

Folk Forum Newsletter

September, 2004

The Oak Center General Store
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Hello Fellow Travelers, Brothers and Sisters of Amazing Planet Earth!

In this time of global crisis, when the need for prophetic vision and inspiration is so great, it is difficult to write you without launching into an immediate anti-Bush tirade. The oppressive weight that we all feel as a result of the disastrous hi-jacking of America by this gang of thieves, referred to by the former editor of our moderately conservative regional newspaper in a recent e-mail as "one of the most despicable regimes in the history of this country," leaves us struggling trying to find the right words or tools to help put them out of our misery (and that of the rest of the world as well). The rising tide of nationalism and extremist religion blasting from the loudspeakers of the corporate media's public address system intimidates, bully's and terrorizes us. Many of us feel much like the passengers in the planes hi-jacked on 9/11 and used as a weapon against the "infidels", the "imperialist American beast," as we are called by similar religious extremists on the other side. Our nation has been hi-jacked and is being used as a weapon to further the causes of a wealthy clique of bandits, destroying the nation in the process. Terrorism is not limited to hi-jackers of planes and suicide bombers. Four years ago we stood by with mouths agasp, muttering while these fanatics illicitly took over our nation. The opposition party (I hesitate to call them the Democratic Party and opposition is quite a stretch) offered very little resistance. The "transition team" as they were referred to by Mr. Bush were an assault team dredged up from past attempts at dismantling our democratic institutions. They stormed in, looted its coffers, allowing our great wealth to hemorrhage into off-shore bank accounts and the pockets of the ultra-rich, gobbling up land and resources and cannibalizing smaller companies and pension funds in a feeding frenzy of the greedy. They have plunged this nation into potential bankruptcy and gutted the schools, the environmental protection agency, the Bill of Rights, and all other instruments of the people designed to monitor and protect the welfare of all our people, down to the weakest. They have created a Big Brother system in place of these humanitarian institutions to contain and harass opponents, peace workers, labor, independent agriculture, and environmentalists under the guise of fighting terrorism. These people used George Orwell's 1984 as an instruction manual. Big Lies, half-truths, constant war, constant fear. They have surpassed Goebel's skills in propaganda and mind control during the rise and reign of Hitler in Germany, not due as much to intelligence obviously, but to the sheer weight of the wealth and technology that has accumulated in their grasp. They are masters at creating "push-buttons" to control public opinion and have essentially created an American religious-political cult that favors the

wealthy and uses war and repression as the first option. They intentionally whapped the hornets' nest and tell us now that we need them to protect us from the bees. America is divided and full of fear and anger. We face dangers more grave potentially than ever before—both from within and without.

When did it become acceptable for those who lead this nation to lie to and manipulate its people and its legislators? It did not! For a democratic process to work, there is a listening and discussion process that must be honest, sincere and open. Lying and manipulation betray the very heart of democracy. Suppression of dissent is anti-democratic. These people stole in with less than a majority of the vote and listened to a minute portion of the special interests who funded them and sought windfall hand-outs, contracts and relief from the burden of supporting the infrastructure of this nation. They think nothing of taking our national guard whose duties are protecting the homeland and helping in the event of national disasters off American soil to guarantee their global domination and control of the world's oil whether in Iraq , Saudi Arabia , Tajhikistan , Uzbekistan , Columbia or Venezuela . They carry on covert operations and lie about them, supporting coups, dictators, and human rights abusing para-military groups. They lie to get us into a war that destabilizes the whole world and recruits millions of born-again America haters into the terrorist fold, not to mention destroying a civilization and thousands of innocent lives in the process. When Kerry supports the popular bi-partisan plan to allow the importation of more affordable drugs from Canada , the FDA's Lester Crawford tells the press that intelligence information has revealed plans to attack Americans by contaminating imported drugs. Investigation revealed this was mis-information being used to terrorize the public and sway public opinion away from policies, threatening big Pharmaceuticals' ability to gouge America 's sick and elderly. President Bush opposes, as we might expect, any attempts to interrupt the corporate feeding frenzy. As many saw so graphically in Michael Moore's, **Fahrenheit 911**, the “‘haves’ and the ‘have mores’” are not elites in W's simple mind, but his base. They are the ones invited into the closed door rooms by Dick and the rest of W's baby-sitters to write our health, education, energy, agricultural and trade policy. Also included in this private party are extremist ultra-conservative think-tanks with “push button” control over well organized “Fundamentalist” organizations. Anyone who objects is placed on lists of the dis-loyal, treated like lepers, and banned from the process. Americans who become vocal and active for peace or environment have been denied travel privileges, harassed by the IRS and otherwise persecuted. When Bush or other oligarchs come to town with their 700+ person entourage, the local law enforcement personnel are taken from their duties and the location becomes an armed camp. Fire Departments and Road Maintenance Personnel are pressed into service to create barriers around the invitation-only locations. Local police are handed packets of profiles and pictures that not only include “known terrorists” with Arabic sounding names but those of local lifelong peace activists. The local government gets the bill, and the local community is further divided against itself.

The terrorist alerts have been used for manipulation and the campaign tactics of Carl Rove and company have told Americans they will be terrorized if Kerry is elected. With the Terminator on their convention stage telling us not to be “girlie men,” it is obvious that they intend to exploit the fear they have in large part created and portray themselves as our protectors. We only have to reflect on how much worse things have gotten since they started, how much greater the threat of terror and how much more distrust and disrespect there is for

America world-wide. There are enough suspicious circumstances in the Wellstone deaths and the ignored warnings about 9/11 that their role as our protectors merits some deeper investigation. The only possibility for extricating America and the world from deepening crisis and conflict is to get rid of those who plunged us into the abyss. One must question if 9/11 would have happened if the Bush's and Cheney's wouldn't have been playing games with the Saudi's, Bin Ladens and the Kuwaitis', and Wolfowitz hadn't been playing Zionist Israel's cards through US policy. If Daddy Bush wouldn't have trumped up the first Gulf War to establish bases in Saudi Arabia , and Junior wouldn't have started bombing Iraq the minute he took office, the situation may have been significantly different. This regime has been the best recruiting tool Al Quaida could have dreamed of. The only hope for escaping this descending spiral of conflict and darkness lies in us, as individuals and collectively, not dividing from our neighbors but, instead standing courageously as witnesses for the light, the truth. And then taking steps to right the wrongs and repair the damage. We can't take four more years of this. Kerry has been slow to show the courage, ideals or strength we need to correct all that has gone wrong, and yet we must signal the rest of the world that we, the American citizens with a thought process and a conscience are taking charge again. Even our Republican brethren must think things through and acknowledge the dangers we now face due to these reckless policies. Can truth and justice win in the elections coming? These vandals have openly used mis-information and outright lies. They have tampered with the voting process. They own the Big Media channels. They have incredible amounts of money. They have intimidated us into positions of constant compromise and thus, candidate Kerry as the alternative. Can we politely sit by hoping the light will shine through the billowing smoke of this assault if we just go vote on Nov. 2nd? Probably not. It is going to take some in their face confrontation, open resistance and widespread unity. These people have demonstrated they are not nice and the challenge will be to confront with dignity, compassion, and intelligence, but with resolve that we will not accept any more. This cult "religion" must be called on its pro-rich, pro-war, pro-American theology. It must be called by its name: Blasphemy. Since when is the unborn fetus the only life necessary to protect? What about the already born and those with children of their own? What about future generations and the pollution from excess consumption and war? Inserting democracy into Iraq or Afghanistan with thousands of tons of bombs, radioactive bullets and rockets directed by troops insulated with Bullet-proof gear behind concrete barriers is like doing heart surgery with a chain saw. We can compile lists of all the brash and corrupt things that have transpired to get us here and gather the choir to repeat the chorus lamenting our misfortunes and regrets, but to avert more disaster, we need to do more. God could help out by quickly rapturing these people, but that's not likely. Maybe I'm just an old hippie or someone who actually believes Jesus was right...Love will bring peace. If we want to see love reign in this world, then we must not let those who hate rule us. Keep your humor, sing songs of peace and resist by doing good honest work. Build a real homeland security that feeds people, pays fair wages and weans us from oil. Protect our planet. Take back the faith from those who cast dark shadows on it. Help those who have been trampled on, we will need their help on Nov. 2ndeviction day. We're giving 30 day notice now. Spread the word.
Love and Peace,

Maintenance and Repair

Thanks folks,

We are grateful for all of you who have made donations so that we may continue keeping folkforum going; wood gets purchased, repair happens, bills get paid... THANK YOU! Joe, Jess, Josh, Laura, Steve, David and Alice, Laura, Steve, Mark, Joe, Kathi, Kerry, Jeff, Courtney and the gang, Todd, John, Sherry, Mark, Susan, Henry, Eric and Emma, David, Paul, Trudi, Andrew, Pam, Anne, Rich, Mary, Bill, Dawn, Dale, Joanne, Moms and Dads, brothers and sisters, everyone--we love you and we thank you all for your continual support.

NOTES AND SISTER EVENTS.....

“When you hear that we are ruled by those from the upper crust, remember that crust is just a bunch of crumbs held together with a big wad of dough.” Utah Phillips

- .. “Po liticians are like diapers. They need to be changed often and for the same reason.”
- .. Politics: from the base “poly” meaning many, and ticks which are small blood sucking insects.
- .. **Wednesday Night Film and Discussions:**
- .. **Starting Oct. 13th at 7PM , we will be showing a film every other Wed. nite thru mid-December** (with the exception of Nov. 24—the eve before Thanksgiving). The films will begin with documentaries in the following list and evolve with input from interested participants: A Force More Powerful: a 6-Part series that highlights non-violent resistance and non-cooperation movements thru history, beginning with civil rights in the US and moving to Ghandi in India, So. Africa , Denmark during Nazi occupation, Solidarity in Poland , and finally, the struggle against the US installed tyrant in Chile , Pinochet. The Party’s Over (2000 Election reflections), This is How Democracy Looks are two other possible films we’ll show. Join us every other Wed. nite here at the store at 7PM —we’ll have the popcorn ready to go!
- .. At a recent forum in the Twin Cities, aid workers from the metro region who have spent years working with health, housing, and education projects in Haiti testified to the deterioration of human rights and general welfare of the people of Haiti since the US supported coup there earlier this year. Among the new leaders are documented human rights abusers, world bank officials and corporate officials with special interests. Schools have been closed and supporters of the ousted Aristide persecuted. There is still a grassroots, non-violent resistance movement in Haiti that needs continued support and attention from concerned people everywhere. We as a nation need to recognize the World Court , support it and adhere to International Law.
- .. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez Frias announced early this summer that the cultivation of genetically modified crops will be prohibited on Venezuelan soil and ordered an end to plans by Monsanto to plant up to 500,000 acres of transgenic soybeans in Venezuela . Chavez emphasized the importance of food sovereignty and security as the basis of his decision. The US government has been supportive of the coup attempt against Chavez and aided the opposition to Chavez by Venezuelan upper

class interests. Chavez is popularly supported by Venezuela 's majority poor.

- .. Rochester folks vigil at the corner of 2nd and Broadway on **Tuesdays from 4:30 to 5:15 PM** , starting again soon. Stay posted.
- .. Red Wing folks vigil on **Fridays from 4:30 to 4:45 PM** at Rich Park. Check out the **CARP**, a great local newspaper-pick up a copy here at Oak Center !
- .. **People for Peace and Goodwill** in Northfield , MN meet **Thursday nites** at the Village School (1100 Bollenbacher Ct.) for conversation/education and **every Saturday at noon** at Bridge Square for a 15 silent peace vigil. 130 people attended the vigil one fine and chilly Saturday in January.
- .. **Southeast MN Alliance of Peacemakers** has had a lull during the busy summer, but is becoming active again to due to the stamina of some dedicated individuals. Get involved again. A lot of work to do and much need for support either as members or active volunteers. Membership is \$5/year. Contact:
SEMINNAP@ aol.com
- .. Yes, we're looking for clean plastic bags with handles for the next Farmer's Market season. We have enough egg cartons at this time...thanks for reusing, recycling, renewing~!
- .. We love volunteers to help out with concerts—before or after clean-up, wood-cutting, running the store, etc.—join us and help build community...call Susan at (507) 753-2080 or email at folkforum@lakes.com .
- .. Join Earthen Path Organic Farm CSA for the 2005 season—community supported agriculture, agriculture for and about community and receive weekly boxes of veggies with optional eggs for 18-20 weeks—pick up a brochure at a concert or check out :www.oakcentergeneralstore.com
- .. Buy a few pounds or order a portion of organic lamb, pasture raised beef, buffalo, poultry or pork from your neighbors and help build homeland security by rebuilding a strong local economy. No hormones, antibiotics or GMOs. Here at the Oak Center General Store in our lovely upright display freezer. (507) 753-2080
info@oakcentergeneralstore.com
- .. “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Ghandi
- .. “We can have democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.” Louis Brandeis , US Supreme Court Justice, 1916-1939”
- .. To all you flag waving pro-war folks, we dedicate this quote from Patrick Henry, “The greatest patriot is the one who conserves the most soil.”

Volunteers—We can't do all these fine programs without the generous help from the community that is folk forum....Volunteers who lend a hand are truly the lifeblood of folk forum and keep things going....smoothly. We invite you to plug in prior to, during, or following programs and concerts with a variety of tasks or during the week helping with maintenance and repair or cutting and stacking firewood. Be adventurous, meet interesting people with values and ideals similar to your own, hear inspiring music, and have fun, because we are....community. Contact us if you are moved to help (507)753-2080 or folkforum@lakes.com Thanks!

Route 1, Box 52BB
Oak Center , MN 55041
www.oakcentergeneralstore.com
info@oakcentergeneralstore.com
507.753.2080

Store hours: 9 AM to 6PM Monday thru Saturday
and some Sundays