

An Anti-War Legacy that Resonates

continued **▲ from Front**

Non-violent resistance was how King approached Civil Rights. He was arrested several times waging peaceful battles for justice, willfully violating local laws such as protesting without a permit, demonstrating, and sitting in a whites-only restaurant waiting to be served.

Although Acosca was hesitant to mention her true feelings about the war, she supports those who question the war.

"Thank God for the politicians that are asking questions about whether this war is right," she said. "As soldiers, we do what we are told to but if people don't talk about it then mistakes will be repeated again and again."

Acosca says she will go back to Iraq a third time if she is called, but said she prays to God that those who make the decisions on military deployments "go to every effort to validate the war before another one of my friends dies, I lose a limb or, God forbid, I die."

Adriana Moyola, 25, an ex-soldier from Portland has another view.

Moyola can now talk as she pleases about the war, since she was "other than honorably discharged" for refusing to deploy to Iraq and going AWOL (Absent Without Leave) from her military unit.

"I had signed up for the Army Reserves in February 2001 and wasn't called for duty until August 2006 for 'Operation Iraqi Freedom.' I signed up because I

am from Mexico, where women aren't considered able to be successful people and I wanted to disprove that," she said.

"During that time period, I had some changes in my life that included medical illness. I also had been waiting for six years to get into graduate school and was finally accepted. Most importantly, I thought that the war was racist and unjust. I couldn't find one reason to go, not in the role of a

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— Adriana Moyola

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Moyola made three attempts to avoid fighting in a war that she was "spiritually against."

She asked for an educational deferment in October 2006 and was denied. Secondly, she asked for a medical discharge. While her sergeants were reviewing her paperwork, she was sent to Camp Parks in Oakland, Calif., where she waited for two days until she found out that her medical discharge was denied.

On Jan. 27, 2007, she put her final plan into effect and went AWOL from Camp Parks.

"I just left the base," she said,

"I was AWOL for 187 days."

Before the unauthorized leave, Moyola said she had prepared herself for duty, assured by a female officer who said that the military treated women well in Iraq. But she said her opinion changed when she overheard the same officer tell a male officer that she had lied to her.

Moyola said she hid from the military for four months by staying with another ex-soldier who

marshaled for desertion. I spent five days in jail and was allowed to return to Portland," she said.

"The army told me to never talk to others who had been to Iraq while I was active," she added.

"I was really happy that I didn't risk my life. I knew what I was doing was very patriotic and democratic."

In 1968, Martin Luther King commented about the Vietnam War saying, "We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and for justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight."

Moyola said something much similar about the Iraq war today.

"The people with less access to support are the ones who end up joining the military. Ultimately, any decision you make will affect you. You have to let go of your fear of the government and look into why you are being asked to go to war and who profits from it. Vietnam, in Martin Luther King's time parallels the war in Iraq today."

Acosca also is grateful for Dr. King's work, saying that he has "made such a difference through peace advocacy and we honor him for that today."

had refused deployment.

"I believed it was my human right to choose not to kill innocent people," she said.

"The Army was looking for me in Portland," she said. "They even went so far as to tell PSU, the college I was attending, that if I showed up then to call the police."

Moyola eventually turned herself into the military, thinking that she was going to spend three months in jail and possibly get deported since she was an immigrant from Mexico who moved to the United States with her father at age eight.

"I was really lucky, I wasn't court

Obama's momentum

QUOTE PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/ THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

continued **▲ from Front**

bad," says Floyd Cruse, who was Minister of Information for the local chapter of the Black Panthers. "There's a lot of weight on him for change, and hopefully that will mean something when he takes office."

Cruse has regularly participated in impromptu discussion groups that have lately formed at Reflections every morning with more than a dozen people. He said the "hotbed of conversation and dialogue" gives hope for the world.

Sabrina Serac, a former French teacher at Portland State University visiting the coffee shop before her current research, observed that much of Europe has also fallen for Obama through his call for peace. "He has more presence than Hillary, and he was also against the war, as we were," she said.

Having preached in favor of Obama during her outreach ministry, Rev. Renee' Ward said, "It's very encouraging to see that an African-American man can even be

considered in this day in age to be a candidate for president." Ward credits Obama's momentum with



'It feels so good,' — Gloria McMurtry



'He's approachable and real,' — Rev. Renee' Ward



'There's a lot of weight on him for change,' — Floyd Cruse

his demonstration of integrity, experience and commitment to social issues that comes across even in person. During his visit this past fall to the Oregon Convention Center, she found him "approachable and real."

Reflections employee Tracy Bell expressed the strongest skepticism, saying, "Let's not get caught up in the hype of the first black president before seeing what he can do."

Ward countered with the position that the current moment marks the closest American society has come to a vision of equality in the more than 40 years since Martin Luther King's March on Washington speech.

"Obama represents King's dream coming to fruition, and that reality is based not on his color but on the content of his character," she said.



Barack Obama addresses the crowd at a recent campaign event.



Mr. Cartez Penix, celebrated his 99th Birthday on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008; at his home with his family and friends from his church. He was unable to attend church service, but the entire congregation sang "Happy Birthday" via a cell phone.

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