

Community Involvement

Three Years is too Many

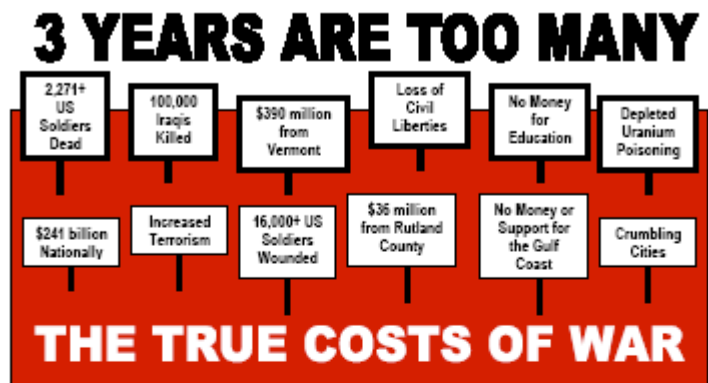
--Katie Sobalsky

I can still remember the first protest I went to. It was back when I was still in high school and very certain that I could change the world. The attacks on our World Trade Center had recently occurred, and President Bush was in the stages of planning the country's response. It seemed very likely that a war was leering in the future, and I was not ready to sit idle and let that happen. Neither were many others. Across the internet, in flyers and by word of mouth, people collectively decided that all opposed to the US invading Iraq would gather together in designated cities and protest the onslaught of what we knew would be a disaster. And so, on that freezing January morning, my two friends and I boarded a train into New York City with no idea what to expect, but enough determination and Beatles songs to carry us along. The protest ended up being larger than anyone could have hoped for, with more than 500,000 concerned citizen united peacefully to express their concerns for America and Iraq. This was still at a time when the majority of American's were gung-ho for an invasion. It was fresh after the 9/11 attacks, and there was hardly a time when patriotism was ever so high. Despite this, there was an unquestionable fever throughout crowd. Everyone there knew that this war was not just, it would not solve America's problems, and they were determined to stop it from happening.

Obviously the protest did not sway George Bush's decision. Three years have since past and we are still at war with Iraq. The main difference now is that most US citizens have come to realize the grave mistake of going to war. Many have finally become attuned to the fact that the true costs of this war are far outweighing any sort of benefits. Three years have gone by and with every passing minute more money is spent and more people are killed and injured. 2,290 US solders are dead. 16,742 are seriously injured. And what about the Iraqi's, who are faring even worse? More than 4,000 Iraqi soldiers have perished, and anywhere from 40,000 to 80,000 innocent civilians have been slaughtered because of this war. The worst of it all is that you are being forced to pay for it. Rutland County has already contributed \$37,467,341 of taxpayer's money on this ongoing battle. Whether you agree with the war or not, that's a lot of your money that could be going to other things. Surely, given the decision, not many people would ever consider putting a child's health and well-being on the line in order to pay for more weapons to kill more people. However, this is exactly what's happening when your tax money is taken away from other important areas and spent on the military. If Rutland alone hadn't spent \$37,467,341 it could have insured 22,435 Rutland children for one year!

What else could the war money have done for Rutland? 337 more housing units could have been built in the county with that money. That's 337 more places for your fellow citizens of Rutland to live who may be homeless right now, or a place for new residents to come in and fuel the economy.

And what about education? Education is priceless, and as Bush puts more and more money into this war, less and less is put towards education. Teachers are being cut left and right as class sizes swell and become unmanageable. Did you



Demonstration to Protest the 3rd Anniversary of the War Against Iraq

Please bring signs and banners that address the true costs of war.

Saturday March 18th
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
**Sidewalk in front of Main Street Park,
Routes 4/7, Rutland**

Organized by Central Vermont Peace and Justice
and Green Mountain College's Club Activism.
For more information, please visit: www.centralvermontpeace.org

realize that if Rutland hadn't spent \$37,467,341 on the war, it could have hired 649 additional public school teachers for an entire year? As a current college student I'm aware at the ever-increasing cost of college tuition. As the price of my education is raised every year I'm forced to bury myself in more and more debt. Even worse, however, are the millions of kids who cannot even go to college because they don't have enough money. The money Rutland paid on the war could have provided 1,816 students from Rutland with a 4-year scholarship to a public university. How many of you are really willing to write one more check to this war when you know you could be funding a persons education, their future?

So, after reading this article chock full of depressing statistics, you may feel angry or sad or appalled, but it should not leave you feeling hopeless. As an American you are given the invaluable right of free speech, so use it! On Saturday, March 18th there will be a demonstration in Rutland protesting the third anniversary of the war on Iraq and to show the country what the true costs of this war are: lives lost, families ruined, destruction of homes and the environment, and money diverted from precious things like education, health care, housing, and even helping our own country after Hurricane Katrina. As a citizen of Rutland you should be aware and concerned about where you're tax money is going. Just imagine what \$37,467,341 could do for Rutland! This will be a peaceful, unified gathering to say enough! Rutland has spent enough, Vermont has spent enough, America has spent enough, the entire world has spent enough! Before another dollars wasted and another life is taken, won't you please take action and join us on March 18th to voice your concerns. The demonstration is being held by Central Vermont Peace & Justice along with members of Green Mountain College's Club Activism. It will take place on Saturday from 2-3:30 on the sidewalk in front on Main Street Park Routes 4/7.

Aren't you tired of just watching the war footage flicker by on TV and not being able to do anything about it? Well get up off the couch and head downtown to join us for this rally. The time for change is now!

Want more info? Go to www.centralvermontpeace.org

Exploring Family Resources in the Rutland Community

A series for families, grandparents, neighbors, and community members

Week 1: How to Engage and Have Fun with children including Free and Low cost Activities On Site and in the Community, Thursday, March 16th, 6:00PM – 9:00PM, Rutland County Head Start, Meadow Street, Rutland, Come learn about different activities in Rutland County that are available to the community, along with simple activities that can be done at home.

Week 2: Using Positive Discipline & Dealing with Challenging Behaviors, Thursday, March 30th, 6:00PM-9:00PM, Asa Bloomer Building, Second floor conference room, Presentation on techniques to use with children to avoid difficult behaviors and how to deal with behaviors when they occur.

Week 3: Developing Healthy Lifestyles, Thursday, April 13th, 6:00PM-9:00PM, Asa Bloomer Building, Second floor conference room, Come for information about healthy eating, exercise, and how nutrition and environment can affect behavior.

Come have a free dinner and connect with other families.
FREE Child Care and incentives included each night.

Sponsored by Rutland County Early Childhood Council, Child Care Support Services, Rutland County Head Start, and Vermont Department of Labor

For more information or to register over the phone call 802-747-0033 or 1-800-775-2390 or email hmattison@vac-rutland.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY! Want to go to shows at the Paramount for free? Sign up to be an usher. For more information and a list of shows, call Cindy Hahn, Paramount Volunteer Coordinator at 747-0145.

Rutland Sustainability Network, Interested in helping to solidify sustainability efforts in Rutland...want to explore community and school garden start-ups, buying more local food, creating healthy homes and living environments,