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TAKING ACTION

A TIME FOR TRUTH

Showings of a documentary on Dec. 7 drew large crowds.

BY MICHAEL CARRIGAN

EDITOR'S NOTE: Michael Carrigan is a local peace activist and event organizer.

Tens of thousands of people from around America gathered Sunday, Dec. 7 at more than 2,650 "house parties" to watch and discuss the new documentary, *Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War*. The grassroots Internet network MoveOn.org sponsored the events. In Oregon there were 81 house parties in 26 communities.

In the Eugene/Springfield area there were six showings of the documentary. Both of the public showings were filled to overflowing. At the afternoon event organized by Friendly Neighbors for Peace at Amazon Community Center, people had to be turned away.

Seventy-seven people had signed up online to attend Justice Not War's evening event at Cozmic Pizza, yet more than 200 showed up.

"These big turnouts indicate a renewed interest in issues of war and peace. I'm greatly encouraged by this," says event organizer Rich Klopfer.

It was estimated that half the crowd was under the age of 35. This was a big change from the age 40 and up demographics that have characterized most recent peace events. MoveOn's electronic organizing clearly reaches the young.

The documentary provided an in-depth look at how the Bush administration systematically distorted intelligence evidence and misled the public in order to turn public opinion in favor of fighting a pre-emptive war in Iraq. The film presented interviews with more than 20 experts, many of whom used to work in the Foreign Service, the military and the CIA. They effectively deconstructed the

case for war with Iraq, pointing out the lies and flimsy evidence the Bush administration used to justify the war.

After the afternoon showings of the film, 740 house party attendees from around the country took part in a conference call with movie producer Robert Greenwald. Greenwald says he produced the movie to "reach Republicans, Independents and those in favor of the war." He strongly urged those on the conference call to show the film to these groups.

Group discussions followed the viewings. Most people thought the film was well done, that it would be effective in convincing "swing" voters that the Bush administration has lied, and that it would make them think twice about supporting Bush.

Discussion also centered around showing the film in outlying areas, as well as the need to mobilize young people by showing them this film, offering more "youth oriented" information and registering them to vote.

People agreed that it's important to connect with people personally and a good way to do this would be to share the film with workmates, family, neighbors and friends who would not otherwise question the Bush administrations policies. Suggestions included showing the film to neighborhood groups, churches, and the City Club, donating copies to libraries, and having showings at the Bijou and on cable TV.

Progressive Responses plans to show the film in January, followed by a panel discussion.

Penny Sabin of Halfway, one of the attendees at a Eugene house party, said, "I'm very encouraged by being here watching this film and that people all over the country are doing the same. I'm optimistic for the first time in a long time."

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