



## **Profound Spinoffs/Real Learning**

Julie Krug, a wonderful Walnut Creek, California middle school teacher, was inspired by the *our developing world* reality tours she has taken to create an elective class entitled Teens Around the World. That class, in turn, inspired the Teens Around the World Action Club. On a visit to *odw* Julie suggested that some of her students were ready for a reality tour. We brainstormed and agreed that middle schoolers needed a physical activity they could participate in.

So it came to be that CANTERA, a Nicaraguan community-organizing NGO coordinated the first *odw* reality experience for middle schoolers. Julie had wonderful rapport with her students, so they were well-versed on issues of poverty, the international debt, the World Bank and the IMF, and they knew how to get along together well.

On the first night of the trip to Nicaragua, we gathered the students to share experiences and reflections. We asked the students what surprised them. They shared many insights including: how small the houses were compared to those back in the United States, how hard even the smallest children worked, how well they worked together, how happy the people seemed to be even though they did not have the material goods people in the States have, how people shared, and how welcomed the students felt.

At the end of our two week stay, we asked them again how they felt. That seemed to turn on a tap, and the students shared many things. They all shared the belief that never again would they feel that they *had* to have this or that material thing. They would appreciate having running water, hot water, medicine and health care, comfortable homes and schools, all the things that they had taken for granted before their trip.

We wondered how this experience would affect the children in the future. Would they keep their experiences close to their hearts and on their minds, or would they fade over time? Would their experiences influence them to act differently? Time

has shown that the trip did have an impact on their lives. In the years since the reality tour, these students have done a variety of things to share what they have learned with others. Among the many things they have done, they have created programs for classes, become active in service clubs, written to elected officials and even gone on television. Now, almost five years later, those students are applying to college. These excerpts from two tour participants' college application essays demonstrate vividly the continued impact the reality tour had on their lives.



*Laijah Idelson and three girls from San Andres de la Palenca take a break from work on a two-room school house to smile for the camera in 2000.*

### Laijah Jo Idelson's College Essay

When I was twelve I had braces, I had out of control frizzy hair, and I was slightly chubby. My world view had me - my family, my school and my friends - in the center of the universe. I knew there were people who struggled to get by every day, but I hadn't seen it firsthand. At that time I wanted to be an actress. Every choice I made was with the purpose of paving my red carpet to Broadway or Hollywood.

A fund-raiser to build a school in Central



## Serious Food for Thought:

### THE IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM

From *Fascism Anyone?*  
by Dr. Lawrence Britt Free  
Inquiry Magazine Sp 2003

Dr. Lawrence Britt, a political scientist, studied the regimes of Hitler (Germany), Mussolini (Italy), Franco (Spain), Suharto (Indonesia), and Pinochet (Chile). He found the regimes all had these identifying characteristics of fascism:

- 1. Powerful and Continuing Nationalism** — Fascist regimes tend to make constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other paraphernalia. Flags are seen everywhere, as are flag symbols on clothing and in public displays.
- 2. Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights** — Because of fear of enemies and the need for security, the people in fascist regimes are persuaded that human rights can be ignored in certain cases because of “need.” The people tend to ‘look the other way’ or even approve of torture, summary executions, assassinations, long incarcerations of prisoners, etc.
- 3. Identification of Enemies/Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause** — The people are rallied into a unifying patriotic frenzy over the need to eliminate a perceived common threat or foe: racial, ethnic or religious minorities; liberals; communists; socialists, terrorists, etc.
- 4. Supremacy of the Military** — Even when there are widespread domestic problems, the military is given a disproportionate amount of government funding, and the domestic agenda is neglected. Soldiers and military service are glamorized.
- 5. Rampant Sexism** — The governments of fascist nations tend to be almost exclusively male-dominated. Under fascist regimes, traditional gender roles are made more rigid. Opposition to abortion is high, as is homophobia and anti-gay legislation and national policy.
- 6. Controlled Mass Media** — Sometimes the media is directly controlled by the government, but in other cases, the media is indirectly controlled by government regulation, or through sympathetic media spokespeople and executives. Censorship, especially in wartime, is very common.
- 7. Obsession with National Security** — Fear is used as a motivational tool by the government over the masses.
- 8. Religion and Government are Intertwined** — Governments in fascist nations tend to use the most common religion in the nation as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Religious rhetoric and terminology is common from government leaders, even when the major tenets of the religion are diametrically opposed to the government’s policies or actions.
- 9. Corporate Power is Protected** — The industrial and business aristocracy of a fascist nation often are the ones who put the government leaders into power, creating a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite.
- 10. Labor Power is Suppressed** — Because the organizing power of labor is the only real threat to a fascist government, labor unions are either eliminated entirely or are severely suppressed.
- 11. Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts** — Fascist nations tend to promote and tolerate open hostility to higher education, and academia. It is not uncommon for professors and other academics to be censored or even arrested. Free expression in the arts is openly attacked, and governments often refuse to fund the arts.
- 12. Obsession with Crime and Punishment** — Under fascist regimes, the police are given almost limitless power to enforce laws. The people are often willing to overlook police abuses, and even forego civil liberties, in the name of patriotism. There is often a national police force with virtually unlimited power in fascist nations.
- 13. Rampant Cronyism and Corruption** — Fascist regimes almost always are governed by groups of friends and associates who appoint each other to government positions, and who use governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability. It is not uncommon in fascist regimes for national resources and even treasures to be appropriated or even outright stolen by government leaders.
- 14. Fraudulent Elections** — Sometimes elections in fascist nations are a complete sham. Other times elections are manipulated by smear campaigns against (or even the assassination of) opposition candidates, the use of legislation to control voting numbers or political district boundaries, and the manipulation of the media. Fascist nations also typically use their judiciaries to manipulate or control elections.



## How to Put Our Moral Values to Work

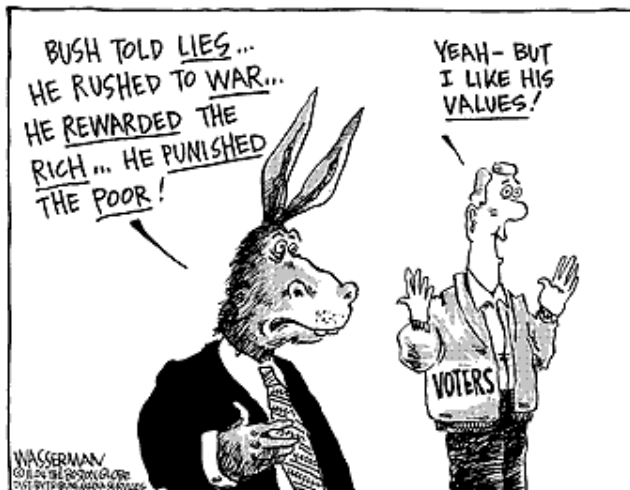
by Barby Ulmer

President Bush says that America should not let poor nations become recruiting grounds for terror. We must act, he has said, to address the poverty and political corruption that breed terrorism. We along with those including the Friends Committee on National Legislation, Jim Wallis of *God's Politics*, and True Majority, could not agree more.

If only his actions backed up his words. If Bush were serious about fighting the conditions that spawn terrorism, he would present a budget to actually do something about it. But Bush's budget is expected to allocate about \$15 billion to humanitarian foreign aid compared with over \$400 billion earmarked for the Pentagon. And this doesn't even include the \$80 billion or more he'll need this year for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

By making an additional \$15 billion available to help poor nations, which could easily be secured by eliminating idiotic weapons systems such as Star Wars, our nation could save the lives of millions of children who die of starvation each year. Then the president could begin to say, without lying, that our nation is trying to wipe out the desperation that provides such fertile soil for terrorist recruiters.

Bush's mixed-up budget priorities really show the gap between his professed moral values and his actions. As Jim Wallis says, "The budget is a moral document!" If we care about kids, here and abroad, we must fund health insurance, Head Start, and other basics. We should fund pollution cleanup. In this way, our budget would be consistent with our moral values, and the president would be putting his money where his mouth is.



## Exit Strategy

by Barby & Vic Ulmer

We asked our elected officials in Washington to include a statement that the U.S. doesn't intend to keep bases there and to give a timetable for our exit in the Iraq/Afghan War budget supplement. Senator Feinstein's response was very unsatisfying. She said we must stay until victory. Do you remember the Vietnam War? How long did we stay there before we understood there would be no victory?

We could claim victory now if we pulled out and let them get on with their democratic process. If we continue to stay, especially with understandably trigger happy soldiers we intensify the insurgency.

When will we learn? Occupiers aren't perceived as friends. War doesn't solve, but creates more problems. If it's oil that we're in there for, then let's launch a massive conservation campaign and subsidize alternative fuel and energy. If our goal is democracy, let's get out and let the Iraqis try it!



## Positive Changes - 2005

### The Benefits of Travel

*Anna Peck Rainville, a Waldorf teacher in Los Altos, California took a small group of young students to work in an orphanage in Antigua, Guatemala. This reflection by one of her students is yet another an example of how meaningful foreign travel and work are.*

In April of 2004, I flew down to Guatemala, where I worked in an orphanage for 2 weeks. Casa Hogar Fe Y Amour is an orphanage in Antigua that takes in children from the corrupt ones in Guatemala City, and this is where I lived, ate, worked and slept for over two weeks.

This experience changed me and my perception of the world profoundly, not only because it was a new and challenging experience, but also because it opened my eyes to so much! While working in Guatemala, whether I was with the children or just walking in the streets, I witnessed firsthand all the suffering and injustice that I had been conscious of but had not fully understood, my entire life.

Like all true adventures, I was faced with and overcame ordeals such as exhaustion (I never really knew the meaning of that word until I really was exhausted!), and utter helplessness (or wishing I could help everyone I saw and, knowing they deserved better, could do nothing.) I even had to battle with homesickness, which at 15, I thought I would have been past! But, judging by the fact that my parents and all my siblings were at home in California, I do admit that I was decently justified in feeling homesick once or twice. I was challenged to control my sometimes overwhelming emotions and to fully dedicate myself to the task of being there for the kids who needed my assistance the most.

The most valuable lesson by far was that I learned the potential that a single, human life holds is immense. I really had no idea that I was capable of changing lives, but day-by-day, I was able to see how my dedication began to positively affect the children I was working with. This realization was very beneficial to me later on when I left the orphanage, because it helped fend off the guilt that berated me for going home to a safe, clean, comfortable and privileged life when the kids weren't coming with me.

I am truly grateful to all those who made my trip possible, and will do my best to live up to the potential I saw in myself while in Guatemala. I cannot help but think of what a difference could be made in the world if we were all able to make such a journey! As a result of

this experience, I will never again underestimate my capabilities, nor will I lose hope in the power of love and compassion that humanity wields.

I am currently planning another trip down to Guatemala this summer, which will fulfill my hope to keep in close contact with both the children and the coordinator of the orphanage. Since my trip last spring, I have decided that working in that area is something I would like to continue for as long as possible. Teaching the children numbers and letters was something that I found deeply engaging and satisfying, so I hope to be doing more of that this time around. Donations of drawing paper, coloring pencils and books (in Spanish) for school aged children are always appreciated! To fund my trip, I will be raising the money on my own this time. If anyone is interested, I am available for baby-sitting, or lending an extra pair of hands wherever needed. I have pencil and pen/ink prints available for purchase (these sell very well!) All of the money I collect will go straight to paying for the trip. Please e-mail me at [drawlife@earthlink.net](mailto:drawlife@earthlink.net)

*Allegra Bick-Maurischat, age 15*



*Allegra with a young boy, Jose, from Casa Hogar Fe Y Amour orphanage in Antigua, Guatemala*

### Middle-Schoolers to South Africa

Vic and Barby Ulmer were judges for Project Spera's World Affairs Challenge. Teams of middle and high school students had to research and present some global aspect of energy. They also had to do a poster demonstrating their topic and research and conclusions.

Barby was a judge for a Napa California middle school presentation on the ocean used for energy in South Africa. It was so impressive, both in the thoroughness of the research and the well designed and presented rap,





## The Danger of Ignorance in US-Arab Relations

In a recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle, Edward S. Walker Jr., President of the Middle East Institute in Washington, wrote concerning the conclusions of the research and dialogue between the Institute & the Al Ahram Center in Cairo. Though significant common ground in personal values and national goals was found, there is ample evidence that anger, frustration and disappointment between the two societies continues. Mutual mistrust has been produced by government policies, different histories and cultures, exaggerated expectations, stereotypes, and ignorance. (*odw* was founded in order to minimize exactly these issues in terms of relations between the US and developing countries.)

The report proposes:

- a continuing Leaders Forum
- engaging a mix of citizens to question and provide a “reality check” on government policies
- furthering student and cultural exchanges
- establishing agreements for joint projects across national borders
- media exchange agreements to produce articles and programs
- interfaith dialogue that is more than lip service.

For a copy of the report, *An Arab-American Relationship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* contact [communications@mideasti.org](mailto:communications@mideasti.org)

### ***Middle Schoolers to South Africa*** Continued from page 4

that she asked if it might be possible to get a CD or video to show to *odw's* participants in the reality eco-tour to South Africa and to show people there.

The girls and one of the mothers want to go with us. There will be schools to present to and possibly other groups. They are in the midst of fundraising for the trip. Any tax deductible donations to the *odw* scholarship fund will be given to them for the tour.

Imagine these girls when they return! And imagine the outreach from all their fundraising! We'll keep you posted.



## Stillness

We had almost needed respite after our presentation/discussion on water to the Great Decisions/Murphys group. Thanks to our long time friend, Ann Horvath, we stayed on to cross-country ski. Especially the last day, the stillness and beauty only to be had when the earth is snow covered, was so profound, so deeply restful. This is a place we'll go to in our minds when we need that peaceful feeling.

## President Paul Kagame of Rwanda

University of the Pacific recently conferred an Honorary Doctor of Laws on Rwanda's President Paul Kagame. Before hearing him we spoke to some Rwandan young men about him. They felt he was truly a progressive who has done much for the country. Kagame spoke of the restorative justice program they've instituted to foster healing...much like South Africa's.

Yet outside the auditorium there were picketers from the Congolese community claiming Kagame was one of the instigators of the massacre against Hutus living in Rwanda, Congo and Burundi. Kagame's answer to the question asked by a student was that Rwanda had to stop the Hutus who crossed into Congo to set up bases from which they crossed back to attack Rwandans. Alas, the international community didn't intervene during the Rwanda genocide. And now is dragging its feet in Sudan. (And yet the U.S. waged pre-emptive war in Iraq?)

We will be talking with our South African friends about the situation to get their insights. Do you know more about this situation? We welcome any information.



## ***Profound Spinoffs***

*Continued from page 1*

America grabbed my interest. With the encouragement of my teacher, Ms. Krug, I signed up to help with the construction of the two-room school in San Andres, Nicaragua. I was excited, but also scared. Actually, I was terrified. I had very few expectations having never left the United States, and never seen extreme poverty. However, the experience was impossible for me to anticipate as twelve-year-old.

It was then that I met ten-year-old Pastor, who was confined to a wheelchair and lived in a shack made of cardboard and tin sheets with his mother and six sisters. One night, Pastor developed a bedsore that turned infectious. As it entered his blood stream it became impossible for him to fight, as he was so malnourished. That same night Pastor died. His death seemed so unfair because I knew that at home my kitchen was stocked full with food. The day of his funeral I held Pastor's Sister's hand while we walked to the grave yard. As his mother knelt beside his open casket, she clasped his tiny palms, and wept. When the strong Nicaraguan men pried her away and lowered her son into the ground, I vowed that I would take action so other mothers didn't have to lose their children this way.

With Pastor always on my mind, I began making decisions that changed my daily actions. I became extremely committed to an organization called Kids Can Free the Children, a global network of young people working to better the lives of other kids around the world. I began to dedicate many afternoons and weekends organizing food drives, more school building fund-raisers, and even started a new Free the Children chapter at my school, because I realized that I had someone other than myself to fight for. Free the Children helped me to understand that I have a voice and that I am obligated to use it. Over time, I came to admire those who had peacefully made an impact in the world rather than the year's Academy Award winner.

***Being knowledgeable and passionate about world issues in middle school isn't always the cool thing to do, but because of my support network from Free the Children, I can succeed at anything I put my mind to.—Laura MacArthur***

### Laura MacArthur's College Essay

As we drove up to the small village of San Andreas de la Palanca in Nicaragua we could see that something was different. The day before we were greeted with smiles and music when we showed up for the first day of building the school. today no one laughed, or smiled, or even waved as our bus pulled up to the building site. There had been a death in the village, a young boy named Pastor. Confined to a wheel chair, he had to stay in bed most of the day. Overnight his bedsores increased to a blood infection, and his body was so malnourished that it could not fight off the illness. If he'd had access to a doctor or a hospital, he would not have died. Immediately our group reacted, and wanted to visit Pastor's mother to see if there was anything that we could do.

I was thirteen, and it was four summers ago, but I can still remember everything about that moment. I remember the short walk over to Pastor's house, and looking at the wildflowers that lined the trail. I remember walking up to the tin shack where Pastor's family was housed. I remember the smell of black smoke, and the sound of roosters crowing. What I remember the most is the sound of his mother crying.

Pastor's mother stood in the doorway, wildly fanning flies away from a table covered with a bright checkered cloth. She spoke to us, but I couldn't

*Continued on next page*



*Middle-school student Sarah with Elias, a resident of the Casa Hogar Fe Y Amour Orphanage*



*from previous page*

understand her. Suddenly, she whipped the cloth off the table and revealed Pastor's body. To be honest, I cannot remember much more from that very moment.

I felt so useless. Nothing that I had done had helped. I had been so excited to raise money the year before, to learn about the children of the world in my Teens Around the World class. But that hadn't saved Pastor. Maybe none of it had done any good. Before, I had believed that everything was so simple, that a solution to the world's problems was so immediate. At that moment, I realized how incredibly complicated the world's problems are.

Our group walked back to the school, and many had to go inside the bus because of how much they were crying. I picked up a shovel and set to work. Barby, one of the team leaders, was beside me, and she mentioned how Pastor's mother wanted to thank us. The school that the children had been going to before was a long distance away. Since Pastor was confined to his wheelchair, he was not able to attend. The day before, he had watched us come and work, and had been so happy, because he would finally be able to go to school. His mother wanted to thank us, because she said that Pastor's last memory was a happy one. It was at that moment that I started to cry.

I've always remembered what Pastor's mother said to us. What I learned that day is that helping people is both incredibly complicated and simple. The reasons for Pastor's death, including malnutrition, access to health care in third world countries, and poverty are incredibly complicated. What we may have given to Pastor the day before he died is simple. Hope.

When I visited Nicaragua for the second time this past summer, I visited the graveyard where he was buried. There was no marker; his family didn't have enough money to afford one.

I hope that I can turn the tragedy of Pastor's death into positive action, by never forgetting him, never forgetting that I have a responsibility to make the world a more just place for all of the children of the world.

*Since Laura's first trip to Nicaragua in the summer of 2000, she has traveled with Free the Children to Kenya for leadership training, to India to help build a school, and to Thailand to volunteer her time in an orphanage. She is now 17.*

*Teacher Julie Krug can be contacted at [juliekrug@hotmail.com](mailto:juliekrug@hotmail.com)*

## Different Perspectives

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: What is a planet?

A: A body of earth surrounded by sky.

Q: What causes the tides in the ocean?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow toward the moon because there is no water on the moon and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

## Great News for Nurses!

**odw** now has a license from the Board of Registered Nursing to grant 30 contact hours of Continuing Education for participants of our Reality Ecotour to South Africa, July 12-August 2.





**Calendar of Upcoming Events**  
**Join us!**

find **voices** on the web at  
[www.magiclink.net/~odw](http://www.magiclink.net/~odw)

**Fridays Peace Vigil** 4:30-6pm 2nd & San Carlos  
in front of the Federal Building, San Jose. Come  
when you can, stay as long as you can

We are organizing an email list to notify those of  
you who would like to download or read **voices**  
on the web rather than have it mailed to you. As  
soon as it is uploaded we will send an email.  
Please send us an email if you want to join our  
list.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Monday Evening June 13 odw** will present an  
interactive program entitled **Water**, discussing  
local & global problems & parallels at the  
Monterey Public Library.  
Sponsored by WILPF & the Peace Coalition  
Open to the Public. Call for more information

We have an email humor list that we send only  
laugh out loud or poignant ones. You're  
welcome to join. We need all the hearty laughs  
we can get. Thanks to all who share theirs with  
us so we can share with others. There's no going  
it alone here. We've got to go together.


\* \* \* \* \*

Our Next **Reality Ecotour** is coming up soon!  
South Africa, **July 12- August 2**. Visit our  
website at [www.magiclink.net/~odw](http://www.magiclink.net/~odw) or call us at  
408-379-4431 for information.

*We are now asking \$10 per year from  
our readers to support the publishing and  
broader circulation of this newsletter.  
Thank you.*

**Moving?** Don't miss an issue of voices.  
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