<u>danbury, connecticut</u> volume four issue one november / december 2004

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Risdon AMS Closes Danbury Factory

BY DAVE BONAN AND COLIN CASCIA

Ridon AMS, a manufacturer of cosmetic product cases on Old Newtown Road in Danbury, will finish shutting down by spring of 2005. The last phase of layoffs is now occurring, according to one employee of the factory. Risdon now employs about 100 remaining workers, 70 of whom will loose their jobs without the option of transferring to the Watertown plant. "This shouldn't be happening," said Patricia Santos, who works in human resources and payroll at the plant. "People are losing their jobs who have been with the company for over 40 years and they do not know how to do anything else. It's going to be hard for them to find jobs."

According to Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, Risdon came to the city 18 months ago and announced the closing and the layoffs. The city offered

months ago and announced the closing and the layoffs. The city offered several tax incentives to the factory in order to prompt them to stay, but Risdon refused to negotiate, standing firm on their decision to leave Danbury.

The Danbury plant opened in 1952 and at its peak had 210 workers in production, engineering and management. Risdon has plants in Watertown, CT with 120 employees; Middletown, NY with 130; Laconia, NH with 15; Barrie, Ontario, Canada with 200 and Renosa. Mexico, with 300. The Renosa, Mexico with 300. [The Renoas plant opened in February of

"They did offer some jobs in Watertown," said Santos. According to Santos, 30 positions were transferred to Watertown, CT and the rest of the jobs are going to the plant in Renosa, Mexico.

This past spring 50 workers were laid off and this month 60 people were transferred to the world headquarters in Watertown, CT. An additional 90-100 workers will be laid off by the end of December 2004. The Danbury plant will remain open with a skeleton crew until the first quarter of 2005, though the majority of the workers will be laid. the majority of the workers will be laid on belote trie iliolidays. Every laid on worker is eligible for severance pay and benefits a week for every year they were employed at the plant, lasting up to 26 weeks.

The closing is expected to also have

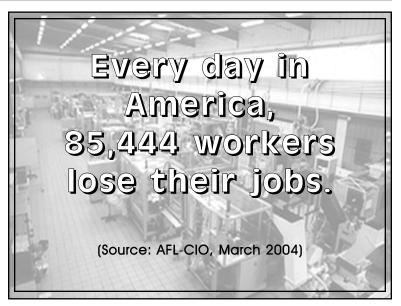


detrimental effects on small businesses in the adjacent plaza.

"It will have a big economic impact on this shopping center," said Dustin Ziegler, an employee at Chamomille Natural Foods, in the neighboring Route 6 Plaza. "It will largely affect the deli and the small post office on the corner."

Courtney Clarke, the Group Leader in the factory has worked at the Danbury plant for 19 years. "We know

continued on page seven



The Detriments of Soy: What They Don't Tell You Part BY SHAWN CARNEY



Behind the mass marketing campaign to popularize soy and soy products through disputable health claims and incomplete

health claims and incomplete scientific presentations, there is a darker reality. A host of health problems are associated with the consumption of soy and yet they are not adequately covered by the media: isoflavones disrupt endocrine function and cause hormonal problems with the reproductive system, phytates block mineral absorption, enzymes necessary for protein digestion are inhibited, substances that depress thyroid function are released, brain function is adversely affected causing dementia, and both carcinoaffected causing dementia, and both carcinogens and toxins are formed during the commercial production process of isolated soy protein. These concerns and the graduation of soy from being considered unfit for consumption to a practically unavoidable food will be explored in this six part article series.

Since the soy industry conveniently neglects to mention harmful components of soy, perhaps we should explore the validity of their health claims. For example, the FDA has allowed marketers of soy to claim that soy lowers blood cholesterol. Yet this statement is based on a literature review that concluded individuals consuming over 250 mg cholesterol per day would experience a 7% - 20% reduction in serum cholesterol after substituting soy protein for animal protein. They neglect to mention, however, that cholesterol reduction would be "insignificant" for individuals who ate less than 250 mg of cholesterol per day. Furthermore, literature reviews come under sharp criticism in the scientific community because they risk making faulty assumptions and liberally arranging results from selected studies to bolster a specific agenda. The FDA was well aware of this ambiguity around the cholesterol claims but allowed them to be made anyway.

Another health claim that doesn't measure up is soy's ability to help prevent cancer. Although

the FDA doesn't allow cancer prevention promotions for soy, they still appear in literature. Facts are misrepresented and over-simplified to mislead consumers. For example, promotional claims are made declaring that the Japanese eat thirty times more soy than Americans and are rewarded with lower rates of cancer of the breast, uterus and prostate. What they fail to mention is that Asians have higher cancer rates for the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, thyroid and liver. Nor do they mention that dietary researchers found lab rats fed soy-based diets developed digestive cancers. Furthermore, the 1994 literature review by Mark Massing, which is used as the basis for Mark Messina, which is used as the basis for anti-cancer claims, reported on 26 animal experiments and conveniently left out all human studies - which had mixed results and did not show any correlation between soy consumption and cancer rates. Messina concluded, "...the data in this review cannot be used as a basis for claiming that soy intake decreases cancer risk". Yet this is exactly what he did a few years later - once he began writing pro-soy literature for the soy industry.

Other disputable claims for soy include osteoporosis prevention, reduction for risk of heart disease, and soy's ability to have dampening effects on hot flashes. The soy industry publicizes Asians having lower rates of osteoporosis and attribute this to soy consumption. However, it defies reason that soy would prevent osteoporosis because soy foods can block calcium absorption and cause vitamin D deficiencies. The Asian dietary factors most likely responsible for lower rates of osteoporosis are probably not soy foods but seafood, like shrimp, which is rich in both calcium and vitamin D.

Also misleading are the highly publicized heart emblems appearing on various foods advertising soy protein. These stem from the claim that "diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol that include 25 grams of soy protein a day may

continued on page six

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Working Families Party Offers an Alternative in Local Elections

BY COLIN CASCIA

November 2nd, you may want to take a second glance at the ballot before firing down party lines.

In Connecticut, the Working Families Party provides an option in elections where working issues such as wages, benefits and outsourcing are either unaddressed or downplayed. Existing in Connecticut for two years, Working Families began in New York where they launched a campaign to raise the minimum wage and were successful in passing the bill through the state house and senate. Governor Pataki vetoed the bill, although Working Families is fighting to overturn the decision.

As a member of Working Families Party and part of a household with five employed people (myself included), my intent is to raise the issues that face working people in Connecticut.

Many people generally associate Connecticut with wealth, and we do boast some of the richest areas of the country. However, we also are the home to some of the poorest places in the United States of America. Overall, year after year working people in Connecticut are handed a raw deal by large corporations and a state government recently purged of a corrupt administration. According to Working Families Party, families in our state are working an average of over 100 more hours a year than a decade ago while 60% of us are earning less than before. More than 1 in 10 children live in poverty.

In Newtown, where I live and am running for State House of Representatives, there are 155 families living in poverty with children in the school system (US Census Bureau). Regardless, social programs continually face budget cuts and what the state lacks in federal funding it takes out on property owners. Property taxes are almost five times as high as they were a little over ten years ago (US Census Bureau).

Minimum wage in Connecticut, now \$7.15 per hour, currently places a full-time worker obscenely below the poverty line, making less than \$15,000 a year. With pay this low, even a household with multiple sources of income would struggle to obtain mere necessities.

Raising the minimum wage does not only affect poor workers. The act creates a ripple effect because it is used as a point of reference on which all hourly wages are based. Furthermore, as a Working Families member and the recipient of an \$8.50 per hour pay check I believe that every working person should be able to pay for living expenses while at the same time being able to save for the future. These are the ideas behind the Living Wage Campaign, a proposal to boost wages for the working poor by requiring firms that receive state and city tax dollars to pay employees a living wage and health benefits. Ideally, these same policies would extend to the private sector as well.

Often times local elections feature single candidates

When you reach for the lever in the voting both on who run unopposed. In 2000, more than 70 of Connecticut's 186 state legislators ran uncontested. In these types of elections, regardless of the single candidate's party and platform, issues suffer. Without an opponent, candidates will only address those issues that they feel are important. Public debate, a practice crucial to a healthy and functioning democracy is nonexistent in these situations.

> This is the political climate I entered into this election year in Newtown. Julia Wasserman has been the representative for the 106th district since 1991. Since that time she has run unopposed in many of the elections.

> In addition to my campaign, Working Families Party is turning up in other areas of Connecticut. In 2003, residents of Windham, CT elected Juan Perez and Deborah Noble to the Board of Selectmen. Noble and Perez, both Working Families candidates, are committed to serving the growing Latino and working poor population in Willimantic. They too are fighting for a living wage in Connecticut. In Danbury, resident Dave Bonan is running under Working Families for State Senate in the 24th District, which includes all of Danbury, New Fairfield, Sherman and part of Bethel.

> Dave Bonan says that he is running "to provide a real alternative in our less than diverse political system."

> "Lower and middle class families can't afford to raise a family with the skyrocketing costs of health care and education on a mere \$7.15 per hour," Bonan said. "Couple that with the recent and soon to be permanent trend of local jobs being eliminated."

> Risdon AMS, Nestle and Kimberly Clark are the most recent to move out of state.

> "Jobs need to stay in state," Bonan firmly stated. "If elected, I would introduce legislation that would keep jobs in state while penalizing corporations that move jobs out of state. I would further introduce legislation that would create a living-wage ordinance for lower and middle-income families that would raise the hourly wage to a level that would be enough to provide a livable income level, around \$12-14 an hour.'

> In the 2004 election, although mass media stresses the importance of the presidential race, local politicians will be instrumental in determining the direction of the nation. Already local politicians, many of them third party members have made their mark on national policy. In San Francisco, CA and New Paltz, NY (where a Green party member is mayor) local public servants and their supporters challenged the status quo and brought the issue of Gay marriage to the courts and public eye by granting marriage licenses to homosexual couples. In over 350 municipalities across the country, lower level offices have

> > continued on page eight

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RNC 2004 – The Faces Behind The Barricades

By Jeff Green, September 9, 2004

Citizens from all over the United States gathered at the Democratic National Convention in Boston this past July to raise awareness of a host of social justice issues and their opposition to the war in Iraq. Forty of these people then embarked on an organized walk to bring those issues to the Republican National Convention held in New York City this past August. The walkers, commonly known as the "DNC2RNC March" worked their way down the New England coast arriving at Columbus Circle on August 26th after covering 260 miles on foot.

Among those who walked was 21-year-old Kaya Weidman, from Woods Hole, MA. Their arrival at New York, Kaya said, was incredibly positive and it gave her a lot of hope for the week to come. "It was so beautiful and I felt empowered by the reception given to us by the NYC police." After quick on-the-spot negotiations, the NYC police escorted the DNC2RNC marchers, now numbering several hundred, down a lane of Broadway to their final destination at Union Square.

And so began the gathering of what would ultimately be 500,000 Americans from every state and every station of life, culminating with a march in New York City and followed by five days of continual demonstrations, rallies and

gatherings, art shows, music and education.
On Sunday, August 29th, the even of the convention, 250,000 people gathered on the streets of New York City for an anti-war march and demonstration, the largest ever at a US political convention.

Wyatt Soto, a 14-year-old boy from Putnam County, NY attended, his first anti-war demonstration, with his father John, a veteran of the endorsement of the NYPD.

Many of those arrested were simply swept off the streets by police using orange netting to seal off exits and sidewalks while others voluntarily subjected themselves to arrest in purposeful acts of civil disobedience.

On Tuesday afternoon, August 31st, the War Resistors League (WRL), in conjunction with the School of the Americas Watch, proposed a march from the World Trade Center site to Union Square and eventually to Madison Square Garden where they intended to stage a "die-in". Shortly after 4 PM, and after negotiating with police to allow the marchers to proceed, 400 marchers stepped off behind a police escort to cross Church Street. Only minutes

Kaya Weidman had no intention of participating in the planned die-in that afternoon. But she joined the WRL march anyway, believing that participating in the walk uptown alone would be

later, the police halted the march and arrested

200 people for blocking the sidewalk.

Upon entering Fulton Street the police ordered her and other marchers to clear the sidewalk. Kaya said, "We did try. They were pushing us up from the back of the street so that we couldn't get into the two-by-twos." She quickly found herself surrounded by police officers, was handcuffed, loaded on a waiting bus and taken to Pier 57. Kaya accepted an ACD from the court, a promise not to be arrested for the next six months, and twenty-two hours later finally walked free.

Kaya's brother Dylan was also arrested but unlike his sister, and believing the arrests were illegal, opted instead for a trial that will be held

> in October. Detained by police for 30 hours, he says the experience was difficult. "There were 30 people to a cell," he said, "with no place to lie down. They fed us stale sandwiches with mold on the bread and we couldn't talk to our lawyers in person even though they were right upstairs and wanted to talk to us.

With the arrests as a backdrop only a few feet away, I spoke with Rob Sarra from Iraq Veterans Against the War. Rob and three uniformed buddies watched the

scene unfolding before them, shaking their heads at the turn of events.

Traveling from Chicago and leaving his girlfriend behind, Rob and several other IVAW

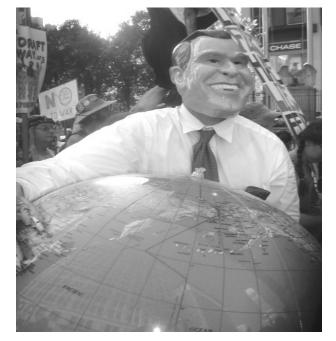
members came to New York to be seen and heard by convention delegates. Serving in the Marines for 9 years, Rob saw the action in Iraq and realized, he says, that with the exception of Saddam Hussein's brutality against Iraqi citizens, the reasons given for the war turned out not to be true. "There were no weapons of mass destruction," he said, and "there were no terrorists there, but there are now!"

When it was time for Rob to re-enlist last December, commanders told him he would be sent back to Iraq for further duty. When his request for a stateside position was refused, Rob decided against re-enlisting and left the Marines, a job he says he loved.

I asked Rob what he expected to find at the convention. "To be completely honest," he said, "I wasn't sure how we would be received in New York. I knew that there would be a ton of Republicans and "Hawks" in NY, and thought we might get a lot of criticism. We didn't, as you know, and I felt as if we were openly welcomed and supported by New Yorkers.

Rob finished by saying, "I suppose that I came away with a great appreciation for the people of this country. I was amazed that so many people came together for one goal and in

only a few different voices." Á few minutes later a Republican convention delegate from Columbus, Ohio came out of the Millennium Hotel with his wife by his side. Surveying the mass arrest scene before him, he



shook his head and muttered, "that's too much"

before walking on.

Dressed in white as a sign of mourning and wearing a copy of the Constitution of the United States with the words, "This is the only permit I need" around his neck, Steve Greenfield, an attorney and father of three from New York's Hudson Valley, made his way uptown with the remaining 200 members of the War Resistors League march.

In a written statement released just before the march convened, Steve stated his planned intention of engaging in civil disobedience and

wrote, in part:

"If we are not prepared to give something of value to protect the lives and welfare of American service members, countless thousands of civilians, our children and the future generations of our precious planet, if we make no challenge to the civil order by which warmongers throughout history and up to today claim legitimacy for their actions, then our voices need never be heeded."

Later that afternoon, Steve was arrested near Herald Square along with more than 50 others and spent two days at the now infamous "Pier 57" unable to call his wife and children to let them know that he was alive and well.

Also arrested at the die-in was Margaret Human, a resident of Pine Plains, a small rural community in NY's Dutchess County. Margaret, who works for a translation services company in Poughkeepsie, said she took vacation time from work to come to NYC. "Not everyone likes to spend their vacation in jail," she said, but agreed with Mr. Greenfield's statement about how definitive action is required more than simply marching and chanting.

In retrospect, Ms. Human thinks she made an impact that day, but that these actions are never

covered enough by the news media.

'We need to have less dramatization and more doing what needs to be done in spite of the police stopping us." She continued, "This requires serious figuring out of what needs to be done. But it also needs people who are willing to be beaten, [by the police] etc. I am aware that I am one of the last that will suffer, li'l old grayhaired, cane-walking, white, female, grandme, but I believe that I am willing claim the right to encourage others. To stop a war, for instance, soldiers must withhold their bodies, citizens must withhold their taxes, and companies must withhold supplies. How to organize this? What can a still small group do? I dunno."

Others came to New York choosing not to make their statements through civil disobedience, but rather to add their bodies and voices to the historic events unfolding that week. Kate Ahmadi was one.

Kate hails from the small town of Washingtonville in New York's Orange County, a conservative bedroom community famed for its local winery, a regional tourist attraction. Kate, several years retired from a teaching position at the University of Connecticut and now on a fixed income, traveled to NYC on the local commuter train for three days to attend various rallies and demonstrations, spending almost \$100 for transportation and three hours each



American Indian Rights movement. I asked Wyatt why he had come to New York that day. He told me that the President had made 'a lot of mistakes' and then went on to name the war in Iraq, his environmental policies and how the administration funds education.

During the weeks leading up to the convention the news from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, NYPD Chief Ray Kelly and the Department of Homeland Security was grim. Authorities promised the specter of terrorism and newspaper headlines guaranteed rampaging black-clad anarchists and riots but, like Wyatt, people came by the thousands anyway.

Expecting more than 3,000 arrests during the convention the NYPD prepared a holding area in an unused bus depot. Pier 57 on the Hudson River, which quickly became known as "Little Guantanamo" and made plans to process 1,000 arrestees each day. By the end of the week 1821 people had been arrested, more than 1400 of them on the most minor of charges.

Among those arrested was a reporter from the American Spectator, a conservative magazine who was interviewing people on the street. Another, an innocent bystander, was Emila Crotty, 23, who organizes Girl Scout Troops in local communities, and Newsday photographer Moises Saman, who spent eight days in an Iraqi prison in 2003. By Wednesday evening 19 reporters from various Independent Media Centers had been subject to arrest, targeted some say, for various minor offenses. On the previous Friday night more than 260 bicyclists were arrested at the monthly Critical Mass event that had previously earned the tacit

continued on page seven

feminism

Feminist Majority League Fights for Equality at WCSU

BY COLIN CASCIA

The Feminist Majority League is back on campus at Western Connecticut State University this semester and is actively working on familiar programs as well as new struggles. The need for a group with a positive and proactive approach to feminism is more important now than ever, with a president who continually chips away at abortion rights and a society that encourages women to engage in sexually and personally demeaning acts.

"Feminism is the best f-word ever. It's shocking, grabs attention, and its true meaning is positive," said FMLA coordinator Veronica Swain. "Feminism is a modern example of a word being vilified by the patriarchal culture at large- without the average person even ever being aware. Other words of this genre include cunt and whore, which also stem from positive meanings."

"Feminists cannot allow this to happen," she said. "We're not militant and anti-men. Many of us are angry, though. We're angry that women aren't equally valued to men. We strive for the elevation of women, not the condemnation of men, yet in that we are condemned. Why? Think about it."

Attitudes towards feminism reflect the perversion of the concept and the word by mainstream media and popular American culture. People such as Rush

Limbaugh use words like "femi-nazi" to heavily connote feminism with elitism and fascism. One of the FMLA's goals is to change that attitude and the attitude towards women in American society. As testimony to the sincerity of this goal, FMLA currently has two male members and encourages membership regardless of gender identity.

FMLA will define feminism by hosting The Vagina Monologues, a presentation that's name speaks for itself. Created by Eve Ensler, the show features stories written by numerous women from a variety of different religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds about their experiences involving their vaginas. The Vagina Monologues are expected to receive the same large turnout and positive reception as last semester. At the event, FMLA will be selling chocolate vaginas.

In order to raise awareness and funds, FMLA will have a table set up at WCSU's Homecoming Parade with literature, patches and a feminist zine. The parade will be at the Westside WCSU Campus on Saturday, October 24.

An issue FMLA will tackle is the sexual degradation of young women in the Danbury club scene. Venues such as Club 11, which hosts nights encouraging women to dress like prepubescent girls and

where sexual assault has been reported, will be the topic of discussion and possible action.

With reports of sexual assault on campus and in Danbury, students feel steps must be taken to change society in a way that encourages women and men to speak out. In addition to FMLA, the student group MARSHAS WAR (Men Against Rape Sexual

Harassment and Assault and Women Against Rape) is working hard to raise awareness and student voices about these issues. According to former schoolteacher Jane Elliot, a woman is raped every 14 seconds. Elliot, who created methods to teach non-diverse classes about racism and segregation went on to explain how the statistic is based on reported rape cases, so considering the estimation that about 50 percent of rape goes unreported, the real frequency is closer to one woman being raped every seven seconds.

With the help of students who demand a safe, equal and free world, FMLA will continue to fight for women and represent feminism on campus.

The FMLA meets on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the Snack Bar, located at the bottom floor of WCSU's student center.

For more information contact:
FMLA Coordinator, Veronica Swain
Email: Dracovixen@aol.com
To join the FMLA's web group, visit:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fmla_westconn



Africa

Compassion, friendship, solidarity with the people of the United States was the caption under the photographs. Every continent, but you, Africa!

Africa! Do you exist?

Are you really the world's second largest continent?
Then, why is your voice, the voice of so many, silent?
Africa! Who is keeping your images from coming through?
Africa! Who is keeping your voices from being heard?
Africa! Your name has been erased from every stone,
Placed in a dark abyss!

Africa! I have walked your shores, flown your skies,
Driven your roads, seen your people in the face of adversity.
I know that your spirits are human, that your hearts beat,
That your towns and cities are real,

That your people do care about the world beyond their shores.

Africans, you are a passionate people, Who celebrate life and mourn death; Who believe in the community of mankind! Africa! Rise!

Make your voices heard, your people's images visible. Let your name ring out!

Lyndia A. Allotey 12/11/2002 12/22/2002

Africa was written after looking at some photographs on a website from around the "World" expressing grief over the September 11th catastrophe, every land and people except Africans!

A Call for Papers & Symposium Programs Lives In Transition: Examining Realities & Perspectives March 31, April 1-2, 2005 University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island

The Program Committee is seeking presentation proposals for the 11th Annual URI Symposium on GLBTQ Issues to be held Thursday, March 31 through Saturday April 2, 2005. The committee welcomes proposals on any well-developed topic grounded in one or more of the many disciplines represented in the critical study of GLBTQ individuals. The committee also invites proposals for applied workshops and panel discussions as well as artistic performances and media presentations.

Past symposium presentations have ranged widely, investigating social, sexual, racial, ethnic, political, artistic, and historical con-

structions of GLBTQ experiences.

Proposals are invited from community organizers and agencies, undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, activists, independent scholars, artists, practitioners, and therapists involved in the study of or working with GLBTQ individuals and communities. Time also may be reserved for more informal, interactive presentations to ponder contemporary topics of interest and/or to give individuals an opportunity to present and receive feedback on their work.

SUBMISSIONS: E-mail submissions are preferred and should be sent to GLBT@etal.uri.edu. Proposals can also be mailed to: Andrew Winters, Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services, 112 Roger Williams Building, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881. Please send any questions via email or contact the office at 401-874-2894.

Please use the application form for all submissions. Your proposal should be 300 to 500 words in length and should be attached to the application form. Presentations typically range from 20 minutes to one hour in length. You may download the form at: www.uri.edu/student_organizations/outri/application.pdf, or you can contact the Program Committee via email or US mail to receive a copy of the application form.

The deadline for proposals is December 1, 2004. You will be notified by early January, 2005 on the status of your proposal.

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a b o r

Mexico Clears Wal-Mart Store Construction

BY MARK STEVENSON ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER OCTOBER 7, 2004

MEXICO CITY - Retail giant Wal-Mart Stores Inc. won a rare victory after Mexican officials and an international preservation group said no damage would be caused by building a discount store less than a mile from the ancient pyramids of Teotihuacan.

The announcement Wednesday by the State of Mexico and the Parisbased International Council On Monuments and Sites, Icomos, struck a blow to opponents who had vowed to block the store, claiming it would intrude upon and damage the archaeological site.

The project in question does not damage the conservation of archaeological remains, nor the integrity, environmental or cultural values of the archaeological zone," according to the report by the Mexico chapter of

The report did recommend several measures — including the use of non-reflective roofing materials, perimeter walls and trees to further hide Wal-Mart's massive "Bodega Aurrera" store, which would operate under the name of a Mexican chain owned by Wal-Mart.

But the council — an oversight body which helps monitor U.N. World Heritage Sites like Teotihuacan — denied claims that the store would ruin the view from the top of the pyramids, which are nearly a mile away.

Mexican authorities "have set a series of conditions so that the store will not affect the view from the archaeological site," the report said.

But Icomos also criticized local officials in San Juan Teotihuacan, the town built starting in the 17th century next to the ruins, for rushing to grant initial building permits without first consulting archeologists. But it described the scant remains found on site — a small stone platform — as relatively unimportant, "modest ... and extremely decayed," and recommended they be reburied to prevent further deterioration.

Wal-Mart, Mexico's largest retailer, was pleased at the news, which came after weeks of sometimes threatening protests at the site.

Opponents were livid.

"What might this mean? Perhaps they can build a strip club at the Holy Sepulcher, a McDonald's at the ruins of Montealban, or a Hard Rock Cafe next to Pyramids of Egypt," wrote columnist Javier Aranda, referring, respectively, to the site where Jesus was buried and to another famous Mexican ruin.

Officials of the State of Mexico, where the ruins are located, had initially hinted they might seek an alternate site for the store.

But on Monday they said there was no way to stop it, because the company had all necessary permits — even though the firm initially started construction without a government-mandated archaeologist.

The 2,000-year-old ruins in a valley just north of Mexico City were built by a little-known culture whose very name has been lost, and were abandoned hundreds of years before the Spaniards arrived.

Canada Wal-Mart Workers Stand Up For A Voice On The Job

WAL-MART WORKERS IN QUEBEC ACCREDITED TO FORM ONLY UNIONIZED WAL-MART IN NORTH AMERICA

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC - A Wal-Mart located in Jonquière, Quebec, Canada is on its way to becoming the only unionized Wal-Mart in North America after a ruling on Monday by the Quebec Labour Relations Board (QLRC) to grant employees union certification with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Canada (www.ufcw.ca).

The union accreditation was issued by the QLRC after a majority of employees at the store signed UFCW Canada membership cards. QLRC adjudicator Jocelyne Houle stated that, "the applicant is representative, as required by law." A hearing has been scheduled for August 20th to finalize the specific definition of which employees will have the right to union representation.

"The Quebec certification shows that when workers' rights are protected, Wal-Mart workers will exercise those rights for a voice at work. Our challenge is to make sure that governments protect workers rights across Canada, the U.S. and around the world," said Joseph Hansen, UFCW International President and President of the Union Network International, a global trade federation representing 16 million workers in 100 countries.

Today's Labour Board victory is the latest in a series of organizing drives at Wal-Mart stores throughout Canada. Currently UFCW Canada has other applications pending for Wal-Mart stores in Weyburn and North Battleford, Saskatchewan; in Terrace, British Columbia, Thompson, Manitoba, and in Brossard, Quebec, where a majority of workers have sought UFCW representation.

The Quebec store will be the first wall-to-wall Wal-Mart store where workers successfully chose union representation. Meat department workers in the Jacksonville, Texas, Wal-Mart Supercenter voted for UFCW representation in 2000. Wal-Mart refused to bargain with the workers, despite orders from the National Labor Relations Board. It also eliminated the meat department in Jacksonville and across the country in an

attempt to scare workers from standing up for a voice on the job. Wal-Mart stated publicly that it supports workplace democracy and that it would not close the store because workers chose a union. The UFCW

Canada looks forward to sitting down to negotiating a first contract without delay.

Baristas Union Prevails: Labor Board Affirms Starbucks Workers Right to a Vote

July 1, 2004

New York, NY- Starbucks was handed a major defeat today when the National Labor Relations Board Region 2 issued its decision upholding the right of Starbucks workers at the 36th Street and Madison Avenue store in Midtown Manhattan to vote in a union certification election. Starbucks attempted to block the first union in the United States at one of its locations by arguing that workers at a single store in the chain should be denied a certification election.

"Starbucks and Chairman Howard Schultz sought to trample on the fundamental human right to form a union," said Daniel Gross, an IWW IU/660 member at the store. "Thankfully, they failed. If Starbucks really is such a wonderful place to work, why is the company so scared of a vote?'

The legal challenge against the Union is a major part of the Starbucks anti-union effort which also includes the dissemination of misinformation, threats of losing benefits, and promises of promotions in return for loyalty to the company. The company hired union-busting lawyers Daniel Nash and Gregory Knopp at the corporate firm Akin Gump in their failed effort to deny a fair vote to workers, an effort which included senior Starbucks managers submitting untruthful testimony under oath.

"The NLRB sent a clear message to Starbucks that it could not block workers at a single store from exercising their statutory right to organize a union," said Stuart Lichten of Kennedy, Schwartz, and Cure, the law firm representing IU/660. "This is a major victory for workers in retail chain stores."

Starbucks workers announced in May that they had formed the first union in the United States at the company and had petitioned for a certification election. Baristas organized a union, because though Starbucks is a highly profitable company that benefits from a communityfriendly image, its employees earn a poverty wage while working under conditions that result in widespread repetitive strain injuries.

For more info:

www.starbucksunion.org or call Daniel Gross at 917-577-1110



Growers' Group Signs the First Union Contract for Guest Workers

By Steven Greenhouse

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SEPTEMBER 17, 2004

North Carolina Growers Association, which represents 1,000 farmers, signed a union contract yesterday covering 8,500 guest workers from Mexico - a move that the association and union said was the first union contract in the nation for guest workers.

At the signing ceremony at a church in Raleigh, the Mount Olive Pickle Company, the nation's second largest pickle company, announced that it had signed a separate contract with the union, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, ending a five-and-a-half-year boycott campaign against the company.

The two contracts end a long, bitter dispute in which the Farm Labor Organizing Committee accused Mount Olive of using cucumber growers who mistreated their workers. In organizing a boycott that was backed by the National Council of Churches, the union said that workers employed by Mount Olive's growers often lived in squalid housing and that one worker had died of heat prostration and another of heat prostration or exposure to pesticides.

The company is tremendously relieved to have the boycott ended," said Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, which is based in Toledo, Ohio. "They were getting tired of all the negative publicity.'

Bill Bryan, Mount Olive's president, said the boycott hardly hurt the company's sales, except in pockets of the Midwest. But he acknowledged it was time-consuming and annoying to have to respond to questions about why his company was being boycotted.

"We have always said we would be interested in settling the boycott if we could do so with reasonable terms that we felt were appropriate for our company," said Mr. Bryan, who asserted that the boycott was based partly on inaccurate information and unfair accusations.

The agreement with the North Carolina growers unusual because it is the first union contract ever signed by farmers in the state, which has a history of hostility to unions, and because the contract provides for a union hiring hall in Mexico to help supply guest workers.

telephone interview, Mr. Velasquez hailed the agreement with the growers' association because it gives unionized farm workers a foothold in the South and because it should encourage workers to speak up without fear of retaliation. He also praised the agreement because it provides grievance procedures and a seniority system, which he said would effectively eliminate a blacklist that prevented guest workers who complained from being rehired. Spokesmen for the growers denied that any blacklist

Mr. Bryan said the agreement Mount Olive signed would help workers by raising their wages by a total of 10 percent over three years. Under federal regulations, agricultural guest workers in North Carolina under the H-2A temporary visa program are to be paid at least \$8.06 an hour, with a piece rate equal to 44 percent of the value of what they pick.

Mr. Bryan said his company would raise the price it pays its 60 growers, a move that would help raise piece rates so workers could earn \$10 to \$12 an hour. Mount Olive also agreed to pay a 3 percent price bonus to growers who agreed to provide workers compensation cover-

In Mount Olive's agreement with the union, the company promised to participate in various committees organized by the growers' association to study how to improve housing and health care for the farm workers. In addition, the union and growers' association said they would jointly contact the Mexican government to discuss graft, bribery and blackmail carried out by recruiters of migrant workers, especially illegal immigrants.

More News Can Be Found On The Web WWW.MADHATTERSIMC.ORG

regional

Mid-Hudson Valley People's Assembly

By Jeff Green

On September 18 more than 200 people gathered in Orange County, NY for the first Mid-Hudson Valley Assembly. Entitled, People's "Reclaiming Our Democracy", the event was the brainchild of activist Tula Tsalis. The Assembly consisted of a full day of seminars and panel discussions culminating with an evening address by Chief UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter.

Mr. Ritter, well known in progressive circles as an outspoken critic of U.S. policy in Iraq, resigned from the UN inspector team four years ago. Mr. Ritter called the war in Iraq "illegitimate" and claimed Americans were, "one of the most ignorant people on the face of the earth". Explaining the comment he said, in general, Americans have no understanding of the complexities of the different cultures of the world and don't really want to know. "We don't deal with things on the basis of rational fact, we act on the basis of irrational

The main purpose of the Assembly was education and training and this was accomplished through a series of more than two dozen panel discussions and seminars. Some of these Money/Clean included: Clean Elections in New York, Living Wages, International Activism, Medicare as the first step towards a National health care program, Workers Rights. the importance of an independent media, and global free trade.

Joel Koval hosted a seminar dealing with the coming ecological crisis, Mark Jacobs and Lisa Rainwater (both from WESPAC) ran a well attended session on the Indian Point nuclear power plant and Manna Jo Greene (Clearwater) hosted a panel on, Food, Environment, Free Trade and Human Rights. Geoff Welch (Ramapo River Committee) and Charlie Olson (WESPAC) facilitated a discussion entitled, "Water: Our Common Resource and Basic Human Right."

In the afternoon there was a program on community organizing led by labor organizers Jen Fuentes (AFL/CIO) and Ed Felton (Mid Hudson Coalition for Economic Justice), in which a sample campaign for a county-wide prescription drug plan was organized. And, during a program on sustainability moderated by Melissa Everett (Sustainable Hudson Valley), a bio-diesel co-op was started by several attendees.

The entryway to the Central Valley Elementary School, site of the Assembly, was turned into an activist fair for the day. Some of the organizations tabling were; Veterans For Peace, Amnesty International, NY Clean Money/Clean Elections, Invincible Defense and other socially conscious organizations doing work in the region.

Organizers for the event were; Sue Hope Altkin, Verne Belle, Tom Golodik, Mark Jacobs, Richard McKnight, Lydia Negron, Trent Schroyer, Steven White and Tula Tsalis.

The People's Assembly maintains a website at: www.midhudsonvpa.org.

The Putnam Smart Growth Alliance

BY MICHAEL EDDINGTON

Growing from a sense of frustration with politics as usual and the continuing advance of suburban sprawl, all the recognized leaders of Putnam County's environmental and conservation movements came together this past summer to form the Putnam Smart Growth Alliance, a 501(c)(4) organization that can endorse candidates and lobby for legislation.

According to PSGA President Lynne Eckardt of Southeast, the Alliance believes it is essential to balance new development with the preservation of open space lands and natural habitats. When describing the need for this new organization Ms. Eckardt says, "We must take into account appropriate environmental factors as well as the community needs to ensure the continuation of our high quality of life."

One of the first official acts of the Alliance was to endorse Marcellino and Thomas DiNapoli's bill in the NY State Legislature that would allow local municipalities to consider a transfer fee of up to 2 percent on local real estate transactions in order to create a source of revenue for the purchase and preservation of open space lands.

Board member Jeff Green of Kent who runs www.planputnam.org said, "What the alliance is going to be doing is not looking at every development coming around but looking instead at the bigger picture, rather than viewing these issues from a town by town perspective as has been done in the past."

On the creation of such a group, John Nolon, director of the Land Use Law Center at Pace University, said that the effort of trying to balance development and conservation is a "good thing." Mr. Nolon adds, "It's also a good thing that people concerned with these things look at these things across municipal boundaries.'

Ridgefield, CT developer Paul Camarda said, "My first thought would be, any time you can bring people together to have a reasonable and thoughtful dialogue regarding issues, there is a possibility good things can come out of that dialogue.'

In late August the Alliance held a fundraiser and cocktail party at a private home in Brewster where they raised over five thousand dollars in donations and a silent auction. The evening event was attended by almost 100 community members and a host of local politicians including NYS Assembly member Sandra Galef and Putnam County legislators Vinnie Tamagna and Dan Birmingham.

The Alliance is currently looking at a number of issues of concern to the region including proposed "Senior Housing" communities, the lack of a permanent funding mechanism to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife habitat, the proposed widening of Route 22 in Brewster and Patterson, and a 400,000 sq ft retail development proposed for the I84 corridor that has earned significant community opposition.

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reduce the risk of heart disease". This claim was supposedly based on some clinical trials which demonstrated lower levels of cholesterol were possible from a diet low in both saturated fat and cholesterol that had soy protein added to it, compared with similar diets without the soy added. However, other studies have not shown such a benefit, hence the stipulation "...may reduce the risk...". Furthermore, such a diet would likely reduce the risk of heart disease based on its own merit, without the soy.

Recent studies have also cast doubt on soy's ability to mediate the effects of hot flashes on postmenopausal women. For example, a doubleblind study reported soy did not reduce the quantity or severity of hot flashes among breast cancer survivors; the inadequacy of soy isoflavones to reduce the risk of breast cancer will be addressed

in a subsequent article.

In conclusion, the general public has been grossly misled about the historic safe consumption of soy products and the possible health benefits they bring. Levels of consumption suggested to the U.S. general public far exceeded those which other countries have observed and even the very soybeans consumed have been genetically altered in recent decades. Scientists and researchers who opposed government approval of health claims were met with resistance or ignored. The motivation for this string of developments is the soy industry's ability to take a product, which less than one hundred years ago was listed in the USDA handbook (1913) for industrial use and not a food, and turn it into a desirable multi-million dollar commodity. This industry includes merchants, manufacturers, scientists, publicists, bureaucrats, bond financiers, food writers, vitamin companies, retail stores, and the agribusiness conglomerates which grow it. Their misinformation is mainstream and without much contest before the general public. Indeed, it seems consumers will proceed to purchase this fashionable product in its many forms for years to come, at least until it becomes the tobacco scandal of the 21st century.



Whereas the focus of this article was upon the inaccuracy of health claims made, the next installment of this series will examine ways in which soy can instigate risks to your health.

For more information until then, visit: www.soyonlineservice.co.nz.

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RISDON

continued from page one

that it's a business decision but the layoffs disrupt people's lives. A lot of these women who are mothers have to go out and find new jobs. It's hard, especially in Fairfield County because it's one of the richest coun-

ties and everything is expensive."

Clarke, who came to America from Jamaica explained, "The first thing I did was to join the Army and then came to Risdon. That's all I know. I'm 44 years old and I've got to start all over. I think that God will help me find something."

me find something."
Patricia Santos and other workers expressed that Risdon AMS had always been an exceptional employer "Benefits always had been good and they cared for the employee. We were a family here," she said.

continued from page three

day traveling to and from NYC.

I asked Kate what she hoped to get from the rallies and demonstrations she participated in and her answer was remarkably simple and eloquent, "Hope", she said. Kate felt compelled to attend expecting, as did John and Wyatt, Kaya, Dylan and Rob, that her voice would he heard by Republican delegates inside the convention

Also looking for hope was Matt Corsaro, a social service worker and part time guitar instructor and musician from New Paltz, NY. Matt awoke early Sunday morning and joined 40 others to ride a bus more than 100 miles to the march and demonstration on Sunday.

These people are not your stereotypical political dissenters: a 14 year old boy, a combat weary marine, a successful attorney with a wife and children, a secretary, a guitar instructor, and tens of thousands of others across-the-board

"This was the biggest plant they had in Connecticut. Where there once was machinery, all you see are empty places."

Courtney Clarke, smiling, reminisced about the annual holiday celebrations. "One of the best places I've ever worked. At Christmas time you get to pick a gift and they give you dinner. Plus on Thanksgiving you get a turkey and we also get a bonus if we don't have any loss accidents."

Stephen Librandi, Director of Human

Resources for Risdon in Watertown said, "Risdon's primary reason for the plant closing was a shift in the market of cosmetics from luxury items to mass marketed ones."

"There's no substitute for a good paying job with a benefit package," Librandi stated. He claims that production workers at

spectrum of the American public, average citizens from every walk of life.

Some risked arrest to make their point while others gave up days off from work or took vacation time that could have been spent at the beach or in the mountains or visiting family and friends. Many spent funds, dipping into savings, many borrowed from friends and family for the trip. Some took trains or busses from far away places.

One group driving from Oregon had their car break down in Pennsylvania. Not having enough money between them to fix it, they left the car behind and hitchhiked the rest of the way to New York underscoring a simple determination expressed by thousands and thousands of others.

Once here, people who could not afford hotels slept on floors or in spare rooms of the homes of friends or distant relatives or strangers willing to offer their hospitality. Political offices, social convergence spaces and churches acted as informal dorms. People slept

Risdon make roughly 20-30 thousand dollars annually. "Workers in Renosa [Mexico] earn six times less per hour than an American Risdon worker," and in accordance to Mexican government mandates. "receive health benefits."

Risdon's profits will increase with 90-100 less jobs on the payroll. Whether they will post it as earnings or use it to create jobs in Connecticut remains unclear. As of now, Risdon AMS has no other plans to downsize in the United States.

"It's sad. What's happening is very sad," Santos said. "This place becomes a home. You spend eight hours here every day. It's hard to realize that it is going to come to an

"This was the biggest plant they had in Connecticut," said Clarke. "Where there once was machinery, all you see are empty places."

where they could. Washed where they could. Ate where they could.

While Republican delegates slept comfortably in \$250 a night hotel rooms eating caviar and drinking champagne at glittering parties hosted by corporate moguls, thousands of ordinary New Yorkers welcomed demonstrators to the city by providing them with simpler food, shelter and comfort, mostly free of charge.

Why would so many average citizens go through so much hardship and sacrifice so much to be in NYC during the conventions? And, how is it that so many New Yorkers, famed for their brusqueness and "attitude" would open their arms and homes to strangers in such large numbers? One young man in Union Square Park had an answer. Written in red paint on a white "T" shirt were three words, one atop the other. "End Bad Things".

And so it was this past summer in New York City where American's gathered in larger numbers than ever before in a simple quest to

end bad things.

& entertainment arts

Our Culture, Our Resistance: People II of Color Speak Out on Anarchism, Race, Class and Gender, was recently Color). The books chronicle writings by A NEW BOOK FROM APOC people of color on the aforementioned

Our Culture, Our Resistance"

issues, as well as the Anarchist People of Color movement. The purpose of these books is to contribute to the ongoing dialogue among people of color and others. It is the first big printed means of starting conversations about anarchism and race. Something you can give to others, start dis-

cussions with, and whatever your creativity can support. To make copying easier for underground distributors, Volume 1 is limited to 92 half-pages (23 letter-sized, double-sided pages). Volume 2 is also 92 pages and is being released simultaneously, so to share all the extended pieces.

Download your copy and hit the print shop now! "Our Culture, Our Resistance, Volume 1" www.illegalvoices.org/downloads/ocor_book_1.pdf

"Our Culture, Our Resistance, Volume 2" www.illegalvoices.org/downloads/ocor book 2.pdf

"More Culture, More Resistance: Unpublished Works" Not everyone got published, including some fantastic poetry and articles, due to time and space and not as a statement on the quality of any piece. All unpublished submissions can be read on line at:

www.illegalvoices.org

(Topics such as "Experiencing Anarchism", "Puppets, Pageantry and Protest Politics", "Raising Children of Color in White Anarchist Circles", "Free the Land: Social Justice and the Environmental Movement" and "Race Gender, Class: Structure of the Global Elite and World Capitalism" are covered.)



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Photos taken by Mr. Jerome Bibuld at the eleventh annual Gasball Music Festival on September 18, 2004 in Danbury, CT. The puppets are members of the Waking Dream Performance Company (www.wakingdreamworld.org). The other photos are of BunnyBrains 88 (www.bunnybrains.com) - Malcolm Hutch (bassist) on the left and Bobby Bunny (vocals and guitar) on the right.

WORKING FAMILIES

continued from page two

facilitated the massive opposition to the Patriot Act, enacting legislature to repeal various clauses of the controversial, and in my opinion, dangerous document. In Connecticut, many local politicians ignored or acquiesced to the corruption of former governor John Rowland. Meanwhile, the governor cut the jobs of hundreds of state workers and Connecticut sunk deeper into economic turmoil that we have not yet begun to fully recover from. On the other hand, there were those, such as Bob Godfrey (state representative for the 110 district. Danbury) who spoke out against the injustice and pursued impeachment and investigation into the numerous Rowland scandals. Defending the citizens of Connecticut from exploitation by the hands

of corporate interest and political scams should be one of the primary roles of public servants. It is one of my personal and political goals and one that I will never put a price on.

For more information on the Working Families Party, visit:

www.ct-workingfamilies.org.

For more information on candidate profiles, voting records and finances, both locally, regionally, statewide and nationwide,

visit: www.vote-smart.org www.opensecrets.org.

