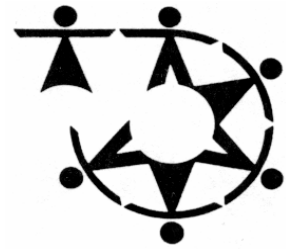


THE

# MUSTARD SEED



Denver Justice & Peace Committee

Celebrating 25 years of peace and justice !

901 W. 14th Ave., Suite 7, Denver, CO 80204, (303) 623-1463, www.denjustpeace.org  
April 2005, Volume 26, Number 2

## Uruguay and Water Privatization

By Frances Shure

Thanks to the Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas, I became part of a “delegation” to Uruguay, a country with 3.4 million residence, about the size of the state of Oklahoma. The delegation was organized for the purpose of celebrating the October 31, 2004, electoral victory of the country’s new progressive government. As a member of the delegation, I had the opportunity to learn about the significance of this historic event through meeting with leaders of NGOs and ministers of the new government. (For information on our sister organization in California—see box on page 10).

**History and Culture:** Uruguay obtained independence from Spain in 1828 and became a buffer state between its large neighbors Brazil and Argentina. Very little indigenous presence remained after the Spanish conquest. European immigrants including a significant number of Jews settled this land, and arrived full of European ideas and ideals of that time, such as anarchism, socialism, and communism. José Batlle y Ordoñez served as president twice between 1903 and 1915. He instituted free medical care and pensions for the elderly. Under his guidance Uruguay made progress in separating church and state, legalizing divorce, and giving full legal status to illegitimate children. While much of Latin America was under the oppressive thumb of colonialism and dictators, Uruguay expressed

its progressive ideals. The government, “instituted free public education before England, women’s suffrage before France, the eight-hour workday before the United States, and divorce before Spain...”(1)

But the state of the nation changed rapidly and drastically. Due to excessive dependence on cash crops, the economy failed; corruption in government grew; and in 1968, the famed Tupamaro urban guerrilla group created embarrassment for the corrupt government through acts of civil disobedience. The government suspended constitutional rights and political parties of the left were banned. Citizens were detained, tortured, or disappeared. During the military dictatorship (1973–1985), there were more political prisoners per capita in Uruguay than any other nation in the world. U.S. involvement was evidenced by the presence of Daniel Mitrione, police chief of Richmond, Indiana, who taught torture techniques to this military junta. (The movie, “State of Siege”, and the book, Hidden Terrors, by A.J. Langguth, both discuss this point in history.)



The dictatorship allowed democratic elections in 1985, in exchange for the passage of a law which would guarantee impunity for their crimes against humanity and abuse of power. The two main political parties, the Colorados and the Blancos, continued vying for

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Justice and Peace Committee is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America through education, solidarity projects and nonviolent activism.

### DJPC Board of Directors:

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Hannah Vanderlan, and  
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Harriet Mullaney

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**Printed by P & L Printing**

**Thanks to all the amazing volunteers and hard-working interns that help in the office and assist with program development, fundraising, newsletter publication, mailings and the website. We couldn't do it without you!**

## *Message From the Board*

*By Fernando Pineda-Reyes*

En vida hermano, en vida!  
Nunca visites panteones, ni llenes tumbas de flores,  
Si vas a dar una flor, dála hoy con amor,  
No esperes a que la gente se muera o se vaya  
Para decirle cuanto los amas,  
En vida hermano, EN VIDA!

These lines are part of a poem my grandfather liked. He said that one has to find his place on the web of life and it is very important to realize that no matter what you do, you are affecting others. I guess he noticed I was not convinced, so he said, "You play soccer right? What is the point of being on the field but not playing the game?"

I grew up in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. My parents provided me with love, food, a roof over my head and an education. In my youth, I realized there were things I disagreed with in regards to politics but I did not become active in making a difference at that time.

I studied at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM) where I had my share of demonstrations, strikes and marches. I was there during the initiation of the Zapatista movement, at least, what we heard about it in the politically controlled news. I did nothing. Well... I did made a donation of 10 pesos at a demonstration. I missed one election because I did not vote. I thought that working and supporting the people closest to me was enough—at least it felt good...

I have been living in the United States for seven years now. I cannot vote yet and I am pissed off! Yeah! It took losing the opportunity to vote in order to honor it. Then I woke up and learned a new and intriguing pair of words, "Environmental Justice". I was so thrilled to find two words that described my feelings. So I became active but not entirely committed. Then I learned the term, "Grassroots Organizing", which was a hard one to translate but it fit me well once I understood the concept. I felt that by working locally I was becoming a part of the revolution. Soon I realized I was playing a smaller game yet again.

I learned about the Denver Peace and Justice Committee from my friend Andy who invited me to attend a meeting. I thought, "Maybe it is time..." I have say, when I arrived at the meeting and heard about the good work the members of DJPC have been doing, all I could do was smile. I was so intrigued and excited! The little machine inside my head kept saying: These gringüitos are crazy! Guatemala? El Salvador? Mexico? CAFTA? Globalization? Not only do they care, they have been there! They know the language and better yet the culture! I wanted to be part of it. They

*(Continued on page 3)*

## WATER'S WORTH

*Fran Shure's article, "Uruguay and the Privatization of Water", continues on page 10... in the meantime, take a look at our current water situation:*

We now have over 6 billion people on earth and are in an era of water stress. By 2025, the population is anticipated to reach 8.6 billion, creating a condition in which 2/3 of people will live with a serious water shortage, and 1/3 will live with an absolute water shortage.

Denverites currently use 190 gallons/day, the average U.S. citizen consumes 153 g/d, Britons 88 g/d, Asians 23 g/d, and Africans 12 g/d. 13 g/d is the minimum for sustaining one human life.

There is only 1% of the earth's water available for agriculture, industries, and communities. To complicate matters, it is a closed system. No more sweet water can be produced, so what we have must be shared by increasingly larger numbers of people along with other species. Yet, 1/3 of all rivers, 1/2 of all estuaries, and 1/2 of all lakes are too polluted for fishing or swimming.

Along with population growth and an increasing per capita water consumption, massive pollution of the world's surface water systems creates an enormous strain on the remaining supplies of fresh water.

All of the multinational governing bodies of trade, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), WTO (World Trade Organization), and GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs), define water as a commodity subject to the same rules as other commodities, which state that a country cannot prohibit or limit the export of water without risking a WTO penalty. In addition, under



NAFTA's "proportionality clause", if a country turns on the tap to export its natural resources, it cannot turn off the tap until it runs out of that resource. GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) stipulates new WTO rules which pressure governments to deregulate and privatize their water systems. Once made, this becomes a decision that's almost impossible to revoke, even if the corporation fails to keep the system in good repair, or charges fees too steep for much of the population.

In the U.S., 85% of Americans still get water from publicly owned utilities. But big water companies hope to change this very soon. Partly due to finding Third World investments in water services a risky business, they are turning to First World water. Conglomerates like Suez, Vivendi, and RWE aim to control 70% of water services across the U.S. within 10 years. They are moving aggressively and have already bought up the leading U.S. water companies: U.S. Filter, United Water, and American Water Works. These are companies that had predominantly served small towns, but will now become the vehicles for water

privatization in the U.S. The Polaris Institute proposes strategies for defeating this, which can be researched at [www.polarisinstitute.org](http://www.polarisinstitute.org).

Three principals for guiding water decisions are proposed by this Institute:

1. water conservation
2. water as a fundamental human right to be distributed equitably rather than on ability to pay
3. water democracy in which the people preserve water as a special trust.

*From "Whose Water," Yes! magazine, Winter, 2004 issue.*

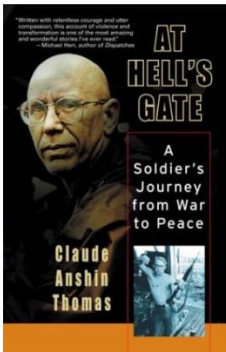
*(Continued from page 2)*

were **committed!** DJPC invited me to stay so I became active, but not yet completely committed. Now, I have been a board member for a couple of months. While attending the last board meeting, I got inspired yet again! It is time... I am now **COMMITTED!** There are a lot of things to do to support the work of DJPC.

Grandpa is gone, no flowers for him. I am 34. I am a father. I play soccer every week. I am a source of transformation. I stand for freedom and that is my possibility...

En paz,

Fernando Pineda-Reyes



## Book Review: "At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace"

By Lynn Farquhar

Over the holidays I finally got a chance to visit the Vietnam War Memorial in Angel Fire, NM with my brother. With the immense suffering that war and other wars have caused, combined with the surreality of current imbedded news reportage and concerns over friends and family deployed to Iraq or likely to be deployed, I'd been meaning to see it on a friend's strong recommendation. He was right that it was not to be missed...the photography display, writings by war veterans and a searing, moving film all amounted to a most compassionate labor of love and healing for the human spirit. This is probably why I wound up checking out a copy of Claude Anshin Thomas' book, "At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace", from the local library, based on a brief review of it I'd read in "Shambhala Sun" around the time I visited Angel Fire.

This winter I've been exploring the Buddhist practice of Tonglen, spurred on by my frequently aroused dismay and anger over our tax dollars funding such horrific violence as continues in Iraq, not to even mention Afghanistan, or the little mentioned operations in Colombia and elsewhere. Tonglen practice is intended to open the heart fully to suffering, and although Thomas' book doesn't mention Tonglen per se, he does manage to convey the most concise, meaningful case for mindfulness meditation (and by my own extrapolation, Tonglen) this reader has ever come across.

Part memoir, part treatise on nonviolent activism, part mindfulness meditation handbook, "At Hell's Gate" is a cathartic travelogue through one man's journey through the nightmares of internal and external warfare/violence to a dedicated pilgrimage for both inner and outer peace and healing. In the author's words:

*Many people continue to believe that in certain circumstances we should kill to prevent further killing. My hope is to help people to discover what a terribly dangerous argument this is. This very argument has been used to justify preemptive strikes, to maintain a nuclear arsenal that could destroy the planet a hundred times over, to uphold the death penalty. It is being used as a rationale for the current operations of Iraq and Afghanistan - and it was also the argument that the Fascists and the Nazis used to justify their agenda in Europe...*

Contrary to the pessimistic or fatalistic opinions held by many that war is inevitable, given the grim nature of the human being, it is my firm conviction and clear understanding that while conflict is inevitable, the degeneration of conflict into slaughter, mayhem, and the abject abandonment of truth is not. We do not need war to stave off our boredom or give us meaning and definition as a people. It is not our human nature but rather our unhealed, unaddressed suffering that propels us to industrialized killing. Killing at this level is quite simply the consequence of a fear-based philosophy that drives us to seek safety by attempting the impossible: to control everything and everyone around us.

Claude Anshin Thomas' book couldn't come at a more timely moment in history. This morning I heard a story on the radio about yellow ribbon displays in high schools for local heroes fighting in Iraq. I was tempted to dial up the station and give them a piece of my agitated mind, asking where are the stories of the unsung heroes who refuse to kill... for whom the glories of war are too immense a lie to ignore and who work incessantly to open their own and others' hearts to the pain and suffering inherent in such a lie. As it happened, however, I turned to a page I'd marked in "At Hell's Gate" and read:

*We don't have to live in violence. I know that from my own experience. If we really want to live differently, we can. It is not a question of politics but of actions. It is not a matter of improving the political system or correcting social injustice. These are valuable but will not alone end war and suffering. We must stop fighting the endless wars that rage within. Engaging in this process, I have begun to heal from the wounds of the many wars I have fought in: in my family, in school, in society, with alcohol and drugs, in Vietnam. I know now that I can practice peace by being peace.*

(Continued on page 5)



## GSTV UPDATE

The Global Solutions to Violence (GSTV) program is pleased to welcome DANIEL LOPEZ as the new part-time Coordinator! After an extensive search and review of candidates, Daniel was chosen to head this worthwhile initiative due to his dedication, proven leadership, and experience in the field of education.

As a member of the GSTV Committee for the past 2 years, Daniel has made several presentations at various high schools, participated in regular strategic planning meetings & retreats, and most recently, facilitated the training for new educators. As the Membership Program Coordinator for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of Amnesty International USA, Daniel worked with student activists in a variety of capacities: coach, mentor, cheerleader, problem-solver, and resource/curriculum developer, just to name a few. Daniel currently serves on the National Steering Committee for Human Rights Education for (HRE) AIUSA.

Daniel's expertise also extends to more formal academic settings: He has taught English as a Foreign Language in Spain; Spanish Language and Culture at Red Rocks Community College and the University of Denver. He has presented teacher-training seminars all over the world, including Panama, Slovakia and Saudi Arabia. As a teacher of Spanish and World History at Colorado Academy in Denver, Daniel implemented Non-Violence Education into his own classes, as well as trained fellow faculty about such methodologies. In an effort to "mainstream" HRE in our nation's schools, he presented on "Incorporating Human Rights Education Into the Foreign Language Curriculum" at the South West Congress of Language Teachers (SWCOLT) conference in March of 2003. As member of the Service-Learning Committee at Colorado Academy, Daniel encouraged and empowered his colleagues to combine HRE with volunteerism. By distributing materials, estab-

lishing contacts, and serving as an advisor for the school, he helped to build a bridge between these two distinct, yet intimately inter-connected, fields.

Indeed, Daniel Lopez has been actively involved in the field of Service-Learning and International Education & Training for the past 20 years. At the ripe age of 15, he backpacked for a summer through India and Sri Lanka. He then went on to become an exchange student in both Spain and Venezuela. These life-changing experiences firmly set him on the path of global exploration. While earning a B.A. in Spanish / International Studies and an M.A. in Education from American University in Washington, D.C., Daniel studied for a semester with the Partnership for Service-Learning in Ecuador. He was consequently chosen to be Fulbright Scholar in Ecuador in 1993 where he conducted teacher-training workshops at bi-national centers throughout the country. The U.S. State Department / School for International Training (SIT) sent him to Southern India in 1996 to teach American Studies as part of the English Teaching Fellowship program.

Ever since, Daniel has sought opportunities to share his knowledge of the world with others and lead a variety of cross-cultural programs: He has been a Program Director for VISIONS Service Adventures in the Dominican Republic, British Virgin Islands, Ecuador and Peru; Country Manager for Global Volunteers in Tanzania; and Team Leader in Peru for Where There Be Dragons, an all volunteer-based travel organizations. Daniel is currently the co-founder and Executive Director of Kindred Spirits Tour and Travel. As GSTV moves to the next stage of development, we encourage you to contact Daniel if you are interested in getting involved or providing suggestions/insights about the future direction of the program.

**Plan on attending our annual GSTV retreat on SATURDAY, MAY 14<sup>th</sup>!**

(Contact: [GSTV@denjustpeace.org](mailto:GSTV@denjustpeace.org) for details!)

*(Continued from page 4)*

This practicing of peace...this being peace is not a spiritual dissociative mechanism to cultivate when confronted with real conflict...rather it is a mindfulness to cultivate so that we can find the path of peace from moment to moment in ways that do not add more violence into the mix...I am very grateful to this generous author for sharing such wisdom from his heart...from the perspective of "hell's gate".

*Lynn is currently a resident at the Lama Foundation, an intentional spiritual community working towards sustainability in northern New Mexico.*

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Mark Surma and Kara Martinez

## CAFTA awaiting Congressional vote in the U.S.

The US-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was officially signed by trade representatives from the United States, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica by the end of January 2005. Although each country's trade minister ratified the agreement, participating countries are still required to obtain domestic congressional approval in order for the agreement to take effect. Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala have ratified the agreement under questionable democratic processes and despite massive public opposition particularly in Guatemala. While not an initial participant in the negotiations, the Dominican Republic has been added to the agreement.

The Bush Administration signed CAFTA on May 28, 2004. CAFTA will come to vote in the U.S. Congress by the end of April or beginning of May 2005, as hearings began in the Senate and House on April 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, respectively. Due to the reauthorization of a U.S. trade law known as "Fast Track," President Bush can push through this trade agreement without congressional revisions. This means that no changes to the actual written agreement can be implemented and once debates on the trade agreement close, Congressional members can vote only a simple yes or no to pass or fail the legislation.

CAFTA is controversial due to the many reasons it would negatively affect both the Central American countries involved, as well as the U.S. Some of these reasons include: the majority of the citizenry of the Central American countries involved have been locked out of negotiations—this is especially the case with indigenous populations; multilateral corporations are set to gain most while small farmers and the working poor in the region will be undermined; Central American countries do not adhere to even the most basic labor rights and CAFTA makes no move to improve this but rather creates what has become known as "the race for the bottom" in wages and labor protections; the remaining textile jobs in the United States will quickly be outsourced to those countries providing the cheapest labor—a practice always obtained through repressive means; CAFTA would promote privatization and deregulation of basic public services and allow for the continuance of poor environmental standards; alternatives are available—fair trade versus free trade agreements would provide for more sustainable and wide-reaching development.

## TAKE ACTION TODAY!!!

A movement of organizations covering a wide berth of interests, ranging from international human rights activists to Colorado sugar farmers, has been working hard to block CAFTA's approval in Congress. Some success has been achieved in finding allies within the House and Senate. However, our work is not yet done. Colorado legislators are divided. Republican House Representatives Bob Beauprez and Marilyn Musgrave have expressed their intentions to vote for the bill, while Democrat Representatives Mark Udall and John Salazar say they will vote against it. All other representatives remain undecided at the time of this printing. PLEASE contact your representatives, notably Senator Ken Salazar, Senator Wayne Allard, Rep. Diana DeGette, Rep. Joel Hefley, and Rep. Tom Tancredo before they vote on this legislation.

### **CAFTA affects wages, jobs & labor rights**

- ◆ **90 cents** = Average hourly wage for a Honduran worker creating goods for the U.S. market
- ◆ **42%** = % national unemployment rate in El Salvador
- ◆ **0** = Number of CAFTA countries found to be in compliance with basic International Labor Organization (ILO) standards.

### **Raise your voice to help stop CAFTA!**

- ◆ Write a letter to the editor!
- ◆ E-mail your Representatives and Senators.
- ◆ Better yet, print out the letter and mail it via snail mail—a method which garners more attention.
- ◆ Call your Representatives and Senators today!
- ◆ Sample letters, talking points and easy e-mail links are available through the DJPC website.

These statistics were compiled by Public Citizen.  
More figures at: <http://www.citizen.org/documents/CAFTAbyNumbers.pdf>

**Visit us today at: [www.denjustpeace.org](http://www.denjustpeace.org)**

## Legislative Update continued...

### **Violence and Repression in Guatemala surrounding CAFTA ratification**

Demonstrators succeeded in stalling Guatemala's original March 2<sup>nd</sup> ratification date, however on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Congress of Guatemala approved CAFTA 126 votes to 12 (with 20 members abstaining), making Guatemala the third country, after El Salvador and Honduras, to ratify the agreement. Over the subsequent week, protests assembled throughout the country as farmers, indigenous groups, and students sought to challenge ratification of the treaty. Thousands lined the streets of major Guatemalan cities in opposition. Police used fire hoses and tear gas on demonstrators and security forces fired on the civilian protestors, an act that is strictly prohibited under the 1996 Peace Accords. Two protesters died and many were injured in clashes with the police. Death threats were issued to two journalists in what appeared to be an effort to force them to stop reporting on the demonstrations. Organized protests continue en mass.

Despite accusations that President Oscar Berger promoted attacks on demonstrators, that the process to obtain justice for some 200,000 civilian deaths that occurred under the command of the military dictatorship is at a complete standstill, and the fact that that witnesses of these suspended trials still face the threat of death, the Bush administration has announced its intentions to lift the ban on military aid to Guatemala which has been in place since 1990.

### **The School of the Americas**

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, House Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) reintroduced HR 1217, "The Latin America Military Training Review Act of 2005", a bill which would suspend the authority of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), the successor institution to the United States Army School of the Americas (SOA) in the Department of Defense. HR 1217 would close WHINSEC until further investigation is completed by a joint Congressional task force. The purpose of the task force would be to conduct an assessment into the nature of education and training appropriate for the Department of Defense to provide for military personnel of Latin American nations. A separate human rights commission would investigate the past activities of SOA/WHINSEC. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Armed Services of which Joel Hefley and Mark Udall are both members. Currently, the bill includes 91 bipartisan introductory co-sponsors—13 more than previously.

#### **Action:**

Out of Colorado's seven US Congressional districts, only Rep. Mark Udall has signed on to this pertinent legislation towards suspending and investigating SOA/WHINSEC. PLEASE contact the six other Colorado House Representatives to express your desire that they co-sponsor and/or help pass HR 1217. For more information about the School of the Americas, please visit the SOA Watch Website at: [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org).

## CONGRESSIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

<b>Rep. Diana DeGette, 1st District</b> 303-844-4988; 202-225-4431	<b>Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, 4th District</b> 970-663-3536; 202-225-4676	<b>Rep. Bob Beauprez, 7th District</b> 303-940-5821; 202-225-2645
<b>Rep. Mark Udall, 2nd District</b> 303-650-7820; 202-225-2161	<b>Rep. Joel Hefley, 5th District</b> 719-520-0055; 202-225-4422	<b>Sen. Wayne Allard</b> 303-220-7414; 202-224-5941
<b>Rep. John Salazar, 3rd District</b> 970-245-7107; 202-225-4761	<b>Rep. Tom Tancredo, 6th District</b> 720-283-9772; 202-225-7882	<b>Sen. Ken Salazar</b> 303-455-7600; 202-224-5852



## ***DJPC BUILD FOR PEACE!!!***

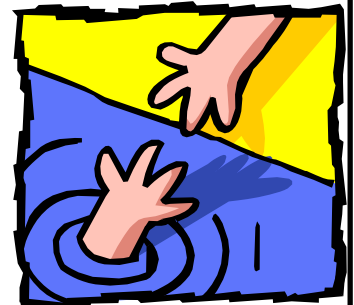
We at the Denver Justice and Peace Committee are readying ourselves for an active spring! It starts with a big push to increase participation in and contributions to DJPC's annual work-a-thon, **BUILD FOR PEACE** (B4P). Our spring date is set for **Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at Family Tree**. However if that day is not convenient with your calendar we will have two more workdays scheduled in the fall when you are welcome to join us! B4P is our most effective fundraiser and we appreciate your support in this event.

B4P is an excellent opportunity for you to get out into the Denver community, contribute to a meaningful project and help DJPC in the process. It is also a great way to meet other DJPC members and volunteers! For those of you who are not familiar with B4P, here is how it works:

- 1) Volunteers (like you!) commit to a day's work on a project. You can sign up by calling the DJPC office at 303-623-1463 or e-mailing us at [djpc@denjustpeace.org](mailto:djpc@denjustpeace.org). Please provide us with your name, phone number and e-mail address.
- 2) Volunteers then collect pledges from friends and family to fundraise for the Denver Justice and Peace Committee and its main programs, CAMINOS and Global Solutions to Violence (GSTV). When you sign up, we will send you a Sponsor Sheet and a packet with helpful instructions about soliciting supporters, sample letters, along with information about DJPC and our programs.
- 3) Show up on your scheduled workday ready to help, have fun and meet new people!

### **THIS SPRING WE WILL BE WORKING WITH FAMILY TREE!**

Family Tree provides shelter and services to families and youth of metro Denver to overcome domestic violence, homelessness, child abuse and other family crises.



### **LUNCH IS PROVIDED AND PRIZES AWARDED!**

We hope you can join us for this meaningful, fun and exciting event! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions. We look forward to seeing you and stay tuned to the website [www.denjustpeace.org](http://www.denjustpeace.org) for other upcoming events.

**If you cannot participate in a workday, please consider sponsoring and soliciting others to sponsor a Build for Peace participant through contributions to DJPC Education Fund, 901 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 7, Denver, CO**



## **BUILD FOR PEACE 2005 AWARDS**



**This year you could be eligible to win a four night stay for two at Casa Milagros in Yelapa, Mexico!**

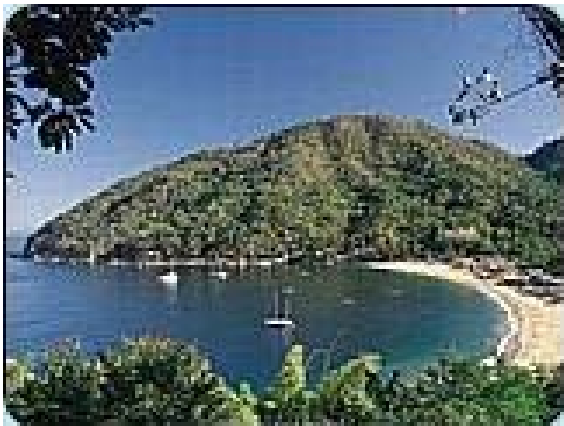
**Yelapa, Jalisco, Mexico:** Nestled in the southernmost cove of the Bay of Banderas lies the peaceful village of Yelapa. Yelapa is part of a large *comunidad indigena* (Protected Indigenous Community), which has prevented commercial development in the region. Yelapa's tranquility is ideal for those looking to travel to a unique, unspoiled paradise complete with a golden sand beach, a superb place to swim, snorkel or parasail. Yelapa provides a unique opportunity to live more simply and holistically.

(Information adapted from: <http://modena.intergate.ca/personal/davidj/>)

**Casa Milagros Resort:** Built in 1969 as a five bedroom family residence, Casa Milagros is now a 12 room *posada* (inn). Located high on a bluff, it overlooks the ocean, bay, village, and river below. Casa Milagros has a large double kitchen and outside dining area overlooking the bay and a 2000 sq. ft. roof terrace that offers the ultimate views of Yelapa. Casa Milagros truly is the finest way to enjoy Yelapa, offering solitude away from the hustle and bustle of the old village and yet is only a five minute walk to town.

(Information adapted from: <http://www.palapainyelapa.com/casamilagros.html>).

**Rules for winning:** For each \$100 you raise as a volunteer for "Build for Peace" between April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005, a raffle ticket in your name will be entered in the drawing to take place at the October DJPC Board Meeting (Example: \$930 raised = 9 raffle tickets entries.) Money raised must be turned over to the DJPC office by October 15<sup>th</sup> to be eligible. Participants of both the spring and fall workdays are eligible to raise money and earn raffle tickets during the entire fundraising window.



**Other great prizes will be awarded to the top fundraisers based on the amount of money turned in on each workday!**

(Photo credit: <http://www.yelapa.info/index.html>)

*(Continued from page 1)*

power. Both parties supported the neo-liberal economic policies of the day. The result of such policies is telling: Uruguay is \$12 billion in debt and faces pressure from Washington, the IMF, World Bank, multinational corporations as well as the Colorado and Blanco parties to privatize national resources and industries. Since 1999, poverty has increased by 108%, to include nearly 40% of the nation's population. Montevideo shantytowns have grown 10% annually from 1999 to 2003 as people who are unable to pay rent squat on vacant land and building small homes with recycled materials. In 2002, following the Argentinian financial collapse, Uruguay's peso was severely devalued, real wages plummeted, and unemployment reached an historic high of 23%. During this time, 30,000 citizens, mostly the young and educated, left Uruguay annually for jobs abroad.

### **Historic Election**

Despite many defeats in previous presidential elections, on October 31, 2004, Uruguay left behind 174 years of Colorado and Blanco party rule to elect Tabaré Vasquez, a physician and socialist of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) coalition, as the country's new president. Frente Amplio is a coalition of far-left to center-left parties including the Communist, Socialist, and the Christian Democrat parties. The party now controls both the senate and the Lower Chamber of parliament, where there is a parliamentary system of proportional representation. The new government includes politicians who endured imprisonment, torture, and exile under the former military dictatorship.

This victory represents not only vindication of the victims of the dictatorship, but also a popular repudiation of neo-liberal economic policies. This change in ideology is further evidenced by the fact that during the presidential election, 65% of the population also voted for a constitutional amendment making the privatization of water illegal. Uruguay has thus become the first country in the world to outlaw the merchandising of water.

### **Prognosis for Recovery?**

"Between a wall and a sword" is the saying in Uruguay which loosely translates as "between a rock and a hard place" and describes the position of the new government. If this government enforces the new constitutional amendment outlawing water privatization, forcing the corporations who already control water rights out of business here, it would be seen as "unfriendly to business." Since the conservative judiciary branch of the government was not renewed in the election, it remains to be seen how the courts will "interpret" the new amendment.

### **Uruguay Rejects Water Privatization**

Privatization of water is a trend and a concern around the world. It is thought by some that "water is the new oil," meaning that future resource battles will be fought over fresh water supplies rather than petroleum. These battles have already begun in the developing world. Water rights activists say that in just a few years a handful of companies will control almost 75% of all potable water in the world, as governments continue to privatize water and sewerage services. Maude Barlow, in her book, Blue Gold, informs us that the IMF and World Bank have actively encouraged the privatization of water resources in the developing South, making privatization a condition for granting loans. Barlow states, "The concentration of power in the hands of a single corporation and the inability of governments to reclaim management of water services allows corporations to impose their interests on government, reducing the democratic power of citizens."

### **The Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas**

The MITF sponsors small-scale humanitarian aid projects in Central and South America including an accompaniment project in Guatemala. They sponsor delegations to various countries, and can be reached at [mitf@igc.org](mailto:mitf@igc.org) or P.O. Box 2481, Mill Valley, CA 94942 or (415) 924-3227. Dale Sorenson is the Director.

Recently, water privatization has been strongly rejected in several Latin American countries including Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia. In 2000, the world watched in awe as Bolivian citizens in the city of Cochabamba revolted against Bechtel's hike of water prices up to 25% of many people's income. In El Alto, water privatization left

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tens of thousands of poor families without access to water because the cost of getting a water hook-up exceeded a half-years' income at the minimum wage. The government canceled the contract. Bechtel now is suing Bolivia in the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes, for \$25 million in "loss of future profits." The people of Bolivia did not choose to privatize their public water systems, some of which consisted of irrigation canals and wells that the citizens themselves dug and constructed without government help. It was forced on them by a contract the government signed in secret with Bechtel, as has been the case in many poor nations around the world.

This lesson was not lost on Uruguayans who knew that the government had signed a "Letter of Intent" with the IMF to "introduce new regulatory frameworks in several areas including electricity, telecommunications, water, sanitation, trains, transport, etc." and that the privatization of water was to be extended from two provinces to the whole nation. However, the two provinces that had already privatized water suffered a jump of 10 times the price for potable water. Furthermore, water supplied by the corporations was contaminated and unfit for drinking, whereas water supplied publicly was drinkable from the tap. In addition, pipes to poor neighborhoods were removed by the corporations, forcing the government to subsidize them in order to provide water to these communities.

It became clear that Uruguayans had to amend the Constitution itself to defeat this give-away of national services and resources by the government to the multinational corporations. With this constitutional amendment, Uruguay cannot sign any treaty which allows for the future privatization of water. In order to qualify for a plebiscite to amend the Constitution, activists from over 50 organizations within Uruguay collected the required signatures of 10% of the electorate. They had few resources, but held workshops, met with small groups, as well as used local newspapers and radio to educate citizens and obtain signatures. 230,000 signatures were required and 283,000 were presented.

The text of the amendment is brief, but includes crucial wording that makes it an historic document. It declares that:

- (1) Water is a basic human right, not a "need" that can be satisfied by private corporations in exchange for profit. Therefore, social criteria prevail over economic criteria.
- (2) Water for human consumption is given priority over all other uses of water.
- (3) Corporations cannot pump water and export it without limits, either as bottled or bulk water.
- (4) A majority approval in parliament is required to provide water to other countries facing water shortages, for solidarity reasons.
- (5) Private provision of water delivery and sanitation services are illegal, and can only be provided directly by state or government entities.
- (6) The participation of consumers, communities and civil society in all stages of water management is required in order to protect against corruption of public utilities.
- (7) All water resources must be managed in a sustainable manner, which will mean an emphasis on water conservation and the prevention of water contamination.
- (8) Affected corporations will be compensated and debts will be honored, but there will be no room for any lawsuit for "lost future profits."

While an event to celebrate, the passage of this constitutional amendment is not the end of the story. Water corporations have already threatened to use international arbitration panels to negate the will of the Uruguayan people. Tiny, courageous Uruguay is leading the world in efforts to retain democratic control over water supplies. Since what happens in Uruguay may affect how water rights are considered around the world, defending this constitutional reform may require world-wide support. Thank you, Uruguay for re-assuming your role in the world as leaders in progressive social reform and setting this historical precedent in South America and the world! (2) 1. *The Progressive*: "Where the People Voted Against Fear", by Eduardo Galeano, January 2005 issue. 2. Thanks to our guide, Andrés Conteris, for checking for accuracy and editing this article.

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## Fifth World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil

*By Frances Shure*

It is tempting to call the World Social Forum (WSF) of 2005 "unorganized" when printed programs aren't ready for the thousands from around the globe (155,000 I was told), or when the translation boxes don't work. I succumbed to that temptation, I confess, maybe more than once. But in hindsight, I have to admire how amazingly organized it was, knowing it was run mostly by volunteers who managed to keep the 2,500 events mostly on schedule. Furthermore, the 35,000 strong youth camp, arranged in self-managed "neighborhoods", held its own separate programs and concerts. Perhaps my concern with organization is revealing of my North American up-bringing? It is a challenge to describe this annual phenomenon (now to be bi-annual). It began as a grassroots people's and civil society's answer to the World Economic Forum and has become a venue for networking and discussing alternatives to imperialism, the neo-liberal economic model, and the urgent issues spawned by such entities.

On my first day, I attended a seminar on water privatization, where Danielle Mitterand, wife of the former president of France, was a panelist. "She attends every WSF," my private interpreter informed me as I treated him to ice cream he good-naturedly chastised me for the many U.S. policies we all work so hard to defeat. He reminded me that whom WE elect as U.S. president, means at least as much to their well-being as whom THEY elect. Bush is universally reviled in France, and more and more the American people are being considered as responsible for Bush policies.

I also assisted in a presentation on the attacks of 9/11/01. This event did not make it to the printed program. But without a break in stride, Lynn, the presenter from New York, put up posters as I handed out fliers. 75 people learned of the evidence suggesting U.S. government complicity in these attacks. Three Swedes, curious to learn more, accompanied us for dinner afterwards. They were Green Party members, one a member of the Swedish Parliament and another of the European Parliament. After commiserating about current U.S. policies, the discussion turned to spirituality. Quite a high point!

The next day I chose the seminar on Nanotechnology and Agriculture. Key technologies of the last half-century have focused on reducing size and costs while increasing power (e.g. transistors, semiconductors, genetic engineering). Our capacity to manipulate matter is now moving from genes to atoms. (A nanometer is one-billionth of a meter.) When an atom of gold, for example is manipulated, its properties can change drastically, from a very stable element to a highly reactive one. Why is this being done? To make money, of course! For example, tires can be made that will last the lifetime of the car--or of its owner! As with genetic engineering, the "precautionary principal" and the potential for harm to human health and the environment is not being taken seriously. A few scientists recognize that with the tremendous opportunities promised, there are also horrendous social and environmental risks.

One of the last lectures was that of John Perkins, author of Confessions of an Economic Hit Man (EHM). Perkins explained how he and other EHMs *purposefully* manipulated third world countries into deep debt from which they could never recover. New to me (and not in his book) was his revelation that the U.S. wanted Iraq to agree to the same economic plan as it had with Saudi Arabia. Saddam Hussein would not comply. The CIA was dispatched to assassinate him, when that proved futile, the military stepped in Perkins ended by saying that there must be international laws passed to prevent the predatory lending practices like the ones in which he was involved.

If the motto of the WSF is "Another World is Possible", then "Any Experience is Possible," describes the WSF itself. With a huge venue including 11 different "Thematic Terrains" (stretching for miles), and with events dealing with the environment, war, diversity, technology, poverty, landless workers movement, art, etc., 155,000 participants will have 155,000 experiences. Next year there will be continental wide Social Forums with one in Venezuela. The worldwide gathering will reconvene in Africa in 2007. I would suggest attending with a group to make your experience easier and more fruitful and to consider attending a local Social Forums like those held in London, Boston, and Uruguay. The Chicago Social Forum is about to meet again May 1, 2005. For more information, visit [www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)

## **CAMINOS Update**

By Susan Cotton

*Liberation that raises a cry against others is no true liberation.  
Liberation that means revolutions of hate and violence  
And takes the lives of others or abases the dignity of others  
Cannot be true liberty. -Oscar Romero-*

### **Accompaniment News**

The genocide cases against two Guatemalan generals continue to move slowly through the Guatemalan court system. Meanwhile, the families that are testifying in these cases receive steadfast accompaniment, provided through solidarity groups worldwide, including CAMINOS. Our newest accompanier, Heidi Gross, went to Guatemala in mid-February for a 6-month stay in the villages of Xix and Ilom, where CAMINOS members have been accompanying witnesses for over 3 years. Heidi is from Spokane, WA, where she was an AmeriCorps Volunteer for Washington Reading Corps, and tutored children in grades K-8 to develop and improve their reading skills. Heidi's background includes a year in Morelos, Mexico, where she worked in Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos Orphanage teaching English for 250 special case high school students without funds or textbooks, and mentoring troubled teenagers and struggling students. Heidi's training in Guatemala will include workshops on the human rights situation in Guatemala and the genocide cases in particular, as well as an intensive study of the Ixil language, the language of the region. We welcome Heidi, and look forward to first-hand news from the Guatemalan highlands.

### **Promesa Partnership**

CAMINOS would like to thank the many participants who danced 'til dawn (well, 10:30 anyway!) at the recent salsa dance fundraiser at the Mercury Café. People had a terrifically fun time and raised close to \$1,000 for CAMINOS' new health initiative, the Promesa Partnership!

Partnering with a church from Tucson, and a Mayan board of advisors in Guatemala, CAMINOS has pledged to support the ongoing work of health promoters in the resettlement community of Tesorito, in southern Guatemala. CAMINOS has a long history of involvement with the families of Tesorito, including accompanying the families during the founding of the community in 1998. Resettlement from the mountains to the coast brought health concerns, which have not been alleviated in subsequent years. According to a recent report by Tesorito health workers, the most common illnesses are diarrhea and severe respiratory infections. The most frequently infected populations are children under 5 years old. This is caused by a scarcity of latrines, poor hygiene habits, lack of education around preventive measures, large families, environmental contaminants, and lack of adequate resources that support health. All money raised at the fundraiser will go directly to Tesorito's health team. Huge fundraising thanks go to the band 'La Quinta Nota', DJ Jack Mudry, Rick Clifford and Jennifer Dolle, and the staff of the Mercury Café.


### **Our Culture is our Resistance**

Jonathan Moller's new book of compelling black and white photographs, *Our Culture is our Resistance*, is intimately linked with the communities that CAMINOS has worked with since 1996. His work documents the history of the Communities of Populations in Resistance, the CPR's. The story of the CPR/Sierra (where the first two CAMINOS accompaniers lived and worked) is told in quotes, poems, photos and essays by notable writers and activists. Other photos show the CPR resettlement communities where CAMINOS still works and takes delegations. Some of the most moving photos and text portray the exhumations of clandestine graves and massacre sites, and reburials, in the Ixil region, and where the infamous "scorched earth" genocide campaign of the 1980's took place. The incredible history of the CPR's, and their courageous, ongoing struggle to live a life of dignity and equality, continues to motivate accompaniers, human rights activists, writers, artists, poets, indigenous groups, and others to contribute to the work of Romero's "dynamic and generous" peace.

*Peace is not the product of terror or fear.  
Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.  
Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.  
Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution  
of all to the good of all.  
Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity.  
It is right and it is duty.*

*-Oscar Romero-*

## Meet Kara Martínez DJPC's new Director of Program Services



*We do not travel this world alone. What is our purpose here if not to leave footprints on the lives of others? We are surrounded by everyday miracles, the tangible and the intangible, leading us to the discovery of our true selves and the knowledge that how we live our lives can affect so many others. When the floodgates of realization are opened, the past, present and future take on revolutionary meaning.*

These are words I wrote as a young student about to graduate from college at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. I had recently returned from a semester of studying social justice in Chile through the School for International Training where the world as I knew it had been literally turned upside down. My journey to the southern hemisphere was not my first experience venturing out of the country and I had long known that the small town in rural Iowa where I grew up contained only a tiny fraction of a greater reality. Even though nearly a decade has passed, I still consider that particular snapshot in time my most transformative.

The year was 1997 and the infamous General Augusto Pinochet was still head of the armed forces. On the anniversary of the 1973 military coup, what has now become known as “the first September 11<sup>th</sup>”, Pinochet presided over his military parade in celebration of “Armed Forces Day” while hundreds of thousands of Chileans marched in a long and winding procession towards the National Cemetery to pay homage to the martyred President Allende. I was a witness to that day, a young student overwhelmed with guilt upon seeing the phrase *Yanquis, Go Home!* painted on the side of a building and brought to tears as I watched the silent faces of the *desaparecidos* file past, trapped in black and white photos as their loved ones screamed for justice. It was that day I learned what repression felt like as we fled through the alleyways of Santiago to escape *carabineros* in full riot gear chasing down the crowd with tear gas, water hoses, and clubs. It was also in Chile where I learned that humility and generosity are two of the greatest gifts one can offer or receive. I fell in love with “Castellano” as Chileans prefer to call their Spanish language and became fascinated with non-violent resistance movements—the power of people to move mountains back to their rightful place.

I returned home haunted and impassioned, torn between who I was as an “affluent American” in relation to the rest of the world, yet thankful for the many blessings that have allowed me not only to understand the state of the world from a three-dimensional view but also the possibility that I might do something to improve it. The journey since has provided for many interesting turns. Immediately following my graduation with a degree in international relations, Latin American studies and Spanish, I interned and worked in the regional office of Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), a statesman whose politics and staff I continue to admire.

Service as a Peace Corps Volunteer followed—I was stationed in Belize and volunteered for one year under the Ministry of Rural Development and Culture. My home was a cement block house in a rural Mayan and Mestizo Spanish-speaking community named San José Succotz. The village was located on a major highway, approximately six miles from the border with Guatemala. From the Catholic-run primary school where I led programs ranging from peer mentoring to sports, one can see the Mayan temple Xunantunich on the hillside above and imagine how the surrounding jungle was once covered with fields of maize. I was challenged to throw out my preconceived notions of progress and focus on relationships versus tangible results, allowing me to delight in life's beautiful simplicities: long talks with neighbors under the shade of a palm tree; a spontaneous soccer game on the gravel road home; sticky mango juice running off my

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hands and down my arms; evening swims in the crystal blue Mopan River; the art of tortilla making; teaching English on a breezy porch; and close commune with nature.

My second year led to a transfer to a the larger town, San Ignacio of the Cayo District, where I had the opportunity to scrutinized the ins and outs of grassroots development as the Program Director for a non-profit organization called Cornerstone Foundation ([www.peacecorner.org](http://www.peacecorner.org)). Living in this diverse town--where I could hear Creole, Spanish and English spoken as I strolled through the marketplace--allowed me to witness the dichotomy of a post-colonialist society. My many experiences there lent towards a greater comprehension of the extent to which race and class permeate not only individual interactions, but also relations between nations.

It was in Belize where met my husband Andrew in his hometown of San Ignacio. Andrew continues to be my life companion, my teacher and champion *por el camino*.

I come to the Denver Justice & Peace Committee from the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies with a Master's degree in International Human Rights and professional experience in the Office of Internationalization. During my graduate studies, an internship with the International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic and involvement in the Center on Rights Development allowed experience with different methods of activism, the former promoted "rule of law", the latter practiced educational means. I carry with me an in-depth awareness of human rights issues in Latin America as well as insight into various methods to work towards sustainable and progressive change towards the realization of DJPC's mission. I hope to serve as a resource and motivator to DJPC programs and many valuable members, and in the end to leave *huellas*—footprints—of my own.



# Welcome to DJPC!

For those of you receiving this newsletter for the first time, we welcome your help in working for justice and peace! If you would like to keep receiving *The Mustard Seed* and/or to support our work, please return the slip below.

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## END NOTES:

- ◆ Donate to DJPC online! Visit our website [www.denjustpeace.org](http://www.denjustpeace.org) and make a credit card donation to DJPC via a secure payment form!
- ◆ Also on our website, learn about our programs, read articles, get news from Central America, check out resources and find events and actions that matter to you.
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