

# DELAWARE COUNTY PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE



P.O. Box 309 • Swarthmore, PA 19081 • 610-543-8427 • info@delcopledge.org • www.delcopledge.org

Spring 2007

## Brandywine Turns 30

by Bob Smith

The revulsion against war not too long hence will be an almost insuperable obstacle for us to overcome, and for that reason, I am convinced that we must set in motion the machinery of a permanent war economy ... It must be an ongoing program and not the creation of some emergency. —Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric, July, 1944, speaking before the U.S. Army Ordinance Association

Formed in the fall and winter of 1977 by a group of Vietnam war resisters, Brandywine Peace Community marks its 30th anniversary in 2007.

Brandywine was formed amidst the social exhaustion of the post-Vietnam war period as the U.S. reeled from its defeat in Vietnam and announced a new nuclear weapons buildup and a policy of nuclear first-strike. We knew that militarism would continue to be the underlying, driving force of U.S. culture and economy. We knew in our experiential bones from the Vietnam war resistance that our continuing commitment to non-violent resistance needed to be ongoing, focused, and rooted in faith, spirituality, risk, and community.

Brandywine's campaign of nonviolent resistance to General Electric, the nation's preeminent nuclear weapons producer, began in 1978 at the General Electric nuclear weapons plant at 32nd and Chestnut Streets—now the site of



March 18-19, 2007. Brandywine marked the 4th anniversary of the Iraq war with an action at Lockheed Martin.

upscale condominiums and restaurants—and began an area-wide and national campaign for nonviolent direct action resistance to nuclear weapons and the war economy. One peace researcher at the University of Florida

---

**The greatest crime of our age is making life and death realities abstract.**

—Jean Paul Sartre

---

called Brandywine's campaign at GE "the longest pageant of protest in U.S. history."

Brandywine conducted weekly vigils at the GE weapons plants in both Philadelphia and Valley Forge. We organized "walks of conscience," established a national presence with actions at GE shareholder meetings, and initiated and maintained an international boycott of GE consumer products. We held vigils and fasts, involving people

"sleeping-out" at GE in large GE cardboard refrigerator boxes, which made the connection between weapons profits and unmet human needs. At the center of our campaign was nonviolent civil disobedience and resistance.

There were, of course, blockades and sit-ins, walk-ons, and die-ins, in which hundreds and hundreds of people challenging the legitimacy (and legality) of GE's nuclear weapons work entered onto GE property and were arrested. There were also the "higher risk" actions of the Plowshares 8, the GE 5, and the Rooftop Peacemakers in which small groups actually entered into (and on top of) company property, damaging nuclear weapons components or pouring blood on related test equipment. People were arrested, tried, and went to jail.

Then in 1993 in the largest "defense industry merger" of all time, GE sold its aerospace division to Martin Marietta. Martin Marietta doubled in size, and two years later merged with Lockheed

---

See Brandywine on page 8

# Guatemala: Unearthing the Truth

by Linda Panetta

When I was offered the opportunity to travel to Guatemala earlier this year as part of a campaign to withdraw troops from the School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (SOA/WHINSEC), I jumped at it. After all, nearly 20 years had passed since I lived in this war-torn country, and it had been 10 years since my last visit, which occurred just after the 1996 peace accords were signed ending Guatemala's 36-year war. Jean-Marie Simon's book *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny* was published in 1987, and it had a tremendous impact on solidifying my decision to travel to Guatemala just after graduating from college. It detailed the U.S. orchestrated coup that toppled the democratically elected president in 1954, but it also showed the beauty and dignity of the Mayan people who bore the brunt of the violence during the war. Successive dictatorships and repressive military regimes were responsible for the massacre of tens of thousands of people. The United States was largely unfettered in its sponsorship and support of these regimes, and many of Guatemala's most brutal dictators, human rights abusers, and death squad leaders received their training at the U.S. Army SOA. Alumni, including Hector Gramajo and Rios Montt, incorporated scorched earth campaigns that resulted in over 660 villages being completely wiped out and over 250,000 people being killed or "disappeared."

Sadly, the level of violence and impunity for its perpetrators that existed in Guatemala 20 years ago still continues today. With countless mass graves that still need to be identified and unearthed, families are left anguishing over the fate of their missing loved ones. The daily wage paid out to agricultural workers is still dismal, and small farmers cannot compete against the price and glut of imported produce that now floods the markets thanks to the effects of the Cen-

tral American Free-Trade Agreement. And while "communist" is no longer the label of choice, the term "terrorist" is often applied to anyone attempting to organize unions, to individuals fighting for wage increases, or to anyone who challenges the government. And as before, death threats and targeted assassinations are often the consequence of this label.

During my brief time in Guatemala, I visited the city morgue and was told that there are on average 35 violent deaths every day (about equivalent to the number of people killed daily during the civil war), and the rate of violent crimes against women is staggering. Even more troubling is that most of these murders are never investigated. When they are, the incompetence of police and government forensic teams is so high that the evidence is often worthless.

*Unearthing the past.* I was invited to travel with human rights advocates investigating the disappearance of four workers from a farm in the department of Suchitepequez. While there I also documented the atrocious labor practices on the farm. Most workers work between 8-10 hours a day, 6 days a week, for an average daily wage of \$1. Although the investigation into the disappeared workers will continue, I learned that one of the human rights workers who I accompanied may be forced to flee the country due to the constant death threats he and his family have received.

Though 10 years have passed since the signing of the peace accords, very little justice has occurred, and impunity for the perpetrators is as prevalent today as it was during the genocide. The armed actors who tormented and ruled the country before the accords are some of the most powerful elite of today. Fueled by fear of violence, gated communities are now ubiquitous;



*A 15-year-old girl bashfully giggles as she struggles to place a bucket full of soil on her head. Once balanced, she carries the soil up a hill where it is used for planting rubber trees and other cash crops. She will repeat this laborious chore nearly a dozen times each hour until the end of the workday. In the background, other girls, one as young as 13 years of age, return to fill their buckets.*

they are run by security companies that both perpetuate the fear and imprison the populace. Though they keep the violence outside the walls, the more fear and violence that is generated, the more they have to gain.

Despite all the violence and corruption, an eternal spring continues to flow in the hearts and spirit of the Guatemalan people. Amazing projects are underway to continue the preservation of the Mayan language and culture. Against all odds, people continue to fight for justice, education, health care, land, and human rights. They trust that one day tyranny will be merely a specter of the past and that a prevailing peace will take root to reestablish justice and bring to an end impunity.

(For more photos, go to [www.OpticalRealities.org](http://www.OpticalRealities.org))

# Guatemala in Crisis

by Ronald F. Coburn

Guatemala has the largest population in Central America, 11 million people: 2 percent own more than 70 percent of all the productive farmland; 75 percent live in poverty; 60 percent are descendants of the Mayan civilization of which 90 percent live in poverty. There is what sociologists call a rigid class stratification: on the top, *Criollos*, direct descendents of Spanish colonialists; in the middle, *Ladinos*, people of mixed indigenous and Spanish descent; and on the bottom, indigenous people. About 5 million indigenous people are isolated socially, economically, and politically due to geographic and language barriers as well as lack of educational and economic opportunities. Indigenous people are divided into 21 different groups with different languages and different cultures. The country is in turmoil with extreme land pressures on indigenous farmers, human rights violations directed at indigenous people, murder rates that could be called genocide, and attacks on human rights organizations.

With most of the best land in the hands of very few, distribution of land has been a source of social conflict in Guatemala for centuries. After the Spanish conquest, royal grants were issued to conquistadors and priests giving them plantations that were worked by indentured indigenous serfs. This led to the creation of a racial hierarchy and exploitation of indigenous people that has persisted since the country achieved independence from Spain in 1821. But, the Mayan people have never accepted their fate. In each generation since the Spanish invasion, they have rebelled against the Guatemalan government.

The modern history of Guatemala can be considered to have started in 1944 following the first democratic election in Guatemalan history of President Juan Jose Arevalo. The following 10 years have been termed "Ten Years of Spring": President Arevalo dissolved the secret police, reformed repressive labor codes, developed national literacy programs, established farm cooperatives, and organized

voter registration drives.

J a c o b o Arbenz Guzman was elected president in 1950. He initiated land reform that threatened the United Fruit Company, which had been in Guatemala since about 1900 and which, in 1950, was the major landowner in the country. The U.S. government under President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles saw a direct threat to U.S. corporate interests, and concerned about too much communist influence, initiated a propaganda and destabilization campaign. The CIA led a small opposition army into the country from Honduras and forced President Arbenz into exile.

His successor, President Castillo Armas, was chosen by the U.S. Repression of indigenous farmers followed. In 1962, the first peasant guerilla force was organized. In 1966 alarmed by growing popular demands for reform, the Guatemalan government responded with cruelty and force, and a civil war broke out between peasant guerillas and the Guatemalan military junta. This continued for 30 years. According to the United Nations Truth Commission, the Guatemalan government and allied paramilitary committed acts of genocide and were responsible for 93 percent of the estimated 200,000 killings and 90 percent of the 42,000 human rights violations, 29,000 of which ended in death or disappearances.

The U.S. government supported the Guatemalan military against what it saw as a communist peasant revolt by providing counterinsurgency training to the Guatemalan armed forces and training hundreds of Guatemalan military personnel in the School of the Americas. The U.S. government also provided financial



*The President of Guatemala, Oscar Berger, talks with the press outside the West Wing of the White House shortly after a meeting with U.S. president George W. Bush in the Oval Office in Washington, D.C., April 30, 2004.*

support and weapons. United Nations-brokered peace talks began in 1991 and culminated in 1996 with the final peace accords which provided the framework—so far entirely unrealized—for transforming the country into a more participatory, pluralistic, and equitable society. Land and judicial system reforms were promised. Land reform included the establishment of a cadastral-based land registry, the creation of a land fund, and the development of land conflict resolution mechanisms. European countries provided most of the financial support for these programs. The U.S. has given \$260 million over the period 1997-2000. Unfortunately, the Guatemalan congress has never supported the peace accords agreements, and it is not clear how the money was spent.

Guatemala's independent Historical Clarification Commission concluded that the U.S. government gave money and training to a Guatemalan military that committed "acts of genocide" against the country's Mayan population. Its report contradicts years of official denials of the torture, kidnapping, and execution of thousands of civilians. The report also listed the American training of the officer corps in counterinsurgency techniques as a key factor "which had significant bearing on human rights violations during the armed confrontation."

Eleven years after the peace accords,

Continued on page 4





*Some 60 percent of Guatemalans are descendents of the Mayan civilization, 90 percent of whom live in poverty.*

the country is once again descending into lawlessness and terror. The country seems to be in a chronic, smoldering rebellion driven by discrimination against the indigenous majority, disputes over land ownership, forced evictions, home demolitions, and appropriation of land by corporations. Frequent violence, including killings by paramilitaries and gunmen hired by plantation owners and civilian police organized by local and absentee landowners, multinational corporations, and the Guatemalan government, is now occurring. Thousands of farmers, most of them indigenous, are finding lands they've lived on and farmed for years suddenly off limits. At more than 60 plantations, landless farmers have settled in and are refusing to leave. There has also been a sharp increase in abuses against activists, journalists, lawyers, judges, and human rights organizations working to support the rights of indigenous peoples. There were 2,000 murders in 2004 and 2005. From January to April 2006, there were 65 threats or attacks to staff of human rights organizations and hundreds of violations listed in great detail on the Amnesty International website. In 2004, 527 women were killed, in 2005, 665 lost their lives, and in the first 3 months of 2006, 243 were murdered. Although there is an organized judiciary, human rights violations are practically never investigated, and there is only a single-digit conviction rate for murder.

In 2004, in an internationally monitored election, Oscar Berger became the

new president of Guatemala. President Berger is a businessman and a large landowner. Despite his pre-election vows to respect the human rights of indigenous people, the numbers of agrarian disputes and violent events have increased.

In March of 2006, the Guatemalan congress ratified the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The ratification took place despite strong public opposition. Police fired tear gas and beat 8,000 demonstrators in Guatemala City. Protestors, looking at the example of Mexico, reasoned that "free trade" would attract more multinational corporations and more pressure to displace their farm communities. In addition, it was widely known that in the last five years, 254 mining concessions were licensed, covering roughly 10 percent of the country with 90 percent of that land formerly occupied by indigenous people. Also, it is clear that the Del Monte Fresh Fruit and Produce Company has subcontracted its banana production operation to independent producers so that union organizing and investigations of workers' abuse are virtually impossible.

This year President Bush traveled to Guatemala. He proclaimed that "free trade can spread opportunity, provide jobs, and help lift people out of poverty." But, according to a recent report, there is a food processing plant less than 10 miles from where Bush spoke where children as young as 13 years old are working under deplorable conditions. Speaking on *Democracy Now* on March 13, 2007, veteran anti-sweatshop activist Charles Kernaghan of the National Labor Committee described deplorable conditions in the Legumex factory, which exports food to Superior Foods, located in California:

This company exported more than four million pounds of frozen broc-

coli, melons, and pineapples to the U.S. last year, much of it going to our school children. Inside the factory, they're all kids. The vast majority were thirteen years of age to sixteen-seventeen years of age. It looks like a high school, but it's not a high school. These kids are going in from 7 in the morning until 7 at night, [twelve] hours a day, six days a week. Sometimes they have to come in earlier, at 6 or 6:30 in the morning. They do an extraordinary amount of work ... we watched them cutting up broccoli. You know, you buy those frozen broccoli florets in the stores. Every head of broccoli, they grab these heads of broccoli, and with a knife they make 37 cuts, and then with their hands they break the broccoli apart into 97 pieces. So there's 97 operations. They do one broccoli every 64 seconds. So they're making a cut every seven-tenths of a second. And this is all day long. They're cutting themselves with their knives. They're on their feet all day. They say their feet swell up. Their backs hurt. They're exhausted. They make the same movements over and over again. Their wrists swell up. But they told us something that was extraordinary. They were doing 692 pounds of fruit and vegetables a day. These are thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year-old kids. But they said to us, the worst was the melon ... you work in the water, because they're constantly washing the floor. So here you have thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year-old kids standing in sneakers in an inch of water for twelve hours, and they say that their feet begin to crack and bleed.

Is this the Guatemala of the CAFTA era?

Although it is widely recognized that Guatemala is in crisis, not everyone agrees. Last year, U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, standing next to President Berger, announced more U.S. aid to the Guatemalan military. He said, "My impression is that this is a magic moment in Central America." Perhaps he was correct but for different reasons than he could have understood: The growing peasant movement for land rights and to end discrimination, along with international publicity and support and the involvement of many human rights organizations provide optimism and hope for the future for the indigenous people of Guatemala.

# Declare Peace 14: Not Guilty!

Philadelphia municipal court judge Marsha H. Neifield found the “Philadelphia Declare Peace 14”—Beth Friedlan, Karen Wisniewski, Sylvia Metzler, Mary Jo McArthur, Bernadette Cronin-Geller, Melissa Elliott, Ronald Coburn, Timothy Chadwick, Robert Daniels, Robin Lasersohn, Thomas Mullian, Robert M. Smith, Marjorie Van Cleef, and Silvia Brandon-Pereznot—not guilty on April 23, 2007. Judge Neifield dropped the charges of criminal conspiracy based on insufficient evidence.

Lawyers Paul Hetznecker, representing seven of the fourteen defendants and as advisory counsel to the six pro se defendants, and Paul Messing, representing Ron Coburn, argued flawlessly and tenaciously that free speech protected by the First Amendment as well as access to elected officials to “petition for a redress of grievances” cannot be circumscribed simply because the representative’s office is located in a privately owned building.

The “Philadelphia Declare Peace 14” were arrested on September 25, 2006, as part of the national Declaration of Peace Campaign and charged with misdemeanor counts of defiant trespass, criminal trespass, and criminal conspiracy for their peaceful presence at the office of then-senator Rick Santorum. The “14” waited outside the locked Philadelphia office of Santorum in the Widener building’s main lobby in order to demand congressional action to end the war in Iraq and stop war funding. Each of the charges held a maximum sentence of a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Earlier in the day, the Brandywine Peace Community held a rush-hour vigil and support rally for the “Philadelphia Declare Peace 14” that encouraged continued opposition and resistance to the war.

When asked just how many times he had been arrested for peace actions over the past four decades, Robert M. Smith, staff coordinator of the Brandywine Peace Community, replied, “Don’t know. But I know how many



*Members of the Declare Peace 14 and supporters rally in Philadelphia.*

times I’ve been found not guilty, and that is once, today in Philadelphia.”

## Statements from the Peace 14

Addressing the court, pro-se defendant Beth Friedlan declared “We stand before you as peacemakers, not law breakers, and we ask that you find us not guilty.”

Marge Van Cleef: “So we very simply tried to reach our elected government representative and let him know that he cannot, or could not, continue to support an invasion and occupation, a war the majority of the people in this democracy oppose.”

Robert M. Smith: “The evidence has shown that we did not go to the Widener Building in order to trespass nor to break any law but rather to demonstrate a peaceful response to the war in Iraq. As citizens we seek redress from the crime of this war.”

Tom Mullian: “I believe that these citizens and this court are all part of the democratic process. In representing myself, I make no claims to make a schooled legal argument or to lecture the court, but I do know that laws that serve only other laws or their own stringent letter do not always serve people. So I make an argument for the people who move forth in the truth of these times and for the innocents far away who have no voice at all.”

Thanks to all who stood with the “Philadelphia Declare Peace 14,” inside and outside the court. A very special word of thanks and appreciation for all the inestimable work of attorneys Hetznecker and Messing.

For more information, contact Brandywine Peace Community, P.O. Box 81, Swarthmore, PA 19081. Tel: 610-544-1818; e-mail: [brandywine@juno.com](mailto:brandywine@juno.com); website: [www.brandywinepeace.com](http://www.brandywinepeace.com).





# Best Yet! Fifth Annual Delco Peace Festival

by Bob Small

The fifth annual Peace Festival of Delaware County, which the organizers touted as “the most successful yet,” attracted over 400 people and skirted any rain during the event. The event, subtitled, “Celebrating Positive Energy—Power for Peace,” was held on Saturday afternoon, May 12, at The Peace Center, in the Springfield Friends Meeting House.

Delco Pledge hosted a table at the festival and brought our message to a number of new people, along with getting new names for our e-mail list and selling buttons. Our table was staffed by Paula Bronstein, Brad Bradlee, and Robert Small. Among the other local groups tabling there were Coalition for Peace Action ([www.peacecoalition.org](http://www.peacecoalition.org)) and Citizen Access (<http://citizenaccess.org>).

The featured musical act was Frebo ([www.frebo.com](http://www.frebo.com)). The Anna Crusis Women’s Choir ([www.annacrusis.org](http://www.annacrusis.org)) was the penultimate act and, in my opinion and many others, was absolutely the ultimate. You should see and hear them, not for any political reasons but just because they are so damn good! They’ve been around since 1975, which must be a record for any nonclassical choir. Their music is meant both to be seen and heard, so the vibrations can



*Festival organizers Robin Lasersohn (L) and Terry Rumsey (R) are joined on stage by a festival participant.*

enter your being. There were also many other groups whom we, as both Pledge and individuals, networked with.

Tom Mullian (see [tommullian.com](http://tommullian.com) for upcoming gigs) and the various bands that he is part of provided much of the music. Tom is one of the more inventive area political songwriters, and his latest CD is *Six Strings against the War*. But Tom goes further than just singing against war: He has been arrested for numerous acts of civil disobedience,

including being one of the 107 arrested in front of the Philadelphia Federal Building on the first day of the current Iraqi war.

Among the other opening acts were Stone Age Rock.n.Roll ([stoneagerock.com](http://stoneagerock.com)), who were good although I did want them to play at least one antiwar rock song that I didn’t know all the words to, but that’s carping. Joni Landino also entertained with belly dancing. Having idled away many nights at the now-defunct Middle East Restaurant, I felt she was both authentic and graceful.

Besides great onstage music, there were various side groupings. “Will all the poets meet in the cemetery,” was a jarring announcement, conjuring thoughts of “The Dead Poets Society,” but the John Brown-led forum was very thought-provoking. There were also a drum circle and children’s concert, both of which avoided the cemetery.

It was a great event and is inspiring smaller peace fairs later this summer. For further information on the Peace Center, visit [www.delcopenacecenter.org](http://www.delcopenacecenter.org).



*Pledgers Paula Bronstein and Bob Small staff the Pledge table.*

# Small Town Democracy in Action

by Bob Small

Democracy Unplugged, a local grass roots organization that sponsors forums, recently held their first event of 2007 in Swarthmore Borough Hall on May 9. More than 60 persons attended, and *The Delaware County Times* covered it. The “Meet the Candidates Night” featured six Delaware County Council candidates and four judge of common pleas candidates. The majority of these were the unendorsed candidates. Lest you think machine politics doesn’t thrive even in local offices, most of the candidates who won in the May 15 primary were the endorsed candidates.

Most of the candidates at the forum were hard pressed to have access to enough monies just to run a primary campaign—brochures, lawn signs, some paid staff, money for meals for volunteers, etc. These candidates are, generally, anti-corporate, antiwar, pro-social needs candidates precisely because they need to raise monies. So don’t expect a non-professional politician to be among the nominees of the Democrats or Republicans. This factor is one reason why an antiwar candidate would not usually be in the running for Congress, let alone the presidency, as candidates for these offices generally rise through the ranks, which eliminates the “fringe” candidates.

The Delaware County Council has been exclusively GOP for the last 32 years, only in part due to the inadequacies of the Democrat leadership. Once the GOP became entrenched, it became common wisdom that anyone moving into Delco needed to be a GOP registrant to get tickets fixed, etc. as opposed to in Philadelphia where you must be Democrat. In this atmosphere, to speak of issues is kind of a contradiction in terms. If you ever wondered how democracy works, or doesn’t work, at a local level, this was the place to be.

Some highlights from the event for County Council:

79-year-old Joe Breslin, retired elevator industry worker and GOP non-

machine candidate: “If you elect me, you will have built-in term limits.”

Candidate Rick Lacey used the old Who song, “Won’t Get Fooled Again.”

Rocco J. Polidoro, a businessman, said he wanted to “try and instill democracy in Delco.”

John Innelli, one of the machine candidates came in at the end of the County Council forum; he was told he could make a short closing speech and practically had to be dragged off the podium. He later won in the primary.

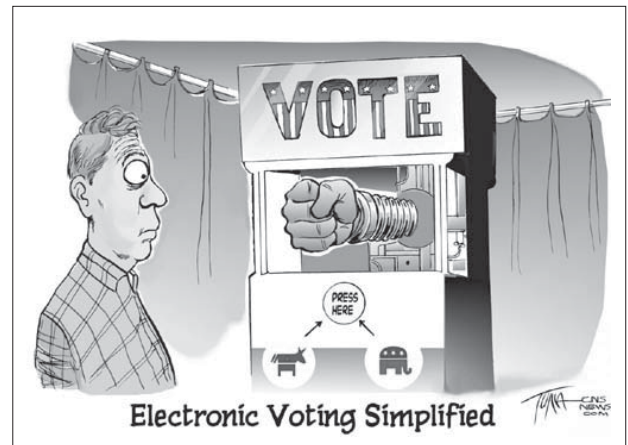
Among the other candidates, Rick Lacey is a realtor, Bob Dimond worked in insurance but is best known for playing villains at The Players Club. David Landau and Anne O’Keefe are lawyers. Guess which of these were the machine candidates.

The judge of common pleas court candidates were four lawyers and, subsequently, the machine candidates won.

Frank Daly, a former mayor of Media, who visited the Delco Pledge Peace Camp at the old Media armory and actually contributed to our cause, said, “I do believe in democracy, as messy as it is . . . the will of the people will out.” Whether he’s the same Frank Daly or the machine Frank Daly is the general election day question.

Mike Farrell, another machine endorsee, pointed out that “97 percent of the lawyers in Media are GOP,” a frightening statistic regardless of the party. This has an impact on the quality of justice and on the quality of defense lawyers available, especially for “unpopular causes.”

Farrell, a Buddha-like figure, spoke of the case of future President John Adams in colonial Boston. Adams agreed to take on the defense of Redcoats who were accused of shooting defenseless American colonialists when no one else would. When his wife, Abigail Adams,



asked him why, he said, “It’s not the peoples’ passion that should rule the day.” He won the case, and the Redcoats were acquitted. Would John Adams have defended the detainees at Gitmo? One likes to think so.

C. Scott Shields, mayor of Rutledge, stated that he was the only current candidate who refused to accept campaign funds from any lawyers because he might need to rule on a case involving at least some of these lawyers. No one else on the panel responded to his challenge. As judge, Scott said he would make rulings determined by the law, and “my yes is yes, my no is no.” He said, “A judge is just supposed to call balls and strikes.” Shields indicated he was pro-tort reform, and said, “I take no prisoners when I solicit cases.” He ended by saying, “There is only one judge and it’s God.” In the primary, he ended up with the least number of votes.

To sum this up, the “fringe candidates,” such as Joe Breslin, Rocco Polidoro, and C. Scott Shields may as well not be running in terms of actually winning a higher office, which may be why we cannot expect any change in any of these higher offices. We can also not expect any change until such time as we have meaningful campaign reform, i.e., when pigs fly. Put another way, anyone who is not considered “mainstream” may as well join the Constitution, Green, Libertarian, or Socialist parties, etc., where they can, at least, be nominated. In Pennsylvania, we have approximately 100 persons elected to various minor offices from these parties.

See [www.democracyunplugged.net](http://www.democracyunplugged.net) for further information.



# Smedley Butler: “I Was a Racketeer for Capitalism”

by Bob Small

Smedley Darlington Butler, for whom our local (Morton, Pa.) Marine Corps Training Center is named, was a war hero who became a peace hero. He is the only person I know of to be a central figure in both the USMC history and this country’s antiwar movement. I discovered the many statues honoring him, most recently in the Springfield, Pa. library and the long-standing one in Philadelphia’s City Hall, in remembrance of his exploits as Philly’s police chief in the prohibition era.

Butler (1881-1940) came from a longtime Newtown Square, Pa. Quaker family, yet joined the USMC while a teenager (somewhat exaggerating his age) in order to fight in the Spanish-American war. During his three-decade career in the USMC, he became one of only a handful of men to win the Congressional Medal of Honor twice. Later in life, he would become an antiwar advocate and a veteran’s advocate. And, oh yes, he would expose a planned White House coup!

Smedley Butler is the centerpiece of the book *The Plot to Seize the White House* (1973) by correspondent and journalist Jules Archer. Archer reveals how Butler, disillusioned by what he saw of U.S. corporations using the U.S. military, would tell Congress and anyone else who would listen that “I spent 33 years being a high-class muscle man for big business, Wall Street, and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism.” He warned against any U.S. involvement in foreign countries, including U.S. soldiers dying for oil in 1930s Iraq!

Amazingly, Butler’s transformation is just one of the side-stories of the book, which discusses the little-known attempt in 1934 by a group of bankers and other Wall Streeters to install a government similar to those current at the time in Germany and Italy, which had managed to destroy those pesky

unions, etc. They choose as their new leader, in essence to replace that alleged Communist sympathizer Franklin Delano Roosevelt, this selfsame Smedley Butler! As John L. Spivack remarks, “The conspirators went about their plot as if they were hiring an office manager; all they needed was to send a messenger to the man they had selected.”

After he had gathered enough evidence and while appearing to be agreeable to this Wall Street putsch, Butler went to the McCormick-Dickstein committee (an early version of the House Un-American Activities Committee). They investigated until the names of certain industrialists were reached, and then they decided (or the decision was made for them) that their investigation was complete. All these events, by the way, are in the Congressional record, as well as in the archives of the old *Philadelphia Record* newspaper. Even the staid *New York Times*, albeit reluctantly, admitted the truth of the story. No one, of course, was in any way punished for this attempted coup.

This tableau was the basis for the movie *Seven Days in May*. However Hollywood, to my knowledge, has never produced a movie based on the real historical event. Smedley Butler started as a raw USMC enlistee, won the Congressional Medal of Honor twice, ended up being the keynote speaker at National WILPF (Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom) conventions, all the while declining an opportunity to be Fascist dictator of America. Amazing!

Smedley Butler was fired from his job as Philadelphia director of public safety for being overzealous and raiding 1920s speakeasies headquartered at the Ritz-Carlton and The Union League. Afterwards in 1925, he said, “Cleaning up Philadelphia was worse than any battle I was ever in.”

There are numerous websites on Smedley Butler; here are just a few: The



*Smedley Darlington Butler*

Smedley Butler Society which has a weblog of antiwar organizations [www.lexrex.com/enlightened/articles/warisaracket.htm](http://www.lexrex.com/enlightened/articles/warisaracket.htm). Read “War is a Racket” by Smedley Butler free on this site: [www.warisaracket.org](http://www.warisaracket.org); The Okinawa Marine base bearing his name: [www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil](http://www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil).

Other books about Smedley Butler: *The Letters of a Leatherneck 1891-1931* by Anne Cipriano Venzon; *The American Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934* by Hans Schmidt; *Old Gimlet Eye* by Maverick Marine; *Adventures of Smedley D. Butler* as told to Lowell Thomas and William Overgard.

## Brandywine

continued from page 1

to become Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest weapons corporation, whose creation was announced in defense industry magazines with the slogan, “And this is just the beginning,” atop pictures of row upon row of weapons systems.

For the past twelve years, we’ve been at Lockheed Martin with nonviolent resistance and various expressions

See Brandywine page 9



# Pledge Plans for 2007

by Brad Bradlee

According to a recent survey, about 70 percent of Americans are convinced that “it’s just a matter of time” before they become rich and famous. “Decline of the work ethic ... hell in a hand basket,” you mutter. Lighten up. A few more riverboat casinos and *American Idol* spinoffs and these folks have seen the future! But when you’re talking about peace and justice, waiting around isn’t going to cut it. As Pledge held its annual strategy session in March, our agenda was full and bursting with opportunities for hard work and nose-to-the-grindstone commitment. Below, Year 2007 goals and initiatives.

The Pledge, of course, has always looked south for its activist focus. Nicaragua and U.S. aggression, NAFTA and fair trade, Haiti and self-determination—our priorities have always had a home in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today we cannot ignore the political sea-change occurring across the region.

- We plan to spotlight the decline of the “Washington Consensus” and the advance of new left Latin American movements—we want to educate ourselves and our membership about this rising “pink tide.”

## Brandywine

of direct action (minus consumer boycott: more than 80 percent of Lockheed Martin’s income is in Pentagon contracts, and the rest is in other government contracts). In the wake of September 11, 2001, Brandywine, as one of the few continually functioning and staffed peace groups (certainly in the area), initiated a number of responses: the Philadelphia Peaceful Response; the Delaware Valley Faith-based Peace Network; and, along with the Delaware County



*President Bush lends a hand in Guatemala, loading lettuce bound for market during his recent trip to Central and South America.*

Then there are those regrettable governments outside the new progressive sphere—almost by definition closely allied with the U.S. government. When these antidemocratic administrations cozy up with our own, Americans have a special responsibility.

- In Oaxaco, Mexico, popular resistance from teachers, farmers, workers, and thousands of sympathizers receives only cursory explanation in our national press. This struggle was featured in our last newsletter and will continue to have our attention throughout the year.

- In Guatemala, where President Bush lent a hand loading lettuce bound for the global market, trade and human rights are our concern. We hope to deepen our activism by partnering with Guatemalan solidarity groups. For in-

stance, one national organization runs speaking tours featuring Guatemalan citizens—Pledge is looking into sponsoring one of these tours.

Youth will be served, and Pledge is making the arrangements!

- The idea is to locate college and high-school student organizations with an interest in things Latin American, then offer them our program—“The New Latin America: A Film Series.” We’ll screen the latest relevant documentary movies and provide an expert speaker to share insights on the filmmaker’s themes and to lead discussion.

Know of a student group with a peace and justice bent that craves entertainment and information? Call or e-mail ... and help put us in touch! (610-543-8427; info@delcopleadge.org).

Pledge of Resistance, WILPF, and others, the Delaware County Campaign for Peace and Justice, which a year later became Delaware County Wage Peace and Justice.

As Bush became increasingly hell-bent on invading Iraq, Brandywine became a national convener and the Delaware Valley organizer of the Iraq Pledge of Resistance (IPOR), signing up thousands who promised to resist the war on Iraq. On March 20, 2003, Brandywine organized the largest act of nonviolent civil disobedience in the history of the

Philadelphia area in which 107 were arrested for closing down the Philadelphia Federal Building as more than 500 people stood in support in a loud outcry against the war.

For the past four years, Brandywine has been at the center of direct action regional protests and nonviolent resistance to the U.S. war of occupation with actions including the Dover-D.C. Trail of Mourning and Resistance (which launched Military Families Speak Out),

---

See Brandywine page 10

Address correction requested

www.delcopledge.org  
info@delcopledge.org  
Swarthmore, PA 19081  
PO Box 309  
Delaware County Pledge of Resistance

## Community Calendar

June 10—Brandywine Peace Community monthly potluck supper & program: “Guantanamo Bay—the Suspension of Habeas Corpus”—Shawn Nolan, Esq. University Lutheran Church, 3637 Chestnut St., Phila., Pa. 4:30 pm, potluck supper (bring main dish, salad, or dessert to share). 5:30 pm—program. Shawn Nolan is an attorney with the Community Federal Defender Office in Philadelphia, working within the Capital Habeas Corpus Unit, which exclusively represents inmates on death row in their capital appeals. Previously he was an attorney with the Defender Association of Philadelphia for thirteen years. He is an adjunct professor with the Great Lakes College Association, where he has taught Social Justice for the past ten years. Mr. Nolan is currently a member of a team of attorneys of the Federal Defender Office that represents five detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He has traveled to the prison there to meet with his clients numerous times.

July 8—Brandywine Peace Community monthly potluck supper & program: “Stumbling into the Future: The Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation”—Craig Eisendrath. University

Lutheran Church, 3637 Chestnut St., Phila., Pa. 4:30 pm, potluck supper (bring main dish, salad, or dessert to share). 5:30 pm—program. Craig Eisendrath served as a foreign service officer in the U.S. Department of State, handling questions of nuclear disarmament and outer space. For some years, he directed the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and was also co-founder of the National Constitution Center. He is presently chairman of the Project for Nuclear Awareness. His most recent books are *Bush League Diplomacy* and *War in Heaven: The Arms Race in Outer Space*, with Helen Caldicott.

Visit the Brandywine Peace Community website, [www.brandywinepeace.com](http://www.brandywinepeace.com), for upcoming peace demonstration, and antiwar protests including planned events in Philadelphia around the 4th of July as well as antiwar observances of the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 6 - 9) and nonviolent civil resistance at Lockheed Martin in Valley Forge.

Brandywine Peace Community, P.O. Box 81, Swarthmore, PA 19081. Tel: 610-544-1818; e-mail: [brandywine@juno.com](mailto:brandywine@juno.com); website: [www.brandywinepeace.com](http://www.brandywinepeace.com).

### Brandywine

the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, and the Declaration of Peace Campaign, around the themes of “Mourning to Resistance” and “Bush Won’t Listen, Congress Must Act.”

War in Iraq has, of course, been very good for the war-makers, chief among them Lockheed Martin, which is the Iraq war’s chief profiteer. We’ve organized protest after protest, marked the mad milestones of the war—U.S. dead: 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000; Iraq dead: 100,000, 650,000—held nonviolent resistance to the war at the White House and Senate and Congress members’ offices, initiated the “Don’t Spy on Me” Campaign with the ACLU, and organized protests against Guantanamo Bay and the assault on civil liberties and the constitution. With it all, we continue to resist Lockheed Martin.

Join us in resistance to the war and the war-maker!



**Resistance: Every Little Bit Helps**  
Order your official Pledge button: \$1.50 to Buttons, P.O. Box 309, Swarthmore, PA 19081.