

Unapologetic Arianna

The journalist offers clear solutions for a better America.

by Aria Seligmann

The *Oregonian* dropped political pundit and former California gubernatorial candidate Arianna Huffington's column in January 2003, telling readers, "She has dragged herself across the line from being a commentator to being an activist."

So, where's that line, anyway?

Huffington isn't sure, either. "I believe the journalists I admire the most are those I call 'crusading journalists' like Upton Sinclair," she says. "It's very hard to write without taking action because ultimately you want to change America. For me, that means using every means at my disposal. Writing, speaking, organizing, taking action. That's the way I intend to spend the rest of my life."

Huffington's recent book, *Fanatics and Fools: The Game Plan for Winning Back America*, is equally unapologetic. In it, she



points out the foibles, gaffes and downright crimes of those within the Bush administration. That's not unlike many other books on the market these days. In fact, if you're a political writer, the past four years have been dream material.

But Huffington goes further. In the final chapter, she outlines her "New Contract for a Better America," a 10-step approach to being better, that includes a call to achieve energy independence, reform the healthcare system, revitalize education, restore integrity to the political process, and put people above corporations.

"The heart of the book is the final chapter, which offers a winning strategy to move beyond the attack on failed Bush policies and offer solutions and do so in a visionary

frame," she says. "It's not a laundry list of policies, because the American people won't connect with that."

One of Huffington's pet peeves is hearing statements about what the American people think. Since the 2000 presidential elections, "I'm tired of hearing we're a country divided because that excludes the 50 percent who didn't vote," she says. "In fact, we're 25-25."

Despite the recent successes of voter registration drives throughout the country, Huffington says getting that other 50 percent signed up is only half the battle. "The other half is making sure they actually vote." History shows that high voter registration does not always translate into high numbers at the polls.

Huffington believes to do so, it's important to appeal to people's idealism.

"I love it that Kucinich is sticking to his progressive ideals," says Huffington, but she thinks he "could have more influence at this stage if he endorsed Kerry and campaigned within the party to influence the agenda."

And she believes that's important, though in 2000, when she organized the Shadow Conventions and voted for "none of the above," she felt differently. "I was very dissatisfied with the two parties but now there is such a clear and present danger in George

Bush, which was not the case in 2000 — we didn't know he'd turn into such a fanatic."

As she tours the country promoting her book, Huffington hears from people over and over how hard times are and how the economy has affected them. They are worried about the war. She hopes Kerry will remember his Vietnam testimony, and harken back to the leader he was then to sound the call to remove troops from Iraq.

"When your house is on fire, you must first put it out. That means getting Bush out of the White House," she says.

One way to do that is to limit corporate contributions. Oregon is one of only six states without campaign finance regulations, and Huffington will talk about that when she's in Eugene on May 6. Initiative 53 is a progressive step toward changing that, by placing strict and comprehensive limits on political contributions. Although she calls it a "great first step," Huffington says that ultimately, "only public financing can ensure we get the corrupting influence of money" out of policy making. **EW**

Huffington will appear in Eugene on May 6 for an 8 pm lecture at the McDonald Theatre and a 6 pm dinner at Café Paradiso as a benefit for Initiative #53: Campaign Finance Reform For Oregon. Lecture tix at Tsunami Books, the Book Mine, and UO ticket office. \$10, stu \$8. Dinner tix available at Café Paradiso or the Money Is Not Democracy Office, 341-4909. \$35-75, ss, includes lecture ticket.

Becoming Involved

Local groups provide volunteer opportunities for social change.

By David Duemler

Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, in their book *A Force More Powerful*, document many of the successes of nonviolent resistance during the 20th century, including its role in bringing down the Soviet Empire, the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet in Chile. Ackerman and DuVall note:

"It is often assumed that the choice of nonviolent resistance is made for moral reasons, but the historical record suggests otherwise. Most who used nonviolent action in the twentieth century did so because military or physical force was not a viable option. ... Those who used nonviolent action in our stories did not come to make peace. They came to fight."

Yet Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were moral visionaries. It could be argued that a commitment to nonviolence is central to any coherent vision of a moral future where all people are heard, have their needs and concerns addressed and are treated with dignity.

A diversity of perspectives on nonviolence is reflected in the Eugene/Springfield community, where there are many groups committed to nonviolent methods of social change. I apologize for not being able to provide a comprehensive listing, but a few of these groups are listed below.

Beyond War

Beyond War educates and uses action teams to advance new ways of thinking and responding to conflict that help to move the world beyond war. The Lane County chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility is one of its action teams. 485-0911.

Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People (CISCAP)

CISCAP educates the local community about U.S. policy toward Latin America. It organizes actions here and in Latin

America. 485-8633.

Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC)

CALC works to uphold human rights and human dignity, and to educate, promote, and mobilize individuals and groups committed to peace and justice. 485-1755.

Eugene Middle East Peace Group

The Eugene Middle East Peace Group seeks to build friendship and dialogue between all of the different groups involved in the Middle-East conflict and to promote an alternative to war based

on relationship and conflict work. 686-8060.

Eugene Peaceworks

Eugene Peaceworks' (EPW) purpose is to educate the general public about the need for all people to work together to create a peaceful, morally just, economically fair, safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable world. 343-8548.

Friendly Neighbors for Peace

Friendly Neighbors for Peace helps people to speak out for peace where they live in the rhythms of their daily life. It

seeks to recreate safe political space within our neighborhoods. 686-2531.

Justice Not War Coalition

JNW's purpose, in part, is to organize and promote community actions for global peace and justice, including marches, rallies, and annual conferences. 343-8548.

Million Mom March

"Honoring local youth who work for peace" is the theme of this year's Mother's Day (May 9) march. 344-9343.

Pacifica Forum

This weekly discussion group meets on Fridays at noon in the Skylight Room of the Erb Memorial Union to provide education and perspectives on war and peace, militarism and pacifism, violence and nonviolence. 344-0483.

Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect (SAFER)

SAFER promotes safety and respect in the schools. 726-7377.

Taxes for Peace

Taxes for Peace consists of federal tax resisters and concerned

citizens promoting the redirection of federal spending away from military programs and toward social services and environmental programs. 342-1953.

Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)

WAND empowers women to act politically to reduce violence and militarism and to redirect excessive military resources toward unmet human and environmental needs. 344-6443.

David Duemler is the secretary of Eugene Peaceworks, on the steering committee for JNW, and teaches psychology at LCC.

Destination Imagination

Plant Sale

Saturday May 1st

12 specialty nurseries from Portland to Port Orford with the highest quality plants

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM Alton Baker Park

Profits will support Destination Imagination at Pleasant Hill Schools

DestinationImagNation

→ Featured Plants ←

Hardy Cyclamen	Blooming Cacti	Ferns
Woodland Plants	Trees & Shrubs	Hosta
Japanese Maples	Native Bulbs	Trillium
Upland & Wetland	Wild Flowers	Alpines
Carnivorous Plants	Erythronium	Gunnera
Ornamental Grasses	Blueberries	Lily Bulbs
Heirloom Vegetables	Water Lilies	Perennials

network

CHARTER SCHOOL

Homeschoolers welcome!

Hands-on education at Eugene-based sites

Now enrolling, part or full-time for 2004-2005

www.networkcharterschool.org | 344-1229