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## Military Privatization

By Dave Depp

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Times Dispatch in a follow-up article to the news of a terrorist attack on a Saudi Arabian building, reported that seven of the Americans killed and fifteen of the Americans injured were employees of the Vinell Corporation a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman based in Fairfax Virginia. The article goes on to describe how Vinell has been employed by the U.S. Army since 1975 to train Saudi military forces and its current contract is worth more than 800 million dollars. Vinell employs at least 1000 people in its Saudi government funded program including many retired American military personnel.



This information about a private American company being involved in military activity is the tip of a very large and growing iceberg explored in detail in the May-June issue of Mother Jones in an article entitled, "Soldiers of Good Fortune", by Barry Yeoman.

The U.S. military has long employed civilians in supporting roles, but starting with the first Gulf war, private contractors have grown in importance. Yeoman says the subsequent war on terrorism has greatly accelerated the process of military privatization. He says private, for profit military companies now enjoy an estimated \$100 billion in business worldwide each year, with much of the money going to Fortune 500 firms like Halliburton, DynCorp, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon. The government's justification for this growing privatization of the military, is that employment of private contractors allows the military to focus its manpower on battlefield kinds of missions. Pentagon officials also justify privatization

*(Continued on page 2)*

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14 N. Laurel St.,  
Richmond VA 23220

Phone: (804)358-1958

Fax: (804)358-2213

E-mail:  
rpec.1@juno.com

RPEC Web Page:  
<http://www.rpec.org>

**RPEC STAFF**

Executive Director:  
Ken Willis

Office Manager  
Johnnie J. Taylor

Volunteer Office Assistant  
Jean Beck

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Editor:  
Bill Gerow  
(mbgerow@comcast.net)

Program Committee:

Steve Colecchi  
John Gallini  
Ben Blevins  
Sue Frankel-Streit  
Cathy Woodson  
Ken Willis  
Judy Bennett  
Dave Depp

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## Military Privatization

*(Continued from page 1)*

saying the private sector can work cheaper and faster than the military.

According to Yeoman, a company named Blackwater USA, guards US government buildings all over the world and trains US military personnel at its 5200-acre facility in Moyock, N.C. Right now it has a \$35 Million pentagon contract to train 10,000 sailors in "force protection". Yeoman says private contractors now "supply bodyguards for the president of Afghanistan, construct detention camps to hold suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay, and pilot armed reconnaissance planes and helicopter gunships to eradicate cocoa crops in Colombia." They also operate American intelligence and communications systems and provide training to military in many countries such as Nigeria, Bulgaria, Taiwan and Equatorial Guinea. Private contractors were heavily involved in the Iraq war running training camps in Kuwait and Qatar, while maintaining weapons systems ranging from B-2 bombers to Apache helicopters. There are also reports that private contractors have engaged in actual warfare. Yeoman quotes Peter Singer of the Brookings Institution who says DynCorp employees, "are engaged in combatant roles, fighting in counter insurgency operations against Colombian rebel groups".

This military privatization trend is a dangerous development for at least four reasons.

1. Companies involved in the business of war, staffed by ex-military personnel including high-ranking officers, provide a potential source of pressure on our government to rely on military solutions to international problems, and to constantly increase the military budget at the expense of domestic spending. A Mother Jones investigative report revealed that \$12.4 million were donated to federal political campaigns by 17 leading private military contractors since 1999.
2. Both the Pentagon and the Executive branch can use private military contractors to avoid congressional limits on military operations, or to counter Congressional policies or mandates that disagree with Pentagon or Executive branch goals. The continuation of aid to the Nicaraguan Contra forces back in the 1980's despite a Congressional prohibition against such aid is a good example. Further, the pursuit of secret policies and operations around the world is made much more possible when private contractors are used.
3. The reliance on private contractors may endanger regular military forces in at least two ways. First, private contractor personnel don't have to abide by the military code of conduct and may not be required to stay in position under enemy pressure. Second, in some cases military personnel are no longer able to provide crucial maintenance to some weapons systems. In fact, it is estimated that 28% of all weapons systems are now dependent on private contractors for maintenance.
4. The growing privatization of the American military encourages the growth of American imperialism. Now, in addition to U.S. military training facilities like the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation at Ft. Benning in Georgia, we have private contractors traveling around the world training foreign military forces to advance American imperial ambitions.

## Letter from RPEC Board Chair

Dear friends,

As the new chair of the Richmond Peace Education Center board of directors, I would like to take a moment to introduce myself and also tell you about the latest activities of the board.

While I have been involved in social justice movements for as long as I can recall, my work as a peace activist actually began in middle school. The threat of nuclear war was a frightening reality in the 1980's and I was at a loss for how to deal with the fear. I joined a group called S.T.O.P. Nuclear War, at the advice of my teacher Paul Fleisher. This organization, which actually had some ties to RPEC, was an invaluable source of solace for me. It helped me realize not only that others shared my fear, but that we could do something about it.

I have never forgotten the lessons I learned during those formative years. Throughout my life, I have continued to apply those skills to make my voice heard about issues of peace and justice. Two years ago I returned to Richmond, from New York City, to run my own socially conscious business. Not long after I returned, I was pleasantly surprised to hear from Paul once again. This time he asked that I join him on the Richmond Peace Education Center board and I was delighted to accept.

I have taken on the role of Board Chair because I believe that RPEC is something that Richmonders cannot do without. There has never been a more important time for peace education. The war on Iraq has sparked a renewed interest in what peace truly means and RPEC is essential in helping the Richmond community begin this journey of understanding.

The Richmond Peace Education Center is an amazing entity. A non-profit peace organization that has managed to survive nearly 25 years is rare – and one with such broad scope and reach in the community even rarer. Now with an infusion of energy, in the form of 7 new board members in the past year alone, RPEC has begun to take on an even greater presence.

In the last few months, the board has set up new committees to more effectively create programming to reach the public; created the e-mail list serve to get the word out about local peace activities; and instigated the “Question War” campaign, which brought the message of peace to Richmonders via Style Weekly and the Richmond Free Press. This is an amazing time to be involved in RPEC. I hope that everyone reading this will be as excited about our expanded presence as I am.

I thank you sincerely for your continued support of the Richmond Peace Education Center. We would not exist without you. Look for many more new and exciting changes in the coming months and please do not hesitate to let us know what we can do to better serve our community.

Yours in Peace,  
Noah Scalin,  
Board Chair  
Richmond Peace Education Center

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**SPECIAL REPORT - Hidden Casualties: An Epidemic of Domestic Violence When Troops Return from War**

By Jon Elliston and Catherine Lutz  
Southern Exposure

After a spate of wife killings at Fort Bragg, N.C. domestic abuse in military families is under new scrutiny — but the Defense Department still turns a blind eye on key causes.

One novel way news reporters have tried to pinpoint the start of major U.S. military engagements is to monitor pizza deliveries at the Pentagon. It's been called the "Domino's theory": When the generals and their staffs go into imminent-war mode, they stay at their posts late into the night, and the pizza orders shoot up.

There are more grim indicators that a military operation is nigh. As the war in Afghanistan began in October 2001, for example, "We could literally tell what units were being deployed from where, based on the volume of calls we received from given bases," says Christine Hansen, executive director of the Connecticut-based Miles Foundation, which has assisted more than 10,000 victims of military-related domestic violence since 1997.

The calls were from women who were facing threats and physical abuse from their partners—the same men who were supposedly being deployed on a mission to make America safer. "Then the same thing happened on the other end, when they came back," Hansen adds.

Hansen and other domestic violence workers say that such patterns of

abuse are signs of how issues of gender, power and control are magnified in the military, making domestic violence an even more extensive and complicated problem than it is among civilians. And while recent events have sparked an unprecedented amount of official soul-searching about domestic violence in military families, those key issues have rarely entered the discussion.

It took the rapid-fire deaths of four women to turn national attention to this oft-overlooked form of domestic terror. The problem forced its way into the headlines last July, following a spate of murders by soldiers stationed at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

In the space of just five weeks, four women married to soldiers were killed by their spouses, according to the authorities. Marilyn Griffin was stabbed 70 times and her trailer set on fire, Teresa Nieves and Andrea Floyd were shot in the head, and Jennifer Wright was strangled. All four couples had children, several now orphaned as two of the men shot themselves after killing their wives.

The murders garnered wide attention because they were clustered over such a short period, and because three of the soldiers had served in special operations units that fought in Afghanistan. (The throat-slitting murder of Shalamar Franceschi a few months before by her husband, a just-released Fort Bragg soldier, might

also have been added to the tally, but wasn't.)

The murders have raised a host of questions -- about the effects of war on the people who wage it, the spillover on civilians from training military personnel to kill, the role of military institutional values, and even the possible psychiatric side effects of an anti-malarial drug the Army gives its soldiers. On the epidemic of violence against women throughout the United States and on the role of gender in both military and civilian domestic violence, however, there has been a deafening silence.

*This is an excerpt from a full-length report in the Spring 2003 issue of Southern Exposure, out this week. For the full report, you can order t h e i s s u e a t [www.southernstudies.org](http://www.southernstudies.org) or by mailing \$5 to Southern Exposure, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.*

*Jon Elliston writes about national security issues in the South and lives in Chapel Hill, N.C. Catherine Lutz is author of Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century.*

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From:  
FACING SOUTH

# In the Public Interest/Ralph Nader

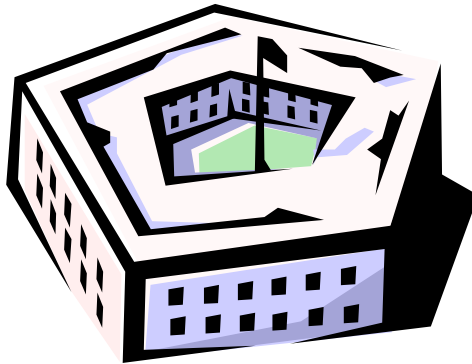
## The Pentagon Connection

I wonder how Seymour Melman feels these days. For over half a century, this Columbia University industrial engineering professor (now emeritus) has been researching, writing and speaking about the massive overspending on the military portion of the federal budget and how this waste is de-industrializing America, costing millions of jobs and starving the investment in public works – repairing the crucial physical capital of America.

Recently, he prepared a memorandum called “The Pentagon Connection” there he recounted the massive redundancy and costliness of various weapons systems – such as the next wave of fighter planes, missiles, submarines and aircraft carriers – and the opportunity cost so adverse to the domestic needs of our country. Remember, the US no longer has a major opponent that used to justify huge military budgets. Both Russia and China are converting quickly to the state capitalistic-oligarchic model and the Soviet Union is no more.

First, Professor Melman cites the Report Card for America’s Infrastructure that was issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers. ([asce.org/reportcard](http://asce.org/reportcard)). One and a third trillion dollars are estimated for the repair of 12 categories of public works, including schools, drinking water systems, sewage systems, airports, public transit, bridges and roads.

The engineering society found what any person who observes – great needs coming from great disrepair and decay. Adding \$618 billion for repair of US housing and railroads brings the capital improvement needs to a \$2 trillion



market, he notes.

Mr. Melman, whose knowledge of US industry is legendary, adds: “Every manufacturing industry whose products are required for repairing and modernizing America’s infrastructure is left out by the federal government’s military plans.” And expenditures.

The military economy drains the civilian economy and this trend has been accelerating into what Melman called a “huge change” in the American economy. He writes: “This de-industrialization has happened so quickly that America’s capacity to produce anything is seriously undermined. For example, last year the New York City government announced its plans to buy a new fleet of subway cars. Though this contract is worth \$3-4 billion, not one US firm responded. Of 100 products offered in this fall’s L.L. Bean catalogue, 92 are imported and only eight are made in

the USA.”

“Closing US factories has not only left millions without work, but has also diminished the US production capability required for repairing our broken infrastructure.” Melman says.

Melman doesn’t mention it in his memo, but previous studies have demonstrated that a million dollars in civilian investment creates more jobs than a million dollars in military weapons systems.

The states and cities are reporting deeper deficits. This year the states will be over \$60 billion in the red. Taxes and tolls are going up. Necessities are being cut – outlays, Melman points out, for schools, libraries, fire and police departments, sanitation departments, child welfare, health care and services for elderly people. But there are hundreds of billions for Soviet-era type weapons driven by the weapons corporations and their campaign cash for key members of Congress who decide the distortions of your tax dollars.

Recently, Bob Herbert, a columnist for the New York Times, interviewed the well-known financier, Felix Rohatyn, who was involved in the response to the city’s fiscal crisis in the 1970’s. The current fiscal crisis of the states and cities is, to Mr. Rohatyn, very serious.

Mr. Rohatyn told Mr. Herbert that he believes that a \$75 billion-a-year program of federal assistance to state and local governments combined with a \$75 billion-a-year tax cut for working people would

*(Continued on page 8)*

**PENTAGON'S MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY STAR WARS PLANS UNDER REVIEW  
PUBLIC COMMENTS DUE BY JUNE 12**

Dear Friends:

Bush's Missile Defense Agency (MDA) has announced a public comment period on their new Star Wars plans. See more details at this link: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo/peis/html/home.html>

Under law, they are required to prepare a new Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and take public comment. There are several ways you can send your comments:

E-MAIL: [bmds.peis@mda.osd.mil](mailto:bmds.peis@mda.osd.mil); FAX: (877) 851-5451 Attn: MDA BMDS PEIS

BY MAIL: MDA BMDS PEIS  
c/o ICF Consulting  
9300 Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22031

According to the MDA, "The Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) is a complex, multi-component defensive weapon system involving technologies and systems ranging in maturity from PATRIOT missiles to directed energy weapons (lasers) and kinetic energy intercept concepts (hit-to-kill technology) from space-based satellites. The BMDS is envisioned to be a layered system of elements, programs and components each with specific defensive capabilities, which, when working together, are capable of defending against all classes of threat ballistic missiles in all flight phases (i.e., midcourse and terminal)."

We urge you to send comments immediately to the MDA expressing your outrage and opposition to this new Star Wars planning. Below are some suggested points to make.

PUBLIC COMMENT TALKING POINTS: (We recommend you use your own words)

1) The cost of Star Wars research, development, testing and production will bankrupt the country. There are currently more pressing needs such as health care, education, child care and social security.

2) Star Wars will destabilize the world, create a new arms race in space, and only make life more insecure for the public

3) Who is the enemy? Today it is the U.S. that leads the world with weapons of mass destruction and a global conventional military second to none

4) Star Wars is being driven by the aerospace corporations who stand to make massive profits by successfully promoting an arms race in space

5) Missile defense has nothing to do with "defense" but is in fact part of a larger effort on the part of the Pentagon to "control and dominate" the Earth and space

Thanks for your help.

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space  
PO Box 90083  
Gainesville, FL. 32607  
(352) 337-9274

## This War Isn't Over

by Jim Wallis

Have I (and we at Sojourners) gotten some interesting e-mails since the war ended! Some tell me that since the war succeeded so easily, don't I (and Sojourners, and all those church leaders) feel bad about being wrong in opposing it? From the other side, some anti-war activists were infuriated that we said we "celebrate" with the Iraqi people that the brutal reign of Saddam Hussein is over. How can we celebrate the American war, with all its devastating consequences?

It's all very interesting. We never said the U.S. wouldn't win the war. Nobody knew how easy or hard it might be, but the outcome was never in doubt. We just said that a mostly American pre-emptive war was the wrong answer to the threats of Saddam Hussein. And we still think so. Sorry. We also supported regime change in Iraq, citing the tremendous human cost of Saddam's brutality and the danger posed by his love for weapons of mass destruction. (Not everybody in the anti-war movement was as clear about the need not only to disarm Saddam, but also to remove him from power.) We don't apologize for saying we're glad to see him gone. But again, we didn't think this war was the right or best way to accomplish that. (See the Six-Point Plan church leaders offered at [http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=action.plan\\_update](http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=action.plan_update)).

Now that the war was such a "success," we are left with a number of problems. It appears the Bush administration is choosing an American military occupation of Iraq instead of an internationally supported U.N. lead in humanitarian aid and reconstruction. Already we see street demonstrations against that occupation. So far, the U.S. military hasn't found any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and The Washington Post reported this week that administration officials are becoming less confident about doing so. Whoops. The imminent threat of those weapons was a central justification for the war.

They also haven't yet found Saddam Hussein. There are speculations now that he and his Baath Party and Republican Guard didn't put up a fight for Baghdad because they decided to disappear in order to live to fight another day, perhaps in an eventual guerrilla war against the American occupiers. That would certainly be a horrible prospect for everybody. And the triumphant optimism of the administration's leading warriors about installing a pro-American democracy in Iraq that would transform the Middle East seems to fade with each passing day. We're also finally adding up the few thousand civilian casualties and seeing their human faces, along with the many more dead Iraqi soldiers - a lot of whom were just young kids conscripted by a dictator. More than 100 American families also are mourning the loss of a loved one. And the disastrous consequences of the war in Iraq for domestic needs in America - where the poor are also becoming war casualties - is a subject worth another whole column.

Three large questions remain unresolved:

First, American leaders now feel vindicated in prosecuting a pre-emptive and mostly unilateral war, and are justifying that policy for the future. The media is already speculating on who is next. Is this the kind of world we want, where the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world makes all the big decisions?

Second, the "humanitarian" war fought to "liberate" Iraq raises the question of why only this gross violator of human rights? What about the many others? Will the U.S. choose to liberate people in countries where American geopolitical interests and the economic stakes are not so high, say in the Congo or Sudan?

Third, what about the emerging doctrine of Pax Americana, where the neo-conservatives who now virtually run the U.S. government are openly speaking the language of dominance and empire as the moral foundation for American foreign policy. The New York Times this week reported Pentagon plans for four permanent military bases in Iraq. Although Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has denied it, we'll see. Perhaps of special concern for Christians is the

*(Continued on page 8)*

## This War Isn't Over

*(Continued from page 7)*

president's increasingly religious language to justify American war and domination. Do we really believe that America and George W. Bush have been divinely appointed to root out evil in the world? That's bad theology and a very dangerous one.

All this has resulted from the war with Iraq. Yes, I am very glad that Saddam is gone. But there were better ways to accomplish that worthy goal and set into motion precedents that would have left us in a much more healthy and hopeful place than we now find ourselves. This war isn't over, and its

\* \* \* \* \*

## In the Public Interest

*(Continued from page 5)*

provide a substantial boost to the economy, and over time would result in the creation of several million jobs.

But, in spite of polls (as well as opinions expressed by military experts, like retired Gen. Anthony Zinni) showing that a large majority of the American people do not believe that President Bush has made the case that Iraq threatens the US nor do they want him to commit our troops unilaterally, the White House chief is willing to spend at least \$150 billion and incur casualties pursuing this obsession while ignoring lire-saving needs in our country.

*Ralph Nader is the founder of several public-interest groups.*



## RpecNEWS Survey

The following survey was sent to those of you currently included on the RPEC e-mail list. If you would like to share your evaluation with the newsletter committee you can do that in several ways: 1) Write me a note answering the questions below (send to John Gallini, 10200 Gwynnbrook Rd., Richmond, VA 23235); 2) Send me an e-mail at [gallinjb@aol.com](mailto:gallinjb@aol.com) and I will send you a copy of the survey which you can return filled out; 3) Send me an e-mail with responses to the questions.

If you would like to be added to the RPEC e-mail list, send an e-mail to: [rpec-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:rpec-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)

1. Please put an X by the option that best describes you:  
 I hardly ever read rpecNEWS.  
 I scan a few issues of rpecNEWS each year.  
 I read something from each issue of rpecNEWS.  
 I read each issue of rpecNEWS cover to cover.
2. What do you like about rpecNEWS?
3. Do you ever utilize material from rpecNEWS? If so, how do you use it?
4. How can rpecNEWS better serve your interests and needs?
5. What issues or themes would you like rpecNEWS to examine in the future?
6. Would you like to write an article for a future issue of rpecNEWS? If so, on what topic?

Many thanks for your time and for your commitment to the work of peacemaking in Richmond.

John Gallini, RPEC Newsletter Committee



## Consumers Corner

### Steps We All Can Take

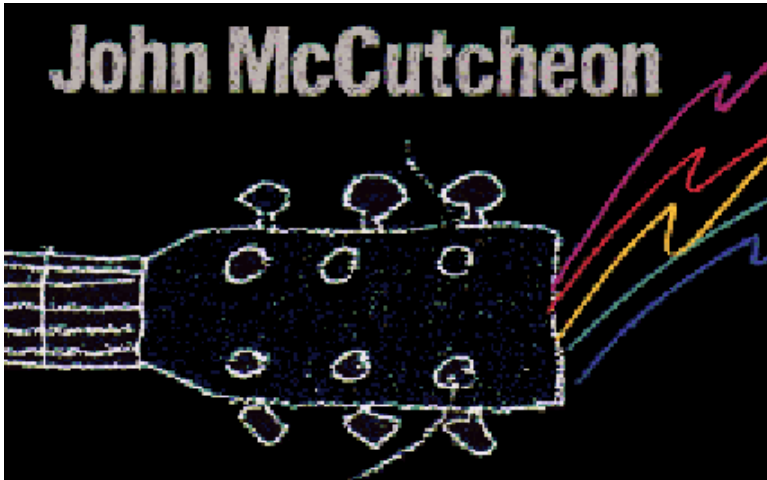
By John Gallini

Over the past four years I have been writing about how to better match our lives to our values. The primary considerations have been care for the poor of our world (by paying attention to sweatshop conditions and fair trade options) and care for the health of the earth itself. I have tried to point out companies and products that we can support, while finding ways to “reduce, reuse and recycle”.

This month, by way of review, I want to highlight a number of steps most of us can easily take to move in that direction. Most are not the cheapest from a short-term standpoint, but are an economic bargain if we take into account the full cost to the earth and her peoples. Here is the list:

- 1) **Coffee** – Buy Fair Trade coffee. A large selection is available at Ten Thousand Villages in Carytown, or you can order via the Internet at: [http://www.sweatshops.org/buy/ladders\\_coffee.html](http://www.sweatshops.org/buy/ladders_coffee.html)
- 2) **Local Produce** – Buy local produce at the Farmers Market downtown or at other outdoor stands around the area. Better yet, join a Community Supported Agriculture group. Last month I described Free Earth Farm (contact Tony Lagana at (804) 562-8704). And I just learned that Noah Scalini, RPEC Board Chair, is the local coordinator for Sprout CSA. Contact Noah at 804-359-2697 or go to the Sprout website at: <http://www.alrdesign.com/sprout> The cost of the Sprout CSA is \$90 per month for a full share and you need only commit to two months to try it out.
- 3) **Clothing** – A thrift shop is probably the best place to buy clothing (from the earth’s viewpoint) and some, like Diversity Thrift or The Thrifty Quaker provide financial support to RPEC. If you can’t find what you need at a Thrift Shop, check for no-sweat/green products at Coop America’s sweatshop website: <http://www.sweatshops.org/buy/ladders.html>. I have also purchased clothing from Maggie’s Functional Organics on the web at: <http://www.organicclothes.com/>
- 4) **Join Coop America** – If you have any interest in this area you should be a member of Coop America. Call 1-800- 58GREEN or go to their website at [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org)
- 5) **Compact Fluorescents** – Everyone should be using compact fluorescents for home and office lighting. You can buy them now at places like Home Depot for as little as \$4 each. These bulbs use less than one-fifth the energy of standard incandescent bulbs.
- 6) **Storm Windows** – This is probably the single most important step you can take to reduce home heating energy use and cost.
- 7) **Recycled Paper Products** – Copy paper for home, office and church should contain at least 30% post-consumer waste. It is now available at a small premium at all office product stores. Bathroom tissue, facial tissue, paper towels, etc. are available that are made from 100% recycled paper. You can find them at stores such as Good Foods Grocery, Friend and Hand or Elwood-Thompson, or you can buy them on-line at <http://www.gaiam.com/> (go to “Household Tools and Cleaning)
- 8) **Environmentally Friendly Cleaning Products** – Available from the locations in “6” above.
- 9) **Cell Phone Recycling** - Cell phone users now have a way to recycle their old phones and support the Sierra Club in the process. CollectiveGood, a recycling group, has teamed up with Staples, the office-supply chain, to set up bins in all Staples stores in the U.S., where people can drop off cell phones, pagers, and personal digital assistants (Palm Pilots and the like) for reuse or recycling. (I checked a local Staples store, and they do have the bins). About half of the phones are expected to be in good enough shape that they can be refurbished and put back into circulation; many will end up being sold at discounted prices in Latin America. If phones can't be put to good use, CollectiveGood will recycle them and properly dispose of toxic elements. The Sierra Club will get a portion of proceeds from sales of refurbished phones.

If you have suggestions or questions, please contact me at [gallinjb@aol.com](mailto:gallinjb@aol.com)



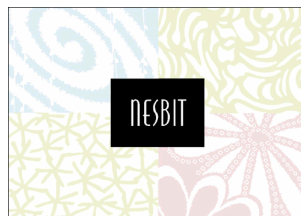
### Thanks Extended to Concert Sponsors

The RPEC Board, staff, and supporters join in extending a hearty “Thank you” to those who volunteered to help in any way with the recent successful John McCutcheon fundraising concert and to the following businesses and individuals who placed ads in the concert program booklet: the Virginia Organizing Project, Narnia Children’s Books, AlterNatives, the Catholic Diocese of Richmond’s Office of Justice and Peace, Dave Depp, The Greenwood Preschool, Terrie Pendleton – Licensed Clinical Social Worker, 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Gallery, Ten Thousand Villages, Davis & Main restaurant, Pax Christi Richmond, Mediterranean Bakery & Deli, Touch & Agree Call-in Christian Talk Show, Don S. Ayers – Educational Consultant, and The Family Education Center.

Special thanks are expressed to our two corporate sponsors, LaDifference International Furnishings



and Nesbit, the Complete Body Salon.



Ads were also included in the booklet for Banner Express Instant Signs, Candyland Music, and Diversity Thrift in recognition of in-kind contributions received during the past year.

RPEC members and friends are urged to remember these contributors, if applicable, by utilizing the goods and services they provide



Do You Have  
Something You Want  
to Say?

We welcome your  
Opinions,  
Criticisms, Expostulations,  
whatever

Send your letters to the  
editor by snail mail to  
RPEC

14 N. Laurel St.,  
Richmond VA 23220



by

email

to the editor at  
[mbgerow@comcast.net](mailto:mbgerow@comcast.net)



**CALENDAR****June 2003****Meetings of Local Groups**

- Every Sunday**      **Food Not Bombs, Richmond <Meal Sharing**, 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 for details
- Every 3rd Wed.**      **Amnesty International**, 7:00 PM at Friends Meeting. 4500 Kensington Ave. Call 320-9488
- Every 2nd Thurs.**      **Virginians Against Handgun Violence**, 7:15 PM., Jewish Community Center, B. Phillips-Taylor, 737-2975
- Every 3rd Friday**      **Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace**, 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
- Every Thurs.**      **Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY)**, 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.
- Every 3rd Sat.**      **Equality Virginia**, 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.
- Every 3rd Sun.**      **Richmond Community for Ethics and Meaning**, at First Unitarian. 1000 Blanton Ave., 5-8 PM, Susan at 784-4069.
- Every 4th Sat.**      **Pax Christi Peace Community** - Call Elaine Ogburn for details - 320-4514.
- Every 1st Mon.**      **Virginia People of Faith for Alternatives to the Death Penalty**, 4:45 PM  
Catholic Diocese Conference Room, Floyd and Cherry, Kathleen Kenney, 359-5661

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Every Saturday**      **Through Memorial Day - Women in Black** - Start at Virginia Museum, Boulevard entrance, near Grove. Contact local WIB at: [richmondwomeninblack.net/](http://richmondwomeninblack.net/)
- Every MWF**      **Protest our Nation's War/Imperial Policies** - Noon to 1:00 pm - at the Federal Courthouse, Tenth and Main
- June 6-7**      **Sowers of Justice Annual Assembly, featuring Ched Myers, "The Biblical Call to Justice at a Time of Terrorism and War"** - Friday, (7:30 - 9:00 pm) and Saturday, (9:30 am - 3:00 pm) - Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville. To register for Saturday, call the Office of J&P at the Diocese, 359-5661. For car-pool arrangements, call John Gallini at 272-8141.
- June 17-18**      **Annual Gathering of Virginia Peace Groups in Lynchburg** - For info contact John Gallini, 272-8141

**RPEC World Wide Web Address:**  
**<http://www.rpec.org>**

## Changes to RPEC Board Noted

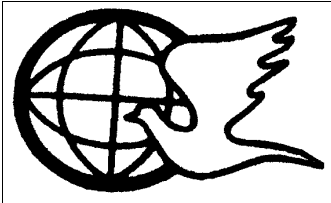
During the past few months several changes have taken place in the membership of the RPEC Board of Directors. At the end of December, 2002, Dave Depp left the Board after completing a 3-year term. Susan Sparling and Sylvia Clute also left at that time, both after serving voluntary one-year terms as part of the Board's effort to establish balanced classes for its directors.

Keo Cavalcanti and Andre Grimes, recognized as new board members at the 2002 Annual Dinner, began their service to the Board in January. Paul Fleisher, Jason Guard, Rev. Rodney Hunter, and Dr. Ravinder Kohli continue to serve, as well.

Rev. Kathy Talley, Dr. Gail Bingham, Charlotte Flowers, and Helen Butler have all resigned, each citing increases in professional and personal duties and responsibilities, while Noah Scalin, Zmarak Khan, Christopher Patterson, Tyla Matteson, Mim Scalin, Ram Bhagat, and Liz Canfield have been recruited to fill vacant seats.

Officers for 2003 are Chair: Noah Scalin, Vice-chair: Keo Cavalcanti, Secretary: Jason Guard, Treasurer: Paul Fleisher.

There are currently several vacancies on the Board. Individuals interested in serving as RPEC Directors are invited to call 804.358.1958 to request a Board Member Application.



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