

Remembering, Rebuilding, Rising Above: Katrina, Civil Rights, and Activism Social Welfare Action Alliance Annual Conference

June 14 - 17, 2007

The oppressive and discriminatory governmental response to Hurricane Katrina months ago continues to this day - compounding decades of similar responses to African Americans and people who are impoverished in Louisiana and Mississippi. The presence and activism of SWAA members in New Orleans this summer is essential. We are witnessing first hand what looks like ethnic cleansing on a broad scale, with full complicity, support and direction of the federal, state, and local governments. We must keep that issue on the public agenda and demand accountability and justice.

Brown University sociologist John R. Logan (2005) suggested the very composition and structure of New Orleans society was forever changed by the storm. These preliminary estimates have been validated by a recent special survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (Konigsmark, 2006). The percentage of whites increased from 59% pre-Katrina to 73% today, while the percentage of blacks fell from 37% to 22%, respectively.

Compounding the housing problems facing the poor of New Orleans, they now face demolition of their former homes. The poor fear that they never will be permitted to return to their homes and neighborhoods. Almost ten months after the storm, only a few thousand families had been allowed to return to some of the less damaged public housing units. Amid talk of rebuilding New Orleans and eliminating impoverished neighborhoods, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which has owned and operated public housing in New Orleans since 2002, recently announced that four public housing projects in the city would be demolished. These projects housed 3,000 of the 5,100 families residing in public housing before the storm and represent more than half of all traditional public housing in the city (Roberts, 2006).

New Orleans residents already are significantly whiter (Whoriskey, 2006) and wealthier than they were before the Hurricane. New Orleans' black mayor, Ray Nagin, was narrowly re-elected to a second term in May 2006, but the closeness of the election signified a shift in the

political balance of power in the city in post-Katrina New Orleans. The opportunity to rebuild New Orleans with a more affluent, whiter resident base and a higher dollar-value property tax base is almost irresistible to political leaders and to local developers who now find themselves in a position to profiteer from new, more upscale developments. There is money to be made from disaster. Those who will be squeezed out are poor, people of color and politically powerless (Cornehl, Allen, Simons, & Hurst, 2006).

The Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927 is only one example of the sordid history of the government's intentionally neglectful and discriminatory response to disaster. In 1927, New Orleans was threatened by flooding of the Mississippi River. As a result of heavy rains throughout the Midwest, the Mississippi broke free from an extensive levee system that had increasingly directed its flow and controlled its propensity to flood. It flooded from Illinois to the Gulf Coast; 246 persons perished as a result. Then, as now, those primarily affected were lower income and black.

Parts of New Orleans were already under water, including some of the high ground in the French Quarter. As the Mississippi flood waters approached New Orleans, wealthy citizens persuaded the Governor of Louisiana to dynamite a levee south of the city to relieve pressure on New Orleans' levees, sparing the city the worst of the flood but submerging large parts of St. Bernard Parish - the largely black areas - to the south of Orleans Parish (Leopold, 2005).

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From the Editor

This newsletter was supposed to be ready in November. Unfortunately, the demands of my personal life created significant challenges towards that ambitious print date. I think I have improved my capacity for ensuring 'on-time arrivals' for future newsletters. However, my capacities will be improved with some assistance. I am interested in developing an editorial committee for both SWAA newsletter and website content. While the activities of this committee will develop over time, the primary efforts will include content solicitation, editing (mostly grammatical and punctuation uniformity) and layout. The actual time commitments for this committee are not known as of this moment, but the more hands in play, the less of demands on any particular person. Interested? Please contact me at bikerbillboyd@hotmail.com.

The content in this edition includes more action based content. This is the first edition in my tenure as editor that includes legislative content, community organizing and petition information. It is very exciting to see Bertha's words living through SWAA members; social workers and other human service workers choosing to be active rather than passive. It is my hope that we can increase the reporting of SWAA member's activism in addition to reflection and analysis articles.

Bill Boyd



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"The real choice before us as social workers is whether we are to be passive or active... We must first of all know that we have allies.... In using the organizations we have we shall find others in the community also fighting in organized ways for the same issues in human welfare."

*Bertha Capen Reynolds
Social Work and Social
Living, p. 175-6*

**Social Welfare Action Alliance
(Formerly The Bertha Capen Reynolds Society)
National Steering Committee**

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*Co-Chairs share one vote on the NSC.

**The chair or co-chairs of the current year's Conference Committee and year immediately preceding the current year each have one vote on the NSC.

SWAA National Steering Committee Meeting

March 24-25, 2007

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Open to all SWAA Members

For more information, contact info@socialwelfareactionalliance.org

Social Welfare Action Alliance

(www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org, formerly Bertha Capen Reynolds Society)

CALL FOR CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2007 National Meeting and Conference

Thursday June 14 - Sunday June 17

New Orleans, Louisiana

(Holiday Inn-Downtown Superdome)

Co-Sponsors: Tulane Univ. School of Social Work; Southern Univ. at New Orleans School of Social Work; Jackson State Univ. School of Social Work; Univ. of Houston Graduate College of Social Work; Univ. of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work; Univ. of Texas at Austin School of Social Work; Univ. of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work; Univ. of Oklahoma School of Social Work; Univ. of Alabama School of Social Work; Univ. of Mississippi School of Applied Social Sciences; Marywood Univ. School of Social Work; Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign/University of the Poor; Anti-Racism Committee, Baccalaureate Program Directors Association.

Conference Theme:

Remembering, Rebuilding, Rising Above: Katrina, Civil Rights, and Activism

To respond to this Call for Participation, please email a proposal **by March 1, 2007** to:
Manoj Pardasani, mpardasa@iun.edu

Agency-based social workers and human service workers, social work students and faculty, and activists with community-based organizations, especially in the Gulf Coast area, are particularly encouraged to send in proposals. Please include the following:

- Cover page indicating names, addresses, and affiliations of all presenters.
- 250 word proposal linked to the conference theme and/or the principles of SWAA (see www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org), **and** 50 word abstract for the program.
- In the proposal, please indicate whether the format is a workshop, a panel presentation, a paper, or some other format. Also being solicited are proposals for cultural contributions in the form of music, poetry, art, drama, and multimedia presentations, for presentation at workshops, plenary sessions and other venues.

Proposals will be responded to as soon as possible after being received. We reserve the right to schedule panel presentations and papers in combined sessions. We regret we are unable to provide complementary registration to presenters. Registration is required within two weeks of acceptance but is encouraged along with the proposal. (See other side for subsidized registrations.)

Register Today Using Form on Next Page! CEUs available!

SWAA 2007 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Registrations Include SWAA 2007 Membership for new members or a one year Membership Renewal/Extension for Current/Former Members! For More Information about SWAA, see www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org. Please check one of the Following:

I am a current or former SWAA Member, please renew/extend my membership: _____

I would like to join SWAA, please enroll me for a 2007 Membership: _____

I would like to register, but please do not enroll me as a member at this time: _____

Please fill in the corresponding amounts in each relevant underlined space and total at the bottom:

(Note: Registration includes Friday dinner at Kingsley House and Saturday dinner. Continental breakfasts are provided for persons staying in the hotel the previous night. Lunches on your own in the French Quarter!)

Early Bird Conference Registration by April 1:	_____ \$60 Student/Low Income	_____ \$100 Regular
Conference Registration After April 1:	_____ \$75 Student/Low Income	_____ \$125 Regular
Friday Registration Only (includes 2007 membership/renewal):	_____ \$40 Student/Low Income	_____ \$75 Regular
Saturday Registration Only (includes 2007 membership/renewal):	_____ \$40 Student/Low Income	_____ \$75 Regular
Contribution to Subsidized Registration Fund (Optional):	_____ Any Amount Welcome	_____ Any Amount Welcome
Total in Check (Made out to Social Welfare Action Alliance):	_____ <i>Student/Low Inc. Total</i>	_____ <i>Regular Total</i>

Subsidized and Volunteer Registrations: A limited number of subsidized registrations are available upon request. There are several conference volunteer registrations also available. To check on availability, please email Michael Dover at dover1m@cmich.edu (subsidized registrations) or Judy Lewis at Jlewis@tulane.edu (conference volunteer), prior to registering.

Housing: Holiday Inn-Downtown Superdome, 303 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70112

Rooms: \$75 per room (with two double beds or one king bed). Call 1-504-581-1600 and state you are calling to reserve a room for the SWAA conference.

Co-Sponsorships: Schools and departments of social work and community-based agencies and organizations can choose among three options for co-sponsoring the conference in a manner which provides complementary registrations. Co-sponsors are listed on the conference brochures and flyers and are entitled to a full-page ad in the final conference brochure. For a sample, please see the 2007 brochure on our website at www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org. If you are interested in co-sponsorship, please contact Michael Dover at dover1m@cmich.edu for more information. Following are the three primary options:

Option A: \$300 for co-sponsorship with one complementary faculty/staff and five student registrations (not including housing)

Option B: \$600 for co-sponsorship with up to two faculty/staff and ten student registrations (not including housing)

Option C: \$1000 for co-sponsorship with any combination of 20 faculty, staff and student registrations)

CEUs: Please request CEU information/forms at on-site registration upon arrival at the conference.

RETURN ALONG WITH CHECK MADE OUT TO SOCIAL WELFARE ACTION

ALLIANCE TO: Dr. J. S. Lewis, Tulane School of Social Work, 6823 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118.

UNITED STATES SOCIAL FORUM - SAVE THE DATE!

The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) urges all SWAA members to organize delegations to the United States Social Forum (USSF), which will be held June 27-July 1, 2007 in Atlanta, GA. PPEHRC will sponsor

- a tent city
- a "March for our Lives" to Coca-Cola headquarters focusing on the right to water and other basic needs
- informational and educational sessions on building a movement to end poverty

Information about the forum is available at www.ussf2007.org and information about the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) will be posted at www.economichumanrights.org as plans evolve.

SWAA is an organizational member of PPEHRC.

USSF FAQ

Who should attend? Organizations working for domestic and global justice, as well as people in struggle for a just world – community members, artists, students, workers, immigrants, teachers, etc.

How do I register? You can register online and pay by credit card, or you can download the registration form and send it in with your check or money order to the address below. If you are an organization or school, you may register up to three participants on one form. Organizations (\$125-\$300 sliding scale) and individuals (\$15-\$100 sliding scale) are invited to register. We encourage you to copy the registration form and share it with other organizations that may want to attend.

What will happen during the 5 days? The first day, June 27, will be a festival, with a welcoming procession, performances, film festival, arts & crafts, popular education classes, and more. The following three days, June 28-30, will follow a structured flow, informed by stories of struggle and relationship building. The Program Working Group has created a focus for each day: **Day 1** - Sharing Information & Building Consciousness / **Day 2** - Connecting our Visions / **Day 3** - Strategizing & Taking it Home. On the final day, Sunday, July 1, we will hold a joint action/demonstration to both celebrate our work and show our strength.

Who sets the program agenda? The United States Social Forum is self-planned: those who register to attend will set the agenda. Registered organizations attending the USSF can submit a proposal for a presentation. (*The proposal application form is available online.*) You can submit as many proposals as you like, and may submit a proposal to present either alone or in collaboration with another group. You have the opportunity to pack the schedule with sessions on a range of issues, such as farmworker organizing in the US, LGBT youth, health care justice, livable wage, gentrification, movement building, organizing in the Gulf Coast, environmental justice, prison issues, reproductive justice, black/brown alliance work, war, community arts, cultural policies, arctic wildlife refuge drilling, and war/foreign policy.

How can I participate? You can distribute information in your community, join your regional committee, participate in a working group, arrange for your organization, school, church, synagogue, mosque, or community group to spread the word about the USSF by serving as speakers, increasing people's knowledge of the World Social Forum. You can also make a donation to the Helping Hand Fund to ensure that students and the unemployed may participate in the USSF.

How can I connect with others in my community who are coming to the USSF? Connect with your regional committee to see if they have plans to mobilize your community for the USSF. Visit our website and log onto the message board to share information about rides, room shares, and more.

How will I get there? Each individual or organization is responsible for transportation. Many organizations are planning to coordinate buses and caravans.

Who can help me attend? We urge you to discuss sponsorship and support with your organization or local church, synagogue or mosque. If you belong to an organization that receives foundation funding, we urge you to approach them about creating an additional travel subsidy grant that will not impact your current level of funding. Most foundations are willing to provide travel grants to organizations and their constituencies.

What about childcare? Childcare will be provided at several sites on a sliding scale according to the participant's ability to pay.

Where will I stay? Each individual and organization should arrange for his or her own housing. We are negotiating prices with several hotels in the Atlanta area. Some hotels will allow up to four people per room, which will make the cost very affordable. Recommended hotels and prices will be posted on the website. Check out the online message board for alternative housing with community members.

What will I eat? We are working to identify economical kitchens for low cost food, but each individual will be responsible for his own food.

What if I want to be a vendor? You can sign up to sell merchandise, be a food vendor, or staff an information table. Vendor information is listed on our website. You can contact the USSF staff at info@ussocialforum.org or fill out the form online.

What should I bring? Bring information about yourself, your work, and your organizations. Bring t-shirts or other items to share, trade, or barter. Bring your imagination, creativity and solutions to share. If you are sun sensitive we suggest you bring an umbrella to protect you from the Atlanta sun. Bring friends and partners in the struggle to share this incredible experience with you.

For more information please contact:

Alice Lovelace

USSF National Lead Staff Organizer

9 Gammon Ave SW Atlanta, GA 30315

(404) 622-1133 office (404) 819-7863 cell (404) 622-6618 fax

alovelace@mindspring.com

www.ussocialforum.org/ www.ussf2007.org

Another world is possible!

The **UNITED STATES SOCIAL FORUM** is *more* than a conference, *more* than a networking bonanza, and *more* than a reaction to war and repression.

JOIN US IN MAKING THE FIRST USSF A SUCCESS!

The **USSF** is the next critical step in our struggle. This moment demands that we build a powerful movement that transforms this country.

We must declare what we want our world to look like and begin creating the path to take us there.

*Join us in
Atlanta!*

It is with great energy and urgency that we appeal to you as supporters and fighters of freedom for humanity.

June 27th - July 1st, 2007 will mark a historic and critical moment for Atlanta, Georgia, the Gulf Coast, and the entire Nation. More than 20,000 grassroots organizers, workers, union members, community members, people of faith, educators, youth, peace activists, immigrant and indigenous populations, and displaced folks and evacuees are planning to convene in Atlanta for the first ever **United States Social Forum**.

This gathering is an essential step to strengthening our collective organizations and each of us individually. We are the ones who will become recommitted and interconnected in ways that will allow us to return to our communities with plans to build local leadership for now and the future.

The **United States Social Forum** will:

- * Address four key current issues: the Gulf Coast Crisis, Immigration, Environmental Justice, and War/Violence.
- * Convene more than 20,000 individuals from across the USA and the world in Atlanta, GA.
- * Provide space for political and economic education on these issues - especially the Gulf Coast disaster and the War in Iraq.
- * Provide an opportunity for essential leadership development of those most affected by economic and racial injustice.
- * Build a progressive infrastructure of grassroots and community-based organizations across the United States for long-term work.

BECOME INVOLVED! Sponsor the USSF... Spread the News... Donate Your Energy and Skills to the Process!

Visit the website for information, updates, and to join this vital work:

www.ussocialforum.org



The **USSF** will provide space to build relationships, learn from each other's experiences, and share our analysis of the problems our communities face. A global movement is rising.

The **USSF** is our opportunity to demonstrate to the world that we too believe that

*Another world
is possible!*

The United States progressive movement stands at the doorway of an opportunity to expand our ranks and strengthen our strategies.

We have entered a critical moment that has the potential to spark real movement in this country. The defeats of the 2004 elections and the aftermath of the Gulf Coast hurricanes shifted the collective consciousness of our nation. Our democratic system is in shambles, there is no effective safety net for poor and working people, and the state is willing to abandon and criminalize families whether they are trying to escape disaster or cross the borders for better work.

The **USSF** offers us a powerful opportunity to harness and direct this shift in consciousness at the grassroots level, and provides a vehicle to bridge current divisions, gather momentum, and create badly needed infrastructure.

UNITED STATES SOCIAL FORUM
9 Gammon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30315
(404) 622-1133 alovelace@mindspring.com

Books by Bertha Capen Reynolds

Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work (1985; originally published 1942)

Reynolds stresses the need for the professional social worker to be educated as a whole person. She describes the stages of conscious intelligence in the process of learning and relates them to the motivation for learning.

Social Work and Social Living (1987; originally published 1951)

The practice and philosophy of social work are critically examined. Reynolds argues, based on her experiences with labor unions, that the orientation of social agencies toward psychological dynamics makes it difficult for clients to seek help.

Between Client and Community (1982; originally published 1934)

Caseworkers are often caught between the conflicting needs of their clients and the community, especially in times of rapid change. Reynolds examines how these conflicting demands can be resolved.

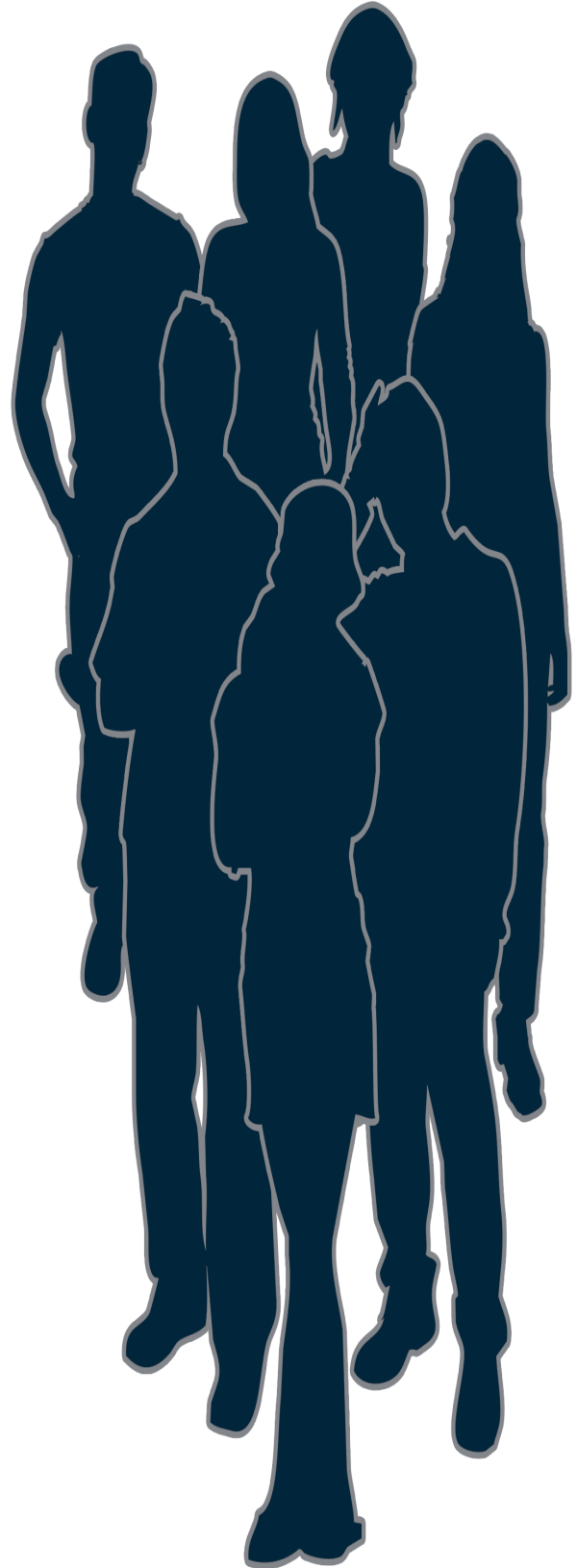
Uncharted Journey (1991)

Reynolds' inspirational autobiography dedicated to "young social workers who are facing realities and shaping our profession with courage and creativity." Covers the development of her practice philosophy and the source of her career from 1914-1964.

The Years Have Spoken (1988)

A collection of annual greetings sent by Reynolds to her friends from 1935-1973. This limited edition includes her annual original verse and narrative describing the condition of the world that year and how she had been affected by these events.

*TO ORDER Bertha's Books, go to
www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org*



Chapter Reports

Houston Chapter Report

Students at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston have re-activated the SWAA chapter this fall. Over 20 students have expressed interest, and 10 of them have become official SWAA members, which creates “official” chapter status. Also, there is a 4 person steering committee and two semi-faculty liaisons, one of which is Gary Norman. For the fall, the chapter is hosting the Women’s Prison Book Drive on campus to help provide resources for incarcerated women and also raise awareness of women’s prison issues. They also plan to sponsor several brown bag lectures, along with several social, community-building events. As the book drives begins to close, the chapter will begin its “change campaign” against the rampant sexual abuse within Texas’ prisons. Specifically, the chapter plans a letter writing campaign in alliance with ACT UP Austin, an HIV activist group, to demand condom access in Texas prisons.

Like most organizing efforts, the progress is moving along slowly but surely.

Kasey McKee
swaahouston@yahoo.com
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SWAA_UH/

Michigan Chapter Report

We spent the entire semester working on the campaign to defeat Proposal 2 here in Michigan. We collaborated with One United Michigan and Students Supporting Affirmative Action on many events, providing volunteers for phone banking, canvassing and literature distribution to educate voters on the implications of the proposal and encourage them to vote no. Within the School of Social Work, SWAA educated our peers with email announcements and a large calendar of events to encourage students, staff and faculty to attend the many education events going on campus. Finally, SWAA organized two educational events in the School of Social Work.

After the passage of Prop. 2, members organized (with ABSWS) a march on Washington to protest the Supreme Court cases. To fund the trip, SWAA held a bake sale and raised over \$400 in just one week, allowing for the rental of a bus to get us all there.

Sara E. Schmidt
sesch@umich.edu

Mississippi Chapter Report

A new Mississippi chapter of the SWAA will formally launch at the annual program meeting of the state NASW chapter in March 2007. Efforts to recruit members from schools of social work and social welfare agencies are underway, spearheaded by a joint project between University of Southern Mississippi and University of Mississippi social work faculty. Initial recruiting efforts and planning took place at the recent Alabama/Mississippi Social Work Educators conference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama in October.

The proposed workshop session “Why Mississippi Needs the Social

Welfare Action Alliance” will also address the 12 social justice gaps in Mississippi and how SWAA activists can help to close those gaps.

A first meeting of the new SWAA chapter will be used, in part, to promote attendance at the SWAA national meeting tentatively scheduled for June of 2007 in New Orleans.

Susan Allen
scallen@bellsouth.net

Portland Chapter Report

The Portland SWAA chapter has had limited activity this year. Despite being invited to speak at Portland State’s School of Social Work new student orientation for the first time, few students have been able to attend the initial organizing meetings. We followed up on Mary Bricker-Jenkin’s visit last May by helping our friends at Sisters of the Road (www.sistersoftheroad.org) attend the National Truth Commission in July (see page 12). Our main activity has been working with Sisters of the Road’s annual Martin Luther King Day march and rally. Willie Baptist from PPEHRC was the featured speaker. He was very well received, but the follow-up workshops and activities were cancelled because of excessive snow. We hope that we can gain more active participation among PSU students during 2007.

Bill Boyd
bikerbillboyd@hotmail.com

Rochester Chapter Report

This summer, four SWAA members attended the National Truth Commission in Cleveland, sponsored by the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign. Two of the group members were students who found it an energizing experience, and a good introduction to the concept of economic human rights.

The Rochester Chapter is still inundated with requests from various groups to run Reality Tours. We decided to “kick it up a notch” and challenged ourselves by running four tours in one weekend! Participants included: the Jewish Community Federation; three social action groups from local Catholic Churches; University of Rochester Medical Students; SUNY Brockport Social Work students; and various other members of the community, about 100 riders total. We already have requests from a local Unitarian church and professors from other universities. We added a city school district principal and teacher to our line-up of speakers, as well as a professor from the University of Rochester who has done an amazing project on homicides in our community (see other story). One of our members is developing a grant proposal so that we might hire an organizer to work on these tours to free us up for other activities. There are already several names on a waiting list for the next tour.

We showed the video “Poverty Outlaw” to two groups of students on the SUNY Brockport campus in October. Plans for the spring include a community forum tying urban violence to the denial of economic human rights. We hope to invite Willie Baptist and possibly other KWRU members to facilitate this event.

Barbara Kasper
Berthabk@aol.com

Chapter Reports, continued

Seattle Chapter Report

On October 5, 2006, members of the Seattle SWAA Chapter participated in The World Can't Wait demonstration in the Capital Hill neighborhood. While hundreds listened to the usual, ubiquitous speeches, we signed the Drive Out the Bush Regime petition, already signed by US Representative Maxine Waters, Cornel West, Howard Zinn, and our own local war protestor, Lt. Ehren Watada. We also signed on to the Statement of Conscience of the Not In Our Name movement. This statement concludes that "It is our responsibility to stop the Bush regime from carrying out this disastrous course [of the invasion of Iraq, torture, and detentions]. We believe history will judge us sharply should we fail to act decisively."

We will continue to march, to lobby, and to organize against the war and the current regime.

Marilynn Moch
mochcihri@aol.com

(sub)URBAN HOMICIDE: A Public Intervention Performance Project

The Preface:

This seventh month, public intervention was designed in response to the 54 homicides that occurred in Rochester, NY, in 2005, hence naming it the murder capital of New York State, followed by Buffalo, Syracuse, and New York City. Coincidentally, this marked a 54% increase in murders over the preceding year. Many other U.S. cities are following the same trend: The murder rate rose 76% in Birmingham between 2004 and 2005, 40% in Milwaukee, 42% in Kansas City, and 23% in Houston. On June 12, 2006, the FBI released statistics showing that 2005 was the largest one-year increase in violent crime in the United States since 1991 and the largest increase of homicides since 1998.

This project coincides with a time when U.S. cities are experiencing the disappearance of the middle class at exponential rates. This social shift may, in part, contribute to the gap between those who have the power to make decisions and those who vitally depend on the decisions made. The intention of this project is not to blame anyone for their lifestyle or socioeconomic status, but rather to bridge the gap by presenting a fictional scenario to our wealthiest citizens: "What if this were happening in our prosperous neighborhoods? What decisions would be made then?"

The Project:

First, I plotted the locations of the 54 homicides that occurred in Rochester, NY, in 2005. I then traced the locations with tracing paper, flipped the tracing paper over to the other side of the city, and superimposed the marks across the mirrored suburban neighborhoods (primarily white, high-income communities). I then visited each of these [fictional] suburban homicide sites on the suburban half of the city and placed a memorial on-location for each victim. The mirrored homicide sites included golf courses, front lawns of mansions, supermar-

ket parking lots, school playgrounds, town parks, and church steps. Each memorial consisted of a large funeral flower arrangement and a card showing an image of the victim, the victim's name, age, race, date, cause of death, and his or her chronological number in relation to the 54. I have photographed each of the memorials on site and have made digital prints from the documentation, which I plan to install in both public and private spaces. The project intends to bring sociopolitical awareness to communities that may otherwise be unaffected by the rising incidents of violent crime in their own city, and in many cases, only streets away.

Heather Layton

Multi-media artist and visiting professor of art at the University of Rochester

hlayton@mail.rochester.edu



***Are you organizing as SWAA
chapter or some other activist
group? Please share your ef-
forts with us! Send your reports
to
info@socialwelfareactionalliance.org***

How To Organize a SWAA Chapter

Any group of 10 current SWAA members can create a Chapter. "How to Organize a SWAA Chapter" organizing packets are available from the SWAA website at www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org or by contacting Melissa Sydor at melmas1@yahoo.com or 585-262-4366. The contents of the packets include such things as posters, brochures, book order forms, recent newsletters, copy of by-laws, names of SWAA organizers from the Steering Committee who will help you, and much more! Please allow four weeks for delivery.

JPHS

The Journal of Progressive Human Services (JPHS) is available to members of SWAA at a substantial discount. It can be ordered through SWAA using the application in this issue of the *BCR Reports*. **Neither the JPHS collective nor SWAA are involved in subscription fulfillment; that is the responsibility of our publisher, Haworth Press. If you are a subscriber and have not received an issue, contact Haworth at 1-800-429-6784 or at getinfo@haworthpress.com.** To submit an article to JPHS, send four copies of your manuscript, including a short abstract to: Marcia Cohen, JPHS Collective, University of New England, School of Social Work, 716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103. It is important that your name and any other identifying information not appear on three of these four copies. We also encourage submissions of poetry and short (500-1000 word) opinion pieces for our Soapbox column and letters to the editors. The table of contents of the current issue (17/2 and the forthcoming issue (18/1) appear below.

*For the JPHS Collective,
Marcia Cohen*

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REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL TRUTH COMMISSION

On July 15 and 16, 2006, the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) made history in Cleveland, Ohio by holding the first National Truth Commission on Poverty in the United States of America. The National Truth Commission was held in Lincoln Park, in Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood. Years in the planning and modeled after similar commissions in Africa and Latin America, the National Truth Commission brought people from all across the U.S. and the world to bring to light the actual suffering and economic human rights violations that many Americans endure on a daily basis. Nearly 500 people came to listen and be heard over the course of the weekend.

Social movement leaders from all over the nation and world converged on Cleveland to hear testimony and serve as Truth Commissioners. These included Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Independent Expert on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights for the High Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations and a member of Indian Parliament; Nora Morales de Cortinas, one of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo from Argentina; and Peter Weiss from the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York. They and the other commissioners will convene before the end of the week to strategize appropriate responses to all the gripping testimony they heard. In their closing comments, all of the commissioners stated how touched they were by the testimonies and committed to documenting all that they had heard and learned. People from communities across the U.S. presented testimony detailing economic human rights violations that they have experienced. Testimony was presented in six broad categories, or panels, including:

- Right to Health Care
- Living Wage Struggles
- Right to Housing
- Right to Water and Basic Utilities
- Right to Education
- Unjust Child Removal

Each panel featured individuals who were adversely affected by the policies of this administration. Union representatives from UNITE-HERE spoke alongside the unemployed about the right to a living wage. Donn Teske from the Kansas Farmers Union talked about the experiences of small farming families struggling against big corporate agriculture. Lori Smith from Nashville, Tennessee spoke about being dropped from her health insurance plan after being diagnosed with Lupus and Multiple Sclerosis. Mailon Ellison from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania testified about his struggles trying to make a home for himself and his family while continuing to battle to remain sober. DawnMarie Fucile from Cleveland, Ohio told us about how her child was taken away from her simply because she is deaf and poor. Maureen Taylor from Detroit, Michigan testified about massive water shut offs in Detroit. Two young men from New Orleans spoke eloquently about the realities they face in what was once their hometown. J.R. from Chicago's Cabrini Green Housing Projects described the position held by Chicago housing officials that the best way to deal with Chicago's poor residents is to forcibly evict them.

The individuals who testified at the National Truth Commission spoke the truth about what is really happening to people in communities all across the United States. And each of the individuals offering testimony played an important role in helping the Truth Commissioners

understand the difficulties of their plight and all of the obstacles they face. Later this year the PPEHRC plans to release a publication featuring the testimonies, as well as the findings from the National Truth Commission.

The National Truth Commission was also unique in that it provided an important forum for artists and musicians to discuss their work trying to shine a light on economic human rights violations and tell the world about poverty in America. Hurricane Katrina survivors, performers from the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, and other cultural workers discussed strategies to use arts and culture in the movement to end poverty. These deep and powerful messages, incorporated into art, music, theatre and dance, remind us that we are not alone. The soulful songs and amazing performances at the Truth Commission inspired and united us. The poetry of Ernie Perez and other artists from Rock-a-Mole remind us all of the importance of creativity when addressing the difficult issues surrounding poverty.

The Truth Commission was an enormous success. The testimonies of the brave individuals exposed the numerous human rights violations that many in America face. We cried together and got angry together as we created a space to tell the truth and inspire one another from our struggles.

Given this huge success, it is important for each individual who attended or read about the National Truth Commission to spread the word in their own communities. Take the time to speak to your neighbors and friends about what you know to be the reality of poverty in America. Prepare yourself to read the findings of the Truth Commissioners and to take action in your community. We can not do this alone and are hopeful that individuals like you will continue to support us and join us as we fight for all of our economic human rights.

More information about the PPEHRC and the National Truth Commission, including photos, videos, and transcripts, can be found at www.economichumanrights.org.

National Truth Commission Receives International Exposure

Cheri Honkala, National Coordinator of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, will be presenting the testimony and findings of PPEHRC's National Truth Commission, held July 15, 2006 in Cleveland, Ohio, to 15 Latin American Presidents who are holding a summit in coordination with the Social Summit of the Integration of the Peoples held in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Cheri's presence was requested late yesterday afternoon and she will be traveling today with written, photo, and video documentation of this powerful event.

Honkala will be met by additional PPEHRC representatives who have been in Bolivia for the past several days attending the Social Summit and other meetings to help ensure the participation of the organized poor's participation in the World Social Forum, the US Social Forum, and a march on the Republican National Convention 2008.

Stay tuned for more information.

*Cecilia Garza, National Administrator
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cecilia@economichumanrights.org*

Membership Committee Report

As members know, the Social Welfare Action Alliance offers great opportunities to engage with others in progressive action, to connect with others working for social and economic justice, and to dialogue with poor people's movements, faculty from around the country, rank and file social workers and others.

First, the numbers...

SWAA currently has 269 members that have paid dues in 2006. The membership directory, available in early 2007, lists 383 members who have paid dues as of January 2005 or later. Members can check their status by looking at the directory (available on the SWAA website), which now shows the dates of last dues payment.

Renew your membership today!

The membership committee will mail out renewal letters and forms in early January 2007. The membership form, included with each mailing, features a few changes. First, the student, low income, and/or unemployed membership is now \$10 rather than \$15. Second, a subscription to the Journal of Progressive Human Services is \$25 and is in addition to SWAA membership.

Get involved!

SWAA is a national and international group with members spread throughout North America and in Canada, the United Kingdom, and France. All SWAA members have the chance to engage in action through committees. The Faculty Network is thriving, and the Peace and Justice Committee is looking for more members. You can also start your own local chapter or find a chapter near you. Just put a check next to your interest or interests on the back of the membership form!

Fun Fact

Twenty-nine, or nearly 11 percent of current members have lifetime memberships.

Submitted by Jennifer Filipovich, for the Membership Committee



Maryann Mahaffey:

January 18, 1925 - July 27, 2006

During an interview for Detroit television station WXYZ, Maryann Mahaffey reminded viewers that in 1974 when she was elected to the Detroit City Council, her mission did not change from her social work role with the Girl Scouts. It was 'to end discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, etc., to begin to make a dent in poverty, and to also end discrimination against women'.*

While SWAA members who knew her have parsed this statement and other conversations to discuss whether Maryann was a radical who happened to be a social worker... or a social worker with radical politics, I like the summary by Rochelle Riley of the Detroit Free Press:* During her years of grassroots service on the city housing and civil rights commissions as a volunteer, and on the City Council, Maryann confronted anyone who was blocking help to people in need. "...Detroit (was) the place where she fought for fair housing, women's rights and racial and economic justice, where *her training as a social worker became vital in helping a city in constant strife.*"

SWAA's Ann Withorn made a similar observation, noting that "when I met Bertha Reynolds and Maryann Mahaffey, I asked them both some version of the question (was she first a political radical or a social worker). Both in their way said that the values and politics they held were not grounded in social work 'professionalism' but, rather, that the kind of practice they had as social workers allowed them to practice their politics in the domestic arena."

Maryann is remembered in Detroit as having brought her social work sensibilities to the Council. She pushed the city to create and fund a rape crisis unit, advocated for legislation that regulated homeless shelters and apartment rentals, and expanded the city's health care benefits to include gay couples. She was a friend of organized labor, often joining their picket lines, and spent nights on the streets with the city's homeless people to bring attention to their plight.

Of her experience while an undergraduate social work student at the Poston II Japanese internment camp in 1945, she said, "I think I did some good, but I will be forever haunted by what could not be done, by the irreparable damage inflicted on an innocent, helpless, defenseless population." Her daughter, Susan Dooha, also commented that for Maryann "it was such a powerful lesson about injustice and human rights that it was really a touchstone for the rest of her life... about basic justice for human beings."

Citizens of Detroit, when given the opportunity to write their own 'good-bye' to Maryann, wrote that she was 'a champion for peace and justice,' participating in a peace march as one of her last public activities, that her greatest gift to Detroit was that her "public service was never about her," and "she was always there for all of us."

As a founding member, Maryann's exhortation for social workers to join SWAA (formerly the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society) "Just Do It!" was for many years on our brochure. As I recall, she last attended

Dancing with the Devil: Organizing Work with Mainstream Social Work Organizations

The Kensington Welfare Rights Union and Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Coalition has for years had a very successful collaboration with National Association of Social Workers, Pennsylvania chapter. By “successful” I mean that we (KWRU/PPEHRC) were able to have a mutually beneficial tactical alliance through which some of the needs and interests of both NASW and PPEHRC were advanced through the alliance. Through the use of a legislative alliance and initiative to pass an Economic Human Rights resolution, we (KWRU/PPEHRC) were able to briefly and selectively use NASW-PA resources to educate and organize around the state. That effort continues. The benefits of this alliance include increased legitimacy of NASW, recognition of the work of scores of workers (both social workers and people living in poverty... sometimes overlapping categories), and the creation of a legislative precedent. Both organizations made concessions, and at no point has there been total trust or commonality of interests. Indeed, we had - and have - very different analyses of what is required to achieve social and economic justice in this country, and as a result pursue different strategies. However, we made tactical alliances.

Understanding the difference between strategy and tactics is essential to dancing with the devil without getting your foot crushed.

The other “sine qua non” is being clear on who has what power and when and how they will exercise it.

Here is a case in point: for several years (two terms) I have been the editor or co-editor of the NASW Specialty Practice Newsletter for the section on what was formally known as the Poverty & Social Justice, but is now known as the Social and Economic Justice & Peace. When people, including many SWAA members, organized for this practice section to be restored to standing committee status, the national NASW Executive Director decided to crush the effort. Among other things, she instructed the staff person that works on the newsletter to “improve” it. What that meant was that articles that had already been approved by the steering committee were either dropped or changed so fundamentally that the authors’ meanings and messages were changed. Then the staff person, in exclusive consultation with the chair, created a new, acceptable newsletter. When I and others on the committee objected and requested a conference call, we were ignored. Neither the staff liaison nor the Executive Director had the courtesy to reply. They know that the steering committee members are appointed by the president based on perceived interest, but usually have no relationship with each other, and share only the broadest common interests, program (except the newsletter) and constituency. So, having co-opted the chair, the national NASW simply ignored us and is waiting out the time until our terms are up.

This example is certainly enraging. We could complain endlessly with ample justification about the unprofessional treatment and abuse of power by those who are supposed to work for us as NASW members, but that will only result in increased blood pressure. If we want change, we must be analytical and tactical. Is it worth trying to change NASW? I think not. Is it worth making tactical alliances in selected places at selected times? I think yes, absolutely. Until the Executive Director and the staff editor decided to “improve” the newsletter and “make it

more responsive to members’ interests,” we were able to use the newsletter to get the word out to the 500 section members about analysis and activism rising primarily from the grass roots. We were able to publicize SWAA, KWRU/PPEHRC, and Association for Women in Social Work (AWSW) actions among other social work organizational activity. This is no longer allowed; the dance is over. NASW told the piper to stop playing. They don’t need us.

I believe the decision at hand is whether it’s worth the effort to make them need us again. That will take a lot of organizing and organizational sophistication; which would include building a grass roots commitment among NASW member activists and developing alliances within the organization’s board and other decision bodies. This is not something we should do simply because we’re enraged. Instead, we need to gauge the resources and opportunities that will become available to us if we prevail.

When we organized AWSW in the 1980s, there were clear and conscious efforts on the part of key NASW staff and some board members to sabotage the effort. However, we built our “rump group” quickly and with a broad constituency, that NASW leadership eventually saw it in their best interests to negotiate with us, and they did. Was it worth it? You may ask me privately if you want my opinion. The point is that “rump group” organizing CAN work, but if we choose to use it, we must be clear that any common interests are tactical, not strategic. We must understand that we will gain access to the mainstream organization’s resources selectively and briefly, and that we will be jettisoned when the big guys think they don’t need us any more.

So dancing with the devil should never be our only option for a night on the town!

Mary Bricker-Jenkins, PhD
Professor Emerita
Temple University School of Social Administration

“Social Work can defend its standards only if it realizes the organized nature of the opposition to it, why these interests are opposed, and where its own allies are to be found.”

*Bertha Capen Reynolds
Social Work and Social Living,
NASW, 1975, p. 166.*

WHAT THIS WORLD NEEDS: A DEPARTMENT OF PEACE

The escalating war in Iraq is demanding attention from concerned people around the world; people everywhere are wondering when it will end, and peace begin. With more than 3,000 American and, by one estimate, over 650,000 Iraqi lives tragically ended, many of us feel compelled to look in a new direction - away from war and toward a culture of peace. But where do we turn? One place to look is The Peace Alliance, a nonpartisan, citizen-activist organization spearheading the grassroots movement to create a U.S. Department of Peace.

The Peace Alliance, founded by noted author and lecturer Marianne Williamson, officially launched the Department of Peace Campaign in April of 2003 with only a handful of supporters. Today, it is active in all 50 states with a supporter list into the thousands. It is a diverse group, and includes the recently formed Student Peace Alliance, which already has 15 campus chapters. Many of these supporters will attend the 5th Department of Peace Conference in Washington D.C. next month (February 3-5).

So what is it that draws so many different people to support this legislation? In a word: hope. The recently released 2004 FBI Report on Crime states that violence is increasing in the United States; people across the nation (and around the globe) are increasingly drawn to legislation that would create departments or ministries of peace as a way to reduce it. Here are some sobering statistics:

- The World Health Organization estimated the cost of interpersonal violence in the United States in 2004 (excluding war-related costs) at \$300 billion per year. The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking and homicide committed by intimate partners exceed \$5.8 billion each year. Of that amount, nearly \$4.1 billion are for direct medical and mental health care services, and nearly \$1.8 billion are for the indirect costs of lost productivity or wages.
- The financial cost of violence is itself, staggering, but the human cost is simply appalling. Consider this: 12 children per day lose their life to gun violence. Homicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-24 in 2001. In 1996 some 31,000 gangs were operating in about 4800 American cities and towns - and large cities claim that 72% of their school violence is attributable in part to gang activity. Seventeen percent of high school girls have been physically abused, and 12% have been abused sexually. Nearly 60% of boys who researchers classified as "bullies" in grades 6-9 were convicted of at least one crime, and even more dramatic, a full 40% were convicted of three or more crimes, by age 24. Terrorist acts worldwide are up since the start of the Iraq War. War itself has killed more than half a million Americans just since WWII.

Violence is nothing new, and neither is the concept of a Department of Peace, which dates back to our founding fathers. An "Office of Peace" was originally proposed in 1792 by Benjamin Banneker, noted African-American scientist, surveyor and editor, and Benjamin Rush, doctor, educator and signor of the Declaration of Independence, who were thoroughly disgusted by the brutality of the Revolutionary War.

Washington and Jefferson are thought to have supported it as well.

Since then, bills to create a Department of Peace have been introduced more than 90 times, at times with bipartisan support (for example, in 1969, at the height of the Vietnam War, Senator Vance Hartke (D-IN) and Representative Seymour Halpern (R-NY) introduced bills to create a Department of Peace). More recently, the bill has been championed by Democrats and a few Independents. Currently, Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) plans to reintroduce the bill in the House on February 5, 2007. Peace Alliance supporters will be on the Hill that day, lobbying their representatives to co-sponsor the bill.

So what would a Department of Peace do? Domestically, the Department will develop policies and allocate resources to effectively reduce the levels of domestic and gang violence, child abuse and various other forms of societal discord. It will act as a clearing house for "best practices" models, by funding, replicating and disseminating proven programs that reduce crime and violence. Curricula would be developed for students in grades K-12 to teach them alternative conflict resolution techniques and strategies. The idea is that just as violence is learned behavior, so is how to peacefully resolve conflicts with your classmate. And with the recent wave of school shootings, learning conflict resolution techniques is now an essential part of school life.

Internationally, the Department of Peace would advise the President and Congress on the most innovative techniques and ideas for peace-creation among nations. It would research and analyze the root causes of war to help prevent conflicts from escalating. A Peace Academy, on par with the Military Service Academies, would train civilian peacekeepers and the military in the latest nonviolent conflict resolution strategies and approaches. In short, a Department of Peace would work hand in hand with existing government agencies and structures to help ensure that conflict, when it occurs, does not boil over into violence.

We currently allocate more than \$400 billion per year to the Department of Defense, and estimates put the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at upwards of \$2 billion per week in addition. A Department of Peace would cost the equivalent of approximately two percent of the defense budget (excluding the costs of war), or about \$8 billion per year. For that, we Americans would get a coordinated, proactive approach to reducing crime and violence and a genuine start on creating a real culture of peace. There is no doubt we would reap enormous benefits in our homes, in our schools, in our communities, our nation, and throughout the world. That's a bargain by any definition. A lot of well-meaning people say we can't afford peace: the reality is we can't afford the alternatives.

Anne Creter

For more information on the campaign and registration details for the 2007 Department of Peace Conference, please go to www.thepeacealliance.org, or call Patty Kuderer (206.910.2422) or Matt Harris (206.331.9728), Co-Directors of Communication for The Peace Alliance. © 2007, The Peace Alliance.

Peace and Justice Committee Report – March on the National Capitol

About 300,000 people from as far away as Alaska and abroad marched on the Capitol on January 27th. Their goal was to give their legislators a simple message on Saturday - and again on Monday, as they lobbied the halls of Congress:

- Do not support the surge.
- Bring the troops home now; support Rep. Lynn Woolsey's, D-Calif., House Resolution 508, a plan to bring them home.
- Investigate the lead-up to the war and the massive misuse of American tax dollars in the illegal, immoral invasion/occupation of Iraq.

The events were organized by United for Peace and Justice, with many other peace and justice groups taking part. Although there wasn't a specific group of social workers, I understand that several SWAA members were present, as well as four NASW Board members. I was one of a number of Northern Virginians for Peace and Justice members. Since I spent the morning as a "Red Bucketeer" raising funds for UPFJ, I didn't hear the wonderful speakers; but I was among the throng of people marching around the Capitol at noon. What a glorious sight to see the crowds against the backdrop of the gleaming Capitol in the brilliant sunshine of a balmy day!

Although this event was successful as this event was in confirming the November essay voters sent their legislators that the war in Iraq is unpopular, we must not stop now, and we urge SWAA members to keep up the pressure on their legislators.

We are fast approaching the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq on March 19th. I hope you will take part in events to keep alive our concerns and opposition to ongoing war in Iraq and a possible preemptive war in Iran, resulting in a conflagration throughout the Middle East. You can reach me at moyaatk@att.net, join our listserv at socialworkers4sr@yahoo.com and/or join SWAA's Peace and Social Justice Committee. We hope to develop further plans during our conference in June and welcome your input!

Moya Atkinson

March 17, 2007 March on the Pentagon on the 4th anniversary of the war

Come to Washington - be prepared to STAY!

It's time to move from protest to resistance and force Congress to vote 'no' to war funding!

For more information, go to: www.TroopsOutNow.org.

***Please note: as of this writing, SWAA is not an official affiliate with TONC or sponsor of the March 17 March on the Pentagon, yet wanted to announce the event.*

Health Care Facts

An estimated 50 million Americans lack medical insurance. About 18,000 Americans die each year because they lack medical coverage. But it is not only the uninsured who suffer. Of the more than 1.5 million bankruptcies filed in the U.S. each year, about half are a result of medical bills; of those, three-quarters of filers had health insurance.

Businesses are suffering as well. Insurance premiums increased 73 percent between 2000 and 2005, and costs are expected to keep rising. The National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC) estimates that, without reform, national health care spending will double over the next 10 years. Employers who want to offer employee health care benefits can't compete with low-road employers who offer none. Nor can they compete with companies located in countries that offer national health insurance.

There is little argument that the system is broken. What is not well known is that the dialogue about fixing the health care system is just as broken. Among politicians, a universal, publicly funded system is off the table. However, Americans in increasing numbers know that the United States is the only industrialized nation where the health care system is in dire straits. And this is why: the United States leaves the health of its citizens at the mercy of an expensive, patchwork system where some get great care while others get none at all. The overwhelming majority - 75 percent, according to an October 2005 Harris Poll - want what people in other wealthy countries have: the peace of mind of universal health insurance.

Mary Bricker-Jenkins

Adapted from YES Magazine Fall 2006 issue, "Health Care: It's What Ails Us" by Doug Pibel and Sarah van Gelder

Mahaffey, from page 13

a SWAA conference in 2000 in East Lansing where she was the Saturday night dinner speaker and participated in several workshops. We will miss her dearly.

Maryann Mahaffey:

January 18, 1925 - born in Burlington, Iowa

Summer, 1945 - Recreation Director, Poston II Japanese internment camp, AZ

1946 - BA in Social Work at Cornell College, Iowa

1951 - MSW, University of Southern California

June 8, 1950 - Married Herman (Hy) Dooha

1948-1952 - active in the Progressive Party

1952-1972 - Staff supervisor and group organization director, Metropolitan Detroit Girl Scout Council. Taught at University of Michigan and Wayne State University

c. 1953 - Daughter, Susan Dooha born

1973-2005 - Detroit City Council. Served 3 terms (12 years) as President.

1985 - Founding member, the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society (SWAA)

Students: Seminar Program on Impacts of “Deep Integration”

The MSU School of Social Work and Canadian Studies Centre are currently recruiting for an innovative 15 May – 30 June 2007 program to be held at Simon Fraser University (SFU), just outside of Vancouver, British Columbia. Entitled “The Transformation of North America: Political and Policy Implications of Deep Integration,” the program will highlight the inadequately appreciated “deep integration” phenomenon, whereby the U.S. and Canada are steadily moving towards some type of political unification. As the program will emphasize, this process has been undertaken by the governments of both countries at the behest of their respective transnational corporate leaders, with Canadian Big Business being especially supportive of it. Indeed, since its formation in the middle Seventies, the (Canadian) Business Council on National Issues (now renamed the Canadian Council of Chief Executives), led by the CEOs of Canada’s largest firms, has relentlessly advocated deep integration in the form of continental free trade and policy convergence. Enactment of NAFTA (1994) is indeed often credited, above all, to this organization and its longtime leader, Tom d’Acquino. September 11th added further impetus to the integrative project by encouraging intergovernmental cooperation on security and military matters, as well as on immigration policy. As a result, observers now believe emergence of an American - dominated “United States of North America” has become virtually inevitable. (Mexico is seen as an eventual partner in the new polity, but the U.S. and Canada are typically cited as its initiating members.) In the middle - term, however, the most plausible outlook is for continued “harmonization,” especially between the Canadian single - payer system (known in Canada as “medicare”) and the U.S. hybrid system of privatized insurance for the employed and public insurance for the poor and elderly. Such a development will itself have important implications, since medicare has recently been “converging” in a distinctly American direction, thereby depriving U.S. health care reformers of their favorite working alternative to current domestic arrangements.

The program, which will enroll some 15 undergraduate and graduate students, selected from a national applicant pool, has been planned in collaboration with a number of distinguished SFU and Vancouver - area policy experts, including SFU professor, Gary Teeple, whose book, *Globalization and the Decline of Social Reform*, is assigned reading at virtually every Canadian college and university. Also participating will be Professor Stephen McBride, another renowned policy specialist, and Colleen Flood, an associate of the Parkland Institute in Alberta, and one of Canada’s premier authorities on health care issues. Also planned is a weeklong recreational/informational trip through the Rocky Mountains and a visit to the British Columbia capital in Victoria, on beautiful Vancouver Island.

Students interested in enrolling should contact the MSU Office of Study Abroad website (<http://studyabroad.msu.edu/programs/canadafuture.html>) for further information. They can also reach Professor David Katz directly at: katz@msu.edu.



On Line Petition

Mental Health Professionals - This is your opportunity to stand up and tell your public leaders to support policies, legislation and programs that reflect the core principles and values of our profession. Please view this link: - <http://www.petitiononline.com/8values/petition.html> - to sign the petition and forward this email to your colleagues and professional organizations throughout the country, with your personal note. We anticipate that by collecting thousands of signatures and publicizing this petition through a myriad of mental health professional organizations, a resounding statement can be made that is heard by our public leaders, the press and the general public.

Thank you.

Shauna L. Smith, MSW, MFT

Jean Rosenfeld, MSW, LCSW

Therapists for Social Responsibility

Submitted to BCR Reports by Moya Atkinson

PETITION

A Call To Public Leaders To Enact Policies, Legislation And Programs That Reflect The Core Principles And Values of The Mental Health Community.

We are social workers, marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, chemical dependency counselors, school counselors, psychiatric nurses, and other mental health professionals.

As holders of the public trust, we are committed to do no harm and to positively influence health and wellness.

We recognize that government policies, legislation, and programs profoundly affect the physical and psychological well-being of those who are governed or impacted by these policies.

We therefore call upon all public leaders to enact policies, legislation, and programs that reflect the following eight core principles and values of the mental health community and to oppose those that do not:

1. We believe that peaceful negotiation is a necessary alternative to violence and aggression, which harm the psyche and often lead to post traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, anxiety and depression. The cycle of violence and aggression has been perpetuated for generations. Therefore we call on our public leaders to support efforts toward peace and cooperation and to oppose preventable killing or maiming of others in military and police actions, including the commission of atrocities and genocide.

2. We believe that we have within us the capacity for empathy, compassion and generosity as well as for dehumanization, disconnection, and self-centeredness and that we are at our highest levels of health and well-being when we are guided by and engaged in the former. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to support the sharing of our resources globally with those who are suffering from poverty, disease, homelessness, and neglect and to oppose the hoarding of resources which are essential to other people's survival.

3. We believe that the development, construction, proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction are unsustainable and imperil the existence of all human and most other life forms. We believe that in the steps leading to that devastation the physical and psychological anguish of humankind is increasing exponentially. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to support the ongoing reduction of our military establishment and the elimination of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and to oppose the expansion of our military.

4. We believe that a safe environment is critical to our physical and mental health. We believe that a healthy environment includes access to natural settings which are places of psychological and spiritual healing. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to protect the ecosystems and resources on which we all depend and to maintain the natural settings that protect us from natural and man-made disasters, including global warming. We call upon our public leaders to protect our environment from pollutants which increase our susceptibility to physical and psychological disturbances and to oppose the undermining of these efforts.

5. We believe that a society must implement social programs that promote the health and well-being of its citizens, in order to create a civil society with decreased amounts of stress, fear, pain, and guilt. We believe that excessive inessential goods at the expense of other people's poverty are toxic for the human psyche. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to support funding for adequate health care, housing, education and other essentials and to oppose perpetuating and multiplying the divide between the wealthy minority and the rest of the nation.

6. We believe that discrimination of one segment of society over another for any purpose compromises the psychological health of all parties concerned. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to support the equal and just treatment of every individual and to oppose the discriminating against and the scapegoating of any group based on race, skin color, religion, ethnicity, economic status, gender, sexual preference, or political belief.

7. We believe that protecting our clients' and our own rights to privacy and confidentiality are essential, as they allow us to communicate without being observed or intruded upon without our knowledge. We know that invasion of privacy has been used against citizens to censor debate and to instill fear. We call upon our public leaders to support laws that protect our privacy and to oppose compromising our privacy without due process of just law.

8. We believe that relationships based on integrity and transparency are critical for the health and well-being of families, communities and the world. Therefore we call upon our public leaders to support fairness, honesty and openness in our government and to oppose dishonest, unfair, covert practices including fraudulent elections, restriction of freedom of information, corporate abuses, and unjust laws designed to enrich and empower the already wealthy and powerful.

Cognizant that all people have the potential for life-affirming, sustainable and just actions or destructive, unsustainable and unjust choices, we call upon our public leaders to support the former which promote an environment in which individuals, families and communities can best be served.

SWAA Featured in New Social Worker

<http://www.socialworker.com/home/component/magazine/Association-Spotlight-Social-Welfare-Action-Alliance/>

Association Spotlight: Social Welfare Action Alliance

There are many different professional associations and other groups for social workers. In this occasional column, we will feature a variety of such organizations.

The Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA) is a national organization of progressive workers in social welfare. Formerly the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society, the SWAA was founded in 1985 and is based on key principles that reflect a concern for social justice, peace, and coalition building with progressive social movements. According to Michael A. Dover, BSW, MSW, Ph.D., a founding member and co-chair of the SWAA membership committee, "SWAA is an organization that believes that social workers should be serious about social change." We talked to Dover, an assistant professor at Central Michigan University. Here's what he had to say:

How would you describe the SWAA?

The existence of SWAA, which was founded in 1985 as the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society and recently changed its name, reflects the fact that people in social work come from a wide variety of interests, including those who are very interested in social and political action as social workers, and those who are social workers during the day but peace activists, civil rights activists, GLBT rights activists, environmentalists, animal rights activists, you name it, your typical social activist, on the side. We changed our name in part because a lot of people don't know who Bertha Reynolds is, even though NASW has reprinted her books and one can read about her in the Encyclopedia of Social Work. You can read about this progressive tradition and about BCRS/SWAA in the book, *The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States*, by Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews.

How is it different from other social work organizations?

We're different from the mainstream group, NASW, although more than half of our members also belong to NASW or CSWE or BPD or NABSW or other national groups in social work. We're different in that, for one thing, we are more open to [people without social work degrees], although the overwhelming majority of our members are BSWs and MSWs. True, NASW has Associate Member status, and NABSW has always welcomed [non-BSWs and non-MSWs], but for SWAA, it is a principle that we are open to social workers, human service workers, and other community-based anti-poverty and other activists. We're also the only organization in social work that is explicitly on the port side of the social work ship—in other words, we are on the political left, which we define broadly as being progressive.

What are some benefits of joining SWAA?

We provide access to a national network of activists in social work, via our membership directory available in the "members only" section of our Web site. This is one way in which people interested in relocating get in touch with other like-minded social workers around the country. Our directory lists members by their areas of activism and by the areas of practice, so it makes possible talking and e-mailing with others who

share your interests. For those in rural areas who are likely the only radical social worker around, it's a huge help to be able to network. There is a semi-annual newsletter with thought-provoking articles, and members can write for the newsletter, as well. There are discounts on social justice oriented publications, such as a subscription to the *Journal of Progressive Human Services* for only \$25. And there is an annual conference—this year it is June 16-18 in Chicago. Members get either a discount on their registration or a new or renewed membership for a year as part of their registration fee.

Who can join?

Anyone who generally shares our statement of principles and pays dues, which are \$10 for students and \$35 for others, can join. The membership form is on our Web site.

Are there special activities and/or benefits for students?

There is the student/low income membership category, which allows people who are recent graduates and can't afford the \$35 rate to join for \$10. There is a Student Caucus meeting at our national conference each year, and there are usually student-run workshops there.

Are there student leaders in the organization?

Students are leaders in a couple of ways. First, often our chapters are basically student chapters, and students can represent chapters on the National Steering Committee, under our bylaws. Also, last year at our national conference, a Student Caucus was formed, and two representatives of that Caucus, Kathy Welsh and Valerie Austin, attended our last National Steering Committee meeting in New York City in October.

How/why did you get involved in this particular organization?

In 1985, I was working as a social worker in New Orleans with a group named Social Workers for Social Change. We had been working to defend the special tax that supported public welfare in New Orleans and on behalf of senior citizens who were being evicted from subsidized housing. We had taken social workers to the 20th Anniversary of the March on Washington on August 27, 1983, and many worked for Jesse Jackson, who won the Louisiana Primary.

There were other groups of activist social workers around the country, and there used to be a group called Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, as well. We all agreed there was a need for a national organization.

At the Summer 1985 conference at Smith College on the life of Bertha Capen Reynolds, we had a meeting of those who felt we needed to form an organization that would revive and continue the progressive tradition in social work and social welfare. We issued a Call to Join that was signed by many leaders in the field, including Chauncey Alexander, Millie Charles, and Maryann Mahaffey, as well as several hundred others. We had our founding meeting at the October 1985 NASW conference in Chicago and our first conference the following summer at Smith College, which was where Bertha Reynolds taught.

Do you have any other comments or thoughts to share with social work students and/or new social workers about SWAA?

I was a relatively "new" social worker in 1985, just a few years out of

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my MSW program, and some of the less new social workers at the time responded to our youthful energy in supporting the founding of BCRS/SWAA. But at this point, we need another generation of new social workers who believe there is a need for an organization such as SWAA, which can work to stimulate activism among other social workers as well as pressure NASW and CSWE and other groups to live up to our profession's ideals.

Written by Linda Grobman, ACSW, LSW

New Orleans, from page 1

So many homes were lost to the flooding and so deplorable were the conditions in refugee camps erected for the resulting homeless that an enormous exodus of New Orleans' black residents ensued. Many would never return. This marked a critical turning point in U.S. history of migration from the rural south to the urban north (Wikipedia, 2006a).

Forty years later in 1965, Hurricane Betsy produced widespread flooding remarkably similar to that precipitated by Hurricane Katrina. The levees protecting New Orleans were topped, and ultimately breached by a storm surge from Lake Pontchartrain. Parts of Gentilly, the Upper Ninth Ward, and the Lower Ninth Ward in Orleans Parish as well as Arabi and Chalmette in neighboring St. Bernard Parish were flooded. The flood waters reached the eaves of homes throughout the areas of impact and completely covered others. One hundred and sixty-four thousand homes were destroyed or damaged. Ten days passed before the flood waters receded sufficiently for residents to return to their homes (Wikipedia, 2006b).

New York Times' Bob Herbert recently wrote, "Whatever you've heard about New Orleans, the reality is much worse. Think of it as a vast open wound, this once-great American city that is still largely in ruins, with many of its people still writhing in agony more than a year after the catastrophic flood that followed Hurricane Katrina" (New York Times, December 21, 2006). "Many of the poor residents in the city feel that they've been abandoned by the government and the rest of America..." "We're in terrible trouble down here, said [one woman]... asking passersby if they knew where she might find work... We were all over the television last year. Now we're back to being nobody."

Discussing the rebuilding of New Orleans, sociologist Dr. Beverly Wright reported that in looking at a map of the city, the only areas not selected for rebuilding were areas where the African-American population was about 75 to 80 percent, which is New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward (Post Katrina Injustice, 2006). At the time of her report, Wright was being interviewed at a studio at the University of New Orleans. The university is located in a lower elevation than New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward, yet development and reconstruction in that area was well under way.

In a survey conducted one week after Hurricane Katrina, the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., found that reports of the storm's ramifications on African Americans and the poor issuing from New Orleans and Southern Mississippi had not significantly affected Americans' perceptions of race, poverty, and the role of government in the United States. The American public continues to believe that the lot

of (urban) African Americans has improved significantly. Nearly 60% still believe that blacks who can't get ahead are largely responsible for their own condition, as opposed to being victims of continued [institutional] racial discrimination (Pew, 2005).

A vast open wound...

People back to being nobody...

Intentional neglect and discrimination, in the preparation (or more accurately, lack of preparation) for Katrina...

Intentional neglect and discrimination infecting the reconstruction and rebuilding...

Apparently, the majority of Americans still believe that events like the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and Hurricane Betsy of 1965 are in the past and have no bearing today. The aftermath of Katrina - still horribly visible - bears witness that this is not the case. As Bertha Capen Reynolds said, "It is not we, a handful of social workers against a sea of human misery. It is humanity itself building a dike and we are helping in our particularly useful way." Our particularly useful way is needed in New Orleans June 14-17, 2007 during the annual conference. We need to stand with New Orleans to help in building the dike that will rebuild New Orleans.

Susan Allen

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social workers and human service workers
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Who We Are

The Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA) is a national organization of progressive social workers and other human service workers. Founded in 1985, the Alliance is based on principles that reflect a concern for social and economic justice, peace and coalition building with progressive social movements. These principles articulate a need by social service workers for a practice and theory that responds to progressive concerns.

SWAA chapters determine their own agendas, provide forums for discussions and debates around local, national and international issues. Local chapters are represented on the national steering committee to help shape the organization's direction. In addition, the Alliance holds annual national gatherings that focus on critical issues, tools and ideas for action to promote social change.

"The real choice before us as social workers is whether we are to be passive or active."

- Bertha Capen Reynolds

Join the local chapter of the Social Welfare Action Alliance

Any group of 10 current SWAA members can create a Chapter. "How to Organize a SWAA Chapter" organizing packets are available from the SWAA website at www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org or by contacting Melissa Sydor at melmas1@yahoo.com or 585-262-4366. The contents of the packets include such things as posters, brochures, book order forms, recent newsletters, copy of by-laws, names of SWAA organizers from the Steering Committee who will help you, and much more! Please allow four weeks for delivery.

www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org

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Formerly Bertha Capen Reynolds Society

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