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Peace march, rally commemorate 5th anniversary of U.S. invasion of Iraq

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

More than 4000 people gathered on Portland's South Park Blocks for the March 15 World Without War action camp, rally, and peace march. Commemorating the fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, all attendees wanted to stop the war and bring U.S. troops home.

In addition, supporters represented causes for freedom and justice around the world ranging from Falun Gong persecution in China to anti-immigrant legislation here at home.

Presented by PDX Peace (www.pdx-peace.org), more than 100 local organizations and businesses co-sponsored the event; grim statistics brought the crowd despite rain. The Washington Post, sites 4,461 U.S. military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan. Final costs could total \$3 trillion.

"I'm here because I want to see an end to the war," said Anne Bryant, who lives in the Ashcreek neighborhood of Southwest Portland. A volunteer for the Portland Peace Coalition, Bryant arrived at 8 a.m. Busy children coloring

their own signs surrounded the long tables in her tent.

"This is an opportunity for people to express what they would like to see funded if the money spent on the war were spent on other things," she said. I just talked to some small children who said they'd like to see their family move into a nicer home."

With pouring rain interrupted by brief sun breaks, people huddled under covered booths or tracked through the mud-soaked ground. Leashed dogs walked under their owner's umbrellas. Colorful signs, streamers, and costumed demonstrators brightened an otherwise gray-looking day. Police on bicycles watched from the sidelines. There were no arrests or serious incidents.

One young Nepali carrying a drum wore a jeweled headdress and shirt emblazoned PEACE. People wearing white, grotesque papier-mâché masks and black capes strode by; others dressed as clowns chat with the crowd. Blaring rap music provided background for discussions. "He's a revolutionary who lives and breathes hip-hop," the announcer said as she introduced one band.

"I'm Sophie Liu," a young woman



Demonstrators march for peace in the South Park Blocks, March 15. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

said in heavily accented English. She explained how she escaped from a Chinese concentration camp as she passed out Falun Gong brochures. "People are murdered, and they take and sell their organs," she said. According to Liu, members of this self-cultivation practice are primary targets of atrocity in China.

A Catholic Priest, Father John Mark Gilhousen, came to advocate universal healthcare, and the War Resister's League urged people to avoid paying war taxes. Rachel Hampton from West Hills Friends, located in the Maplewood neighborhood, wanted to "let people know about Quakers. We are

all pacifists," she said. "We've been going to these things since before the war started."

At 2 p.m. the crowd gathered for the rally and cheered. The seven speakers included a Gulf War veteran, and Bob Watada, father of the first commissioned officer to refuse deployment to Iraq.

Barbara Dudley, Professor in the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University and former executive director of Greenpeace USA, said "The invasion of Iraq was not a mistake. It was deliberate, -- and it was illegal." She urged the crowd to follow the lead of

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Park bureau to develop new South Waterfront open spaces

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Portland Parks and Recreation is pursuing the development of two new public open spaces in the South Waterfront.

The bureau will hold one more advisory committee meeting February 8 on implementation of plans for extension of the Willamette Greenway into the South Waterfront's Central District, according to project manager Patty Freeman.

The result would be an area about

100 feet wide and about five blocks long, centered on the foot of Southwest Gibbs Street, containing a combination of natural habitat, recreation facilities, and continuation of the greenway's bicycle and pedestrian paths.

The bureau will also officially apply for design review for the project next month, Freeman said. The bureau hopes that it can commence work on the project within the "fish window," the period (July 1 to October 31) when work is permitted near "fish-bearing streams" (such as the Willamette River) that are home to endangered fish species.

At the moment the bureau has assembled a total of \$3.7 million in fund-

ing for the project, Freeman said. This would be sufficient to do most of the work, but might not cover three features: a boat dock, a shade pavilion, and an "overlook structure" (from which people could view birds and other wildlife.) The cost for these features would be \$580,000, \$120,000, and \$560,000, respectively.

Meanwhile the park bureau is planning the district's Neighborhood Park, a 2.1 acre parcel surrounded by planned high-rises and bounded by Southwest Moody and Bond avenues and Curry and Gaines streets. The city has allocated \$2.8 million for the park's development.

According to project manager Sandra Buttzos, project designers have drafted four possible development schemes for the space:

The first is called an Event design in which much of the space would be devoted to a natural amphitheater, suit-

able for concerts or other performances. The second is called a Landscape design in which about a third of the land would be a lawn or grassy area, and the rest would be landscaping.

The third is a Neighborhood design that would include a playground, benches, gardens, and other features geared to the immediate neighborhood rather than the region. A Hybrid design would combine features of the other proposals.

The four designs were displayed last month at an open house, the second put on as part of the project, last month, and the bureau received comments from about 50 people, Buttzos said. There will be a third and final open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. April 22 at the Oregon Health and Sciences University's Center for Health and Healing, 3303 S.W. Bond Ave. At this session the bureau will present its recommended design.



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