improve safety in their homes, schools and communities?"

#### Caucus Reports

Prince George's County: Tony & Esther had no report

MoCo County: Peace & Justice Coalition, McCAW: still getting emails from them. They're working on two topics: bias against "Muslims" and a paper trail for electronics ballots.

Baltimore Area: Trying to build a coalition to call on Bush and Kerry to make a major statement on the starvation and genocide in Sudan. The Congressional Black Caucus, of which Elijah Cummings is the chair, took a good stand on this but has not followed up.

Western Maryland: no news

Anne Arundel County: AA County Peace Action has endorsed the Lifeline Expedition Walk in which white citizens will walk in replica yokes & chains in a symbolic apology for the participation of their ancestors in the Atlantic slave trade. Infoaboutthe

Expedition [www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk](http://www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk)

#### Unfinished Business

Update on Peter, Paul & Mary fundraiser for ASTT: we will send Advocates for Survivors \$412.

Meetings scheduling: Saturday, December 18, or Sunday, December 19 at the UUC (Tony) or St. John's (Paulette) or Hood College (Nil).

Peace Parade: Tony reported that there were a couple of hundred people, many churches, peace groups, 7 floats, Bishop of El Salvador, Mike Tidwell. The History Channel filmed it; they are doing a documentary on the history of the peace movement. Puppetistas were there also.

#### New Business

Maryland Conservation Council:

We endorsed the *Cove Point Agreement*.

Membership renewal: okayed for \$50

Endangered Species Coalition membership: okayed for \$25

Daniel Berrigan donation: one time contribution to the A.J. Muste Institute: okayed for \$25

Nuclear Weapons: Bert said that it has gotten little publicity, but the Bush Administration is pushing further use & development of nuclear weapons & plants. We should do something about publicizing this. Bert will write a letter to the Washington Post. Ron asked Bert to refer to SMART of PSR (Ira Shorr spoke about it at the last conference.) We decided to give them \$25. Paulette will get the info off their website.

Nuclear waste: Carol said there was a shipment of 300 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium from England to France. The Bush administration is raising the allowable threshold of radioactivity that can be dumped uncontrolled, without reporting and without tracking.

#### Guidelines for Non-Violence from the Pledge of Resistance website

- 1) Nonviolence is resistance to evil and oppression. It is a human (and humane) way to fight.
- 2) Nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his/her friendship and understanding.
- 3) The nonviolent method is an attack on the forces of evil rather than against persons doing the evil. It seeks to defeat the evil and not the persons doing the evil and injustice.
- 4) Nonviolence means willingness to accept suffering without retaliation.
- 5) The nonviolent resister avoids both external physical and internal spiritual violence - not only refusing to shoot or strike, but also to hate, an opponent. The

ethic of real love is at the center of nonviolence. (Dr. King went to some length to describe this love, which he noted is not reciprocal in nature, meaning that this is not the love given to someone because they love you in return. He identified this love most accurately with the Greek word "agape," meaning an understanding, redeeming good will towards all people, a love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor and all fellow beings, making no distinction between friend and enemy.) 6) The nonviolent resister has a deep faith in the future, and believes that the forces in the universe are ultimately on the side of justice. To quote Dr. King, the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

#### What the 9/11 commission report ignores: the CIA-AI Qaeda connection By the World Socialist Web Site Editorial Board

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2004/jul2004/comm-j24.shtml> (Edited)

The national commission investigating the terrorist attacks of 9/11 report, released 7/22, is a lengthy document that deserves careful study. It will be the subject of extended analysis on the World Socialist Web Site.

On the most basic level, the 9/11 report is a whitewash. The 567-page document is filled with criticisms of the Bush and Clinton administrations & the performance of the government agencies responsible for intelligence, national security and emergency response. But the commission attributes all of these failures to incompetence, mismanagement, or "failure of imagination." The fundamental premise of its investigation is that the CIA, the FBI, the US military and the Bush White House all acted in good faith.

The 9/11 report thus excludes, a priori, the most important question raised by the events of September 11, 2001: did US government agencies deliberately permit or actively assist the carrying out of this terrorist atrocity, in order to provide the Bush administration with the necessary pretext to carry out its program of war in Central Asia & the Middle East & a huge buildup of the forces of state repression at home.

The commission concedes, as is well documented, that the Bush administration came into office focused on overthrowing Saddam Hussein, & that operational planning for a war with Iraq began within days of September 11, despite the absence of any connection between the Baghdad regime and the terrorist attacks, and the

longstanding enmity between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda.

The commission heard testimony, from former Clinton and Bush counter terrorism chief Richard Clarke, that the Bush administration stalled on taking action against Al Qaeda during its first eight months in office, despite increasingly strident warnings from Clarke, CIA Director George Tenet, and other intelligence officials that a major Al Qaeda strike against the United States was in the offing. Bush himself received the now-notorious August 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Brief from the CIA, which was entitled, "Bin Laden Determined to Strike Within the United States." But the president told the commission he could not recall taking any action as a result. (He continued his vacation at his Texas ranch for another four weeks).

The 9/11 report lists 10 separate occasions where US government agencies let slip what it called "operational opportunities" to detect and potentially disrupt the September 11 plot. These involved far more than a failure to "connect the dots." Intelligence officials took actions that served to facilitate the 9/11 plot in effect, running interference for Al Qaeda.

The CIA, for instance, failed to notify domestic police agencies after two known Al Qaeda associates and future 9/11 hijackers arrived in Los Angeles.

...

The FBI played a key role in burying a series of warnings about the potential danger from Al Qaeda terrorists enrolled at US flight schools, most notably in the case of Zacarias Moussaoui.

...

The commission report criticizes the failure to act on Moussaoui, suggesting that if his arrest had been widely publicized the hijack organizers might have canceled the attack, fearful that it had been compromised. But the panel refrained from naming any of the FBI officials involved. It was "not our purpose to assign blame," Chairman Thomas Kean declared. "There's no single individual who is responsible for our failures."

The 9/11 commission sought at all costs to avoid investigation of the top levels of the national security apparatus & the White House.

While documenting numerous CIA and FBI actions that effectively prevented the exposure of the 9/11 conspiracy, the commission's report never

addresses an obvious and crucial issue: were any of the Al Qaeda operatives, especially the ringleaders and organizers of the suicide hijackings, at some point assets or agents of the US intelligence services?

This omission is all the more striking because Al Qaeda has its origins in the US-financed mujaheddin guerrilla war in Afghanistan, where figures such as Osama bin Laden enjoyed American support and received CIA training in weapons, sabotage and bomb-making. Khalid Sheikh Muhammed, the reputed mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, was a longtime associate of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a leader of the Afghan Northern Alliance and current ally of the US-backed Afghan president, Hamid Karzai.

The conduct of the 9/11 conspirators strongly suggests that they were under some form of official protection. They made few efforts to conceal themselves, moving about as they pleased, both within the United States and across its borders. They used telephones & credit cards, both easily traceable. They enrolled openly under their own names at US flight schools, and made repeated transcontinental flights to test out airline security and familiarize themselves with the aircraft interiors.

#### **A political amnesty**

The generalized assertion of responsibility where everybody is guilty, so nobody is guilty has a clear political purpose: it provides a political amnesty for the Bush administration in the run-up to the November 2 election.

Bush fiercely opposed the creation of a commission to investigate 9/11 the bloodiest single attack on American citizens on US soil. This itself indicated that his government had something to hide.

With the conclusion of the nearly two-year investigation, however, the White House and the Bush reelection campaign were breathing sighs of relief, & Bush made a well-publicized appearance with Kean and Democratic Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton to receive the commission's report. Bush declared that the panel had done a "wonderful job" & praised the report's "very solid, sound recommendations about how to move forward."

The US media has embraced the 9/11 report as a definitive, objective and critical account of the events leading up to and including the attacks on the World Trade Center & the Pentagon, without any suggestion that the report's indictment of

a "failure of imagination" represents a cover-up of something far more sinister.

The Washington Post gushed, "[T]he 9/11 commission report had the meaty feeling of a history that will endure, thanks to the political pressure, and the subpoena power, that opened up more than 2.5 million pages of information and the testimony of 1,200 interviews. Though quick, the historical judgment seems conclusive: that American leadership failed across the board."

The analysis by the New York Times began: "Months of unsparing study by the Sept. 11 commission and the Senate Intelligence Committee have now produced a broad consensus about two colossal intelligence failures: the missed opportunities that left the United States open to attack from Al Qaeda & the misread clues on unconventional weapons that sent American troops to attack Iraq."

To speak of the Bush administration's lies about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction as "misread clues" or the result of an "intelligence failure" is to insult the intelligence of both the American people & world public opinion. Broadly within the US, & almost universally abroad, it is accepted as indisputable fact that the Bush administration deliberately concocted "intelligence" about Iraqi WMDs which it knew to be false, & made extreme allegations without any sound evidence, in order to portray an unprovoked invasion as a matter of "self-defense." Even sections of the American bourgeois media have suggested as much.

The 9/11 commission report itself documents the fact that leading personnel in the Bush administration were pushing, within hours of the attacks on New York and Washington, for a war to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein. It notes, for example, that Bush ordered the Pentagon on 11/17, 2001 to be ready to occupy the Iraqi oil fields if Baghdad "acted against US interests."

If the US government was prepared to use deliberate lies to provide a pretext for a war in which tens of thousands have lost their lives, why should anyone believe it is incapable of similar methods in relation to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington?

It is highly plausible and on the basis of the available evidence, more likely than not that US intelligence agencies had identified the main leaders of the 9/11 hijackings long before they boarded the doomed flights. Mohammed Atta, for instance, the supposed ringleader, was under US surveillance in Europe nearly two years before 9/11, according to reports in the German media.

Yet this suspected terrorist was allowed to enter & leave the US, enroll in a US flight school, & board transcontinental passenger flights repeatedly.

#### **Laying the basis for a police state**

Just as significant as its whitewash of the US government role in September 11 are the 9/11 commission's recommendations, which boil down to two injunctions: more aggressive military action overseas against supposed terrorist threats, & an enormous strengthening of the repressive powers of the federal government at home.

The panel's major criticism of the Clinton administration is that it was too cautious in its military strikes against Osama bin Laden & other Al Qaeda targets in 1998-99, & that it failed to respond to the 10/2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen.

In regard to the Bush administration, the commission hailed the invasion of Afghanistan & the overthrow of the Taliban regime, but was conspicuously silent on the merits of the war with Iraq, which many of the commissioners clearly considered to be a diversion. Whatever its reservations about the war, however, the commissionechoing the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry observed that a US victory over the Iraqi insurgency was vitally necessary to prevent the emergence of a "failed state" that would play host to terrorist groups.

The 9/11 report strongly suggests a connection between Al Qaeda & Iran, providing political support for eventual military action against the second of the three countries included in Bush's notorious "axis of evil." Extreme-right warmongers like columnist Charles Krauthammer & the editorialists at the Wall Street Journal, who previously had been highly critical of the 9/11 commission, hailed this aspect of its report. Krauthammer noted in a 7/23 column in the Washington Post that, having conquered Iraq & placed 140,000 US troops on Iran's borders, the Bush administration was well positioned for another preemptive war.

The bulk of the commission's 41 recommendations concern the strengthening and consolidation of the US intelligence apparatus, including the establishment of an intelligence czar with authority over the CIA, the Defense intelligence agencies and the FBI's counter-terrorism unit, giving a single individual unprecedented police and

spying powers. This would put an end to longstanding prohibitions against CIA & military spying & other operations within the borders of the United States, & open the way to systematic surveillance & repression against all domestic opponents of the US government.

The panel also called for encoding biometric information in passports and standardizing driver's license requirements across the 50 states. These are steps toward the establishment of a national identity card and a centralized federal data bank in which key personal information on every US resident would be held.

The Democratic Party & its presidential nominee, John Kerry, took the lead in hailing the 9/11 panel's work. Kerry reiterated his longstanding support for a national intelligence director, saying, "That's overdue, & when I'm president, it's going to happen."

This bipartisan support for sweeping new attacks on democratic rights underscores the reality of the 2004 presidential campaign: both of the major bourgeois parties agree on the war in Iraq and the open-ended "war on terror;" they agree on stepped-up attacks on democratic rights at home; & they agree on defending the interests of the super-rich one percent that dominates American society. They differ only on the best methods to accomplish these goals.

#### **Nonviolence Aphorisms**

Gandhi once declared that it was his wife who unwittingly taught him the effectiveness of nonviolence. Who better than women should know that battles can be won without resort to physical strength? Who better than we should know all the power that resides in non-cooperation? - **Barbara Deming**

The non-violent technique does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the oppressor, but rather on the unflinching assistance of God. - **Cesar Chavez**

Violence just hurts those who are already hurt... Instead of exposing the brutality of the oppressor, it justifies it. - **Cesar Chavez**

Through Gandhi & my own life experience, I have learned about nonviolence. I believe that human life is a very special gift from God, & that no one has a right to take that away in any cause, however just. I am convinced that nonviolence is more powerful than violence. - **Cesar Chavez**

Human kind has to get out of violence

only through nonviolence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. - **Mahatma Gandhi**

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

I believe that unarmed truth & unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant. - **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Nonviolence doesn't always work but violence never does. - **Madge Michaels-Cyrus**

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#### **Legal Impersonations**

Despite the recent wave of Wall Street scandals, corporate power still reigns supreme in this country and in the world.

One group of activists is undertaking a creative effort to subvert that power. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is promoting the "Campaign to Abolish Corporate Personhood," a grass-roots effort to educate and mobilize citizens to take action against the unchecked power of corporations.

The heart of the campaign is challenging a little-known Supreme Court decision in 1886 that essentially defined a corporation as a "person" within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (which was ratified in 1886 to protect the rights of newly freed slaves.) This decision essentially grants corporations the same constitutional rights as U.S. citizens. Corporations have increasingly used these rights, in tandem with their often enormous financial resources, to wield inordinate influence in such areas as lobbying, advertising and campaign contributions. Supreme Court decision in recent years that curtailed campaign-finance-reform legislation have drawn on this notion of corporate personhood by asserting corporate right to "free speech."

Since 1999, WILPF has hosted dozens of study groups throughout the country, which gather to explore historical, legal, political, and economic questions about corporations and corporate power. Many of the groups follow up the study with advocacy activities, often focusing on local issues.

This past Dec., Porter Township in NW Penn. became the first local government in the country to eliminate corporate claims to civil and constitutional privileges. The township adopted a legally binding resolution that prohibited corporations operating in the

township form wielding the legal privilege to bypass or block municipal laws that protected residents from toxic sewage sludge.

A recent legal case bears heavily on the issue of corporate personhood. In NIKE vs. Kasky (which the Supreme Court refuse to hear) Nike Corporation argued that recent false statements in its press released regarding overseas employment practices were protected under its constitutional right to free speech; the company was therefore not liable under the state of California's tough consumer-protection and false-advertising laws.

Campaign organizers' long-term goal is "to put we the sovereign people in charge, defining and instructing economic entities and other institution." They seek to change the nature of the debate from one of business practices to fundamental issues of democracy. WILPF organizers, while continuing to promote the study groups, also hope to do more local and national advocacy on issues of corporate personhood, including raising the topic in the 2004 election season.

#### **Declaration to Abolish Corporate Personhood**

WE BELIEVE that the rights of personhood—as manifested in the Bill of Rights, the Fourteenth Amendment, civil rights legislation, and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights—as among the hardest won and most valuable possessions belonging to all human beings.

WE BELIEVE that the word "person" in the Constitution means human beings.

WE BELIEVE that the word "person" in the Constitution was not meant to include corporations or other artificial entities. Corporations are not mentioned, described, or given any rights in the Constitution.

WE BELIEVE that the Supreme Court in 1886 had no moral or legal authority to give the legal rights of person to corporations.

WE BELIEVE that corporate personhood has damaged democracy, the environment, society, and citizens in the United States and around the world, benefiting only giant corporations and the wealthy few.

WE HAVE SEEN corporations claim first Amendment rights to free speech in order to use large sums of money to influence our electoral and legislative processes and to advertise destructive

products to our citizens.

WE HAVE SEEN corporations damage the environment when they use the Fourteenth Amendment to contest government regulations and the Fourth Amendment to avoid government inspections. We eat genetically modified food without our knowledge because the First Amendment protects corporations' right not to speak.

WE HAVE SEEN small, neighborhood businesses crushed, despite our efforts to save them, because the "civil rights" of giant corporations prevent communities from "discriminating" in favor of local stores. Our attempts to prevent the invasion of cell phone towers and giant chain stores are also ruled to be illegal discrimination against corporate person.

WE KNOW that a corporation is not a person. It is a legal abstraction without conscience or moral capacity.

WE KNOW that We the People, through our state governments, create corporations. It is, therefore, the right and responsibility of We the People to instruct corporations as to what they may do and how they may do it.

ON BEHALF OF THE PLANET AND ALL LIVING CREATURES IN IT, we pledge to abolish corporate personhood and thereby protect the rights of human beings everywhere.

For more information on the campaign, including background history, study packets, and organizing resources, contact WILPF, 1213 Race St. Philadelphia, PA 19107, 215-563-7110 [www.wilpf.org/campaigns/ccp/corp/ACP/declaration.pdf](http://www.wilpf.org/campaigns/ccp/corp/ACP/declaration.pdf)

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#### **Excerpt from *Homegrown Democrat* By Garrison Keillor**

August 26, 2004

Something has gone seriously haywire with the Republican Party.

Once, it was the party of pragmatic Main Street businessmen in steel-rimmed spectacles who decried profligacy and waste, were devoted to their communities and supported the sort of prosperity that raises all ships. They were good-hearted people who vanquished the gnarlier elements of their party, the paranoid Roosevelt-haters, the flat Earthers and Prohibitionists, the antipapist antiforeigner element. The genial Eisenhower was their man, a genuine American hero of D-Day, who made it OK for reasonable people to vote Republican. He brought the Korean War to a stalemate, produced the Interstate Highway System, declined to

rescue the French colonial army in Vietnam, and gave us a period of peace and prosperity, in which (oddly) American arts and letters flourished and higher education burgeoned—and there was a degree of plain decency in the country. Fifties Republicans were giants compared to today's. Richard Nixon was the last Republican leader to feel a Christian obligation toward the poor. In the years between Nixon and Newt Gingrich, the party migrated southward down the Twisting Trail of Rhetoric and sneered at the idea of public service and became the Scourge of Liberalism, the Great Crusade Against the Sixties, the Death Star of Government, a gang of pirates that diverted and fascinated the media by their sheer chutzpah, such as the misty-eyed flag-waving of Ronald Reagan who, while George McGovern flew bombers in World War II, took a pass and made training films in Long Beach. The Nixon moderate vanished like the passenger pigeon, purged by a legion of angry white men who rose to power on pure punk politics. "Bipartisanship is another term of date rape," says Grover Norquist, the Sid Vicious of the GOP. "I don't want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub." The boy has Oedipal problems and government is his daddy.

The party of Lincoln and Liberty was transmogrified into the party of hairy-backed swamp developers and corporate shills, faith-based economists, fundamentalist bullies with Bibles, Christians of convenience, freelance racists, misanthropic frat boys, shrieking midgets of AM radio, tax cheats, nihilists in golf pants, brown shirts in pinstripes, sweatshop tycoons, hacks, fakirs, aggressive dorks, Lamborghini libertarians, people who believe Neil Armstrong's moonwalk was filmed in Roswell, New Mexico, little honkers out to diminish the rest of us, Newt's evil spawn and their Etch-A-Sketch president, a dull and rigid man suspicious of the free flow of information and of secular institutions, whose philosophy is a jumble of badly sutured body parts trying to walk. Republicans: The No.1 reason the rest of the world thinks we're deaf, dumb and dangerous. Rich ironies abound! Lies pop up like toadstools in the forest! Wild swine crowd round the public trough! Outrageous gerrymandering! Pocket lining on a massive scale! Paid lobbyists sit in committee rooms and write legislation to alleviate the suffering of billionaires! Hypocrisies shine like cat turds in the moonlight! O Mark Twain, where art thou at this hour? Arise and behold the Gilded Age reincarnated gaudier than ever,

upholding great wealth as the sure sign of Divine Grace.

Here in 2004, George W. Bush is running for reelection on a platform of tragedy—the single greatest failure of national defense in our history, the attacks of 9/11 in which 19 men with box cutters put this nation into a tailspin, a failure the details of which the White House fought to keep secret even as it ran the country into hock up to the hubcaps, thanks to generous tax cuts for the well-fixed, hoping to lead us into a box canyon of debt that will render government impotent, even as we engage in a war against a small country that was undertaken for the president's personal satisfaction but sold to the American public on the basis of brazen misinformation, a war whose purpose is to distract us from an enormous transfer of wealth taking place in this country, flowing upward, and the deception is working beautifully. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few is the death knell of democracy. No republic in the history of humanity has survived this. The election of 2004 will say something about what happens to The omens are not good.

Our beloved land has been fogged with fear-fear, the greatest political strategy ever. An ominous silence, distant sirens, a drumbeat of whispered warnings and alarms to keep the public uneasy and silence the opposition. And in a time of vague fear, you can appoint bullet-brained judges, strip the bark off the Constitution, eviscerate federal regulatory agencies, bring public education to a standstill, stupefy the press, lavish gorgeous tax breaks on the rich.

There is a stink drifting through this election year. It isn't the Florida recount or the Supreme Court decision. No, it's 9/11 that we keep coming back to. It wasn't the "end of innocence," or a turning point in our history, or a cosmic occurrence, it was an event, a lapse of security. And patriotism shouldn't prevent people from asking hard questions of the man who was purportedly in charge of national security at the time.

Whenever I think of those New Yorkers hurrying along Park Place or getting off the No.1 Broadway local, hustling toward their office on the 90th floor, the morning paper under their arms, I think of that non-reader George W. Bush and how he hopes to exploit those people with a little economic

uptick, maybe the capture of Osama, cruise to victory in November and proceed to get some serious nation-changing done in his second term. This year, as in the past, Republicans will portray us Democrats as embittered academics, desiccated Unitarians, whacked-out hippies and communards, people who talk to telephone poles, the party of the Deadheads. They will wave enormous flags and wow over and over the footage of firemen the wreckage of the World Trade Center and bodies being carried out and they will lie about their economic policies with astonishing enthusiasm.

The Union is what needs defending this year. Government of Enron and by Halliburton and for the Southern Baptists is not the same as what Lincoln spoke of. This gang of Pithecanthropus Republicanii has humbugged us to death on terrorism and tax cuts for the comfy and school prayer and flag burning and claimed the right to know what books we read and to dump their sewage upstream from the town and clear-cut the forests and gut the IRS and mark up the constitution on behalf of intolerance and promote the corporate takeover of the public airwaves and to hell with anybody who opposes them.

This is a great country, and it wasn't made so by angry people. We have a sacred duty to bequeath it to our grandchildren in better shape than however we found it. We have a long way to go and we're not getting any younger. Dante said that the hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who in time of crisis remain neutral, so I have spoken my piece, and thank you, dear reader. It's a beautiful world, rain or shine, and there is more to life than winning.

*Garrison Keillor* is the host and writer of *A Prairie Home Companion*, now in its 25th year on the air. This adapted excerpt from Keillor's new book, *Homegrown Democrat* (© 2004) is reprinted by arrangement with Viking, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

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#### **Kerry Won. Here are the Facts.**

[www.TomPaine.com](http://www.TomPaine.com)

Friday, November 5, 2004

by Greg Palast

I know you don't want to hear it. You can't face one more hung chad. But I don't have a choice. As a journalist examining that messy sausage called American democracy, it's my job to tell you who got the most votes in the

deciding states. Tuesday, in Ohio and New Mexico, it was John Kerry.

Most voters in Ohio thought they were voting for Kerry. At 1:05 a.m. Wednesday morning, CNN's exit poll showed Kerry beating Bush among Ohio women by 53 percent to 47 percent. The exit polls were later combined with—and therefore contaminated by—the tabulated results, ultimately becoming a mirror of the apparent actual vote. Kerry also defeated Bush among Ohio's male voters 51 percent to 49 percent. Unless a third gender voted in Ohio, Kerry took the state.

So what's going on here? Answer: the exit polls are accurate. Pollsters ask, "Who did you vote for?" Unfortunately, they don't ask the crucial, question, "Was your vote counted?" The voters don't know.

Here's why. Although the exit polls show that most voters in Ohio punched cards for Kerry-Edwards, thousands of these votes were simply not recorded. This was predictable and it was predicted. [See TomPaine.com, "An Election Spoiled Rotten," November 1.]

Once again, at the heart of the Ohio uncounted vote game are, I'm sorry to report, hanging chads and pregnant chads, plus some other ballot tricks old and new.

The election in Ohio was not decided by the voters but by something called "spoilage." Typically in the United States, about 3 percent of the vote is voided, just thrown away, not recorded. When the bobble-head boobs on the tube tell you Ohio or any state was won by 51 percent to 49 percent, don't you believe it ... it has never happened in the United States, because the total never reaches a neat 100 percent. The television totals simply subtract out the spoiled vote.

#### **Whose Votes Are Discarded?**

And not all votes spoil equally. Most of those votes, say every official report, come from African-American and minority precincts. (See

[www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/electoral\\_reform/residual\\_ballot.php](http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/electoral_reform/residual_ballot.php))

We saw this in Florida in 2000. Exit polls showed Gore with a plurality of at least 50,000, but it didn't match the official count. That's because the official, Secretary of State Katherine Harris, excluded 179,855 spoiled votes. In Florida, as in Ohio, most of these votes lost were cast on punch cards where the hole wasn't punched through completely—leaving a 'hanging chad,'—or was punched extra times. Whose cards were discarded? Expert statisticians investigating spoilage for the government calculated that 54 percent of the ballots thrown in the dumpster were cast by black

folks. (Read the report from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission at [www.usccr.gov/pubs/vote2004/elect04.pdf](http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/vote2004/elect04.pdf))

And here's the key: Florida is terribly typical. The majority of ballots thrown out (there will be nearly 2 million tossed out from Tuesday's election) will have been cast by African American and other minority citizens.

So here we go again. Or, here we *don't* go again. Because unlike last time, Democrats aren't even asking Ohio to count these cards with the not-quite-punched holes (called "undervotes" in the voting biz). Nor are they demanding we look at the "overvotes" where voter intent may be discerned.

Ohio is one of the last states in America to still use the vote-spoiling punch-card machines. And the Secretary of State of Ohio, J. Kenneth Blackwell, wrote before the election, "the possibility of a close election with punch cards as the state's primary voting device invites a Florida-like calamity."

But this week, Blackwell, a rabidly partisan Republican, has warmed up to the result of sticking with machines that have a habit of eating Democratic votes. When asked if he feared being this year's Katherine Harris, Blackwell noted that Ms. Fix-it's efforts landed her a seat in Congress.

Exactly how many votes were lost to spoilage this time? Blackwell's office, notably, won't say, though the law requires it be reported. Hmm. But we know that last time, the total of Ohio votes discarded reached a democracy-damaging 1.96 percent. The machines produced their typical loss—that's 110,000 votes—overwhelmingly Democratic.

### The Impact Of Challenges

First and foremost, Kerry was had by chads. But the Democrat wasn't punched out by punch cards alone. There were also the 'challenges.' That's a polite word for the Republican Party of Ohio's use of an old Ku Klux Klan technique: the attempt to block thousands of voters of color at the polls. In Ohio, Wisconsin and Florida, the GOP laid plans for poll workers to ambush citizens under arcane laws—almost never used—allowing party-designated poll watchers to finger individual voters and demand they be denied a ballot. The Ohio courts were horrified and federal law prohibits targeting of voters where race is a factor in the challenge. But our Supreme Court was prepared to let Republicans stand in the voting booth

door.

In the end, the challenges were not overwhelming, but they were there. Many apparently resulted in voters getting these funky "provisional" ballots—a kind of voting placebo—which may or may not be counted. Blackwell estimates there were 175,000; Democrats say 250,000. Pick your number. But as challenges were aimed at minorities, no one doubts these are, again, overwhelmingly Democratic. Count them up, add in the spoiled punch cards (easy to tally with the human eye in a recount), and the totals begin to match the exit polls; and, golly, you've got yourself a new president. Remember, Bush won by 136,483 votes in Ohio.

### Enchanted State's Enchanted Vote

Now, on to New Mexico, where a Kerry plurality—if all votes are counted—is more obvious still. Before the election, in TomPaine.com, I wrote, "John Kerry is down by several thousand votes in New Mexico, though not one ballot has yet been counted."

How did that happen? It's the spoilage, stupid; and the provisional ballots.

CNN said George Bush took New Mexico by 11,620 votes. Again, the network total added up to that miraculous, and non-existent, '100 percent' of ballots cast.

New Mexico reported in the last race a spoilage rate of 2.68 percent, votes lost almost entirely in Hispanic, Native American and poor precincts—Democratic turf. From Tuesday's vote, assuming the same ballot-loss rate, we can expect to see 18,000 ballots in the spoilage bin.

Spoilage has a very Democratic look in New Mexico. Hispanic voters in the Enchanted State, who voted more than two to one for Kerry, are five times as likely to have their vote spoil as a white voter. Counting these uncounted votes would easily overtake the Bush 'plurality.'

Already, the election-bending effects of spoilage are popping up in the election stats, exactly where we'd expect them: in heavily Hispanic areas controlled by Republican elections officials. Chaves County, in the "Little Texas" area of New Mexico, has a 44 percent Hispanic population, plus African Americans and Native Americans, yet George Bush "won" there 68 percent to 31 percent.

I spoke with Chaves' Republican county clerk before the election, and he told me that this huge spoilage rate among Hispanics simply indicated that such people simply can't make up their minds on the choice of candidate for president. Oddly, these brown people drive across

the desert to register their indecision in a voting booth.

Now, let's add in the effect on the New Mexico tally of provisional ballots.

"They were handing them out like candy," Albuquerque journalist Renee Blake reported of provisional ballots. About 20,000 were given out. Who got them?

Santiago Juarez who ran the "Faithful Citizenship" program for the Catholic Archdiocese in New Mexico, told me that "his" voters, poor Hispanics, whom he identified as solid Kerry supporters, were handed the iffy provisional ballots. Hispanics were given provisional ballots, rather than the countable kind "almost religiously," he said, at polling stations when there was the least question about a voter's identification. Some voters, Santiago said, were simply turned away.

### Your Kerry Victory Party

So we can call Ohio and New Mexico for John Kerry—if we count all the votes.

But that won't happen. Despite the Democratic Party's pledge, the leadership this time gave in to racial disenfranchisement once again. Why? No doubt, the Democrats know darn well that counting all the spoiled and provisional ballots will require the cooperation of Ohio's Secretary of State, Blackwell. He will ultimately decide which spoiled and provisional ballots get tallied. Blackwell, hankering to step into Kate Harris' political pumps, is unlikely to permit anything close to a full count. Also, Democratic leadership knows darn well the media would punish the party for demanding a full count.

What now? Kerry won, so hold your victory party. But make sure the shades are down: it may become illegal to demand a full vote count under PATRIOT Act III.

I used to write a column for the Guardian papers in London. Several friends have asked me if I will again leave the country. In light of the failure—a second time—to count all the votes, that won't be necessary. My country has left me.

Greg Palast is contributing editor to Harper's magazine. His BBC documentary, "Bush Family Fortunes," based on his New York Times bestseller, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, is now available on DVD. View a clip at <http://www.gregpalast.com/bff-dvd.htm>

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