

Peninsula Progressive

the newsletter of Peninsula Peace and Justice

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FREE!

Maine Fair Trade Campaign challenges corporate agenda

by Kaia Peterson

How do international trade agreements affect the people of Maine? What will the effects be locally and to all people living in the Americas if trade agreements expand to include more countries? More than 2,000 individuals and organizations in Maine are now part of a campaign to address these questions, make trade fair, and give Maine a greater voice in the trade decisions that are affecting us all.

In 2003, the Maine Fair Trade Campaign (MFTC) collected over 10,000 signatures to stop the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). These ballots were presented at the FTAA ministerial meetings in Miami last November in solidarity with ballots from communities throughout the Western hemisphere. These communities risk the loss of public services with the privatization of education, health care, and water access if the FTAA is ratified. Corporations could sue governments and overturn laws that limit corporate profits.

The Maine Fair Trade Campaign advocates for the Maine Jobs, Trade, and Democracy Act, currently under review in the state legislature. The legislation would create a commission of legislators and citizens from different sectors including the business, labor, public health, agricultural, and human rights communities to hold public hearings throughout the state. The commission would evaluate the impacts of international trade agreements on the state and make recommendations as to how the state should address these issues.

The Blue Hill Peninsula group of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign formed to build regional support for the campaign and the bill. As part of the effort to educate people in the Blue Hill area about international trade, the group invites the community to a meeting with area legislators on February 28, 12-1:30PM. The meeting about the Maine Jobs, Trade and Democracy Act

will be at the Liberty School in Blue Hill. All are welcome.

To learn more about the campaign or to get involved, visit the Peace through Interamerican Community Action web site at www.pica.ws/mftc or call:

Jack McKay – 947-4203 (Bangor)

Kaia Peterson – 374-5740 (Blue Hill Peninsula)

March for truth

by Tony Aman

March 20, 2004, will be a Global Day of Action against War and Occupation. The one-year anniversary of the U.S. bombing and invasion of Iraq will be protested with demonstrations in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and many other cities in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Groups and individuals across Maine will gather for a march and rally in Augusta at noon on this day to join the international call for an end to the occupation of Iraq and Bush's militaristic foreign policies. We will underline the effects of the Bush administration's failed, flawed, and dishonest policies on vital programs in Maine and throughout the U.S.

Speak truth to power. Join thousands of Mainers as we celebrate the first day of Spring, with music, drama, and colorful pageantry. For more information, call Tony Aman at 326-9574 or visit www.marchfortruth.org

Paint-in

Come to the Paint for Truth paint-in on Tuesday, March 10, 6:30PM at the Liberty School, Blue Hill. Help create a banner to carry in the march and to hang from the State House fence on March 20.

Caravan

Join a caravan from the Liberty School to the rally. Meet at 9:30AM to kick off a day of protest and celebration.

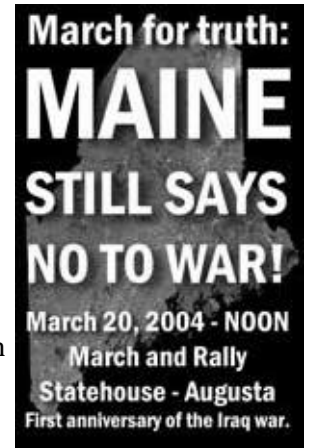
Brooksville's Callahan mine: EPA Superfund site

by Christine West

[Near the Callahan mine, wells have elevated arsenic levels, and shellfish are unsafe for humans to eat. Christine West of Penobscot has prepared a two-part history of this Superfund site. Part 2 of 2]

For 85 years, through a process called "flotation," the Callahan mine separated ore from waste rock by using acids, reducing the ore to tiny particles sent to the smelter. The chemical by-product of this process was discharged into the tailings--waste--pond on site. These heavy metals and acids have leached out of the tailings pond and have been discovered in the area surrounding the mine site.

In 1975, the Maine Department of Marine Resources started studying the bioaccumulation of heavy metal toxins at the Callahan Mine site in marine invertebrate (*see p.2*)



Callahan Mine con't

organisms. In 1999, Maine's Department of Environmental Protection gathered more samples. They traced heavy metals and other hazardous substances in the shellfish in Goose Pond and its effluent in Goose Cove.

Six neurotoxins were found leaching from the tailings pond, including arsenic and cadmium, known carcinogens, as well as lead. Lead in any amount causes irreparable damage to the nervous system. Also found were copper, selenium, and zinc, beneficial to humans in small amounts but lethal in larger doses. Not until 2002 did the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry conduct a public health assessment to learn the extent of the heavy metal exposure.

In October, 2003, the EPA announced the halt of the cleanup of Callahan mine because the Superfund lacked funding. But the Marine Environmental Research Institute (MERI) is still required to gather the information about the site for future remediation plans. A steering committee with scientists from MERI and EPA, along with community volunteers, collects input from local residents.

Since the mine was added to the National Priorities List, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has reported that wells tested in Harborside contained high arsenic levels. Arsenic can be natural or man-made.

Sediment, soil, and surface water sampled had elevated heavy metals and acids. The report concluded that the site might make a person with prolonged exposure to the mine ill. The shellfish sampled from Goose Pond and Cove was deemed unsafe for human consumption. The report's final statement, however, found that Callahan Mine was no immediate threat to the surrounding residents.

Will the cleanup process include capping the site to contain the hazardous materials? What kind of vegetation will be planted to absorb the toxins in the soil? What will be done with the heavy metals found in the sediment plume and in the invertebrates that inhabit the sediment?

The wildlife seems to be thriving with otters, different species of wading birds, amphibians, and many other organisms, but their long-term health can only be determined through proper studies.

Superfund sites have been cleaned up and used for building homes, parks, and playgrounds. The mine could become a wind farm or an expansion of the Holbrook Island Sanctuary. But it may be years before the Callahan Mine can serve any of these purposes.

Visit www.meriresearch.org for more information. Local residents may share input with Jennifer Traub or Margaret Quinn at MERI, 374-2135.

Calendar

March 10 Peninsula Peace and Justice paint-in & meeting, Liberty School, Blue Hill, 6:30PM, FMI: 326-4405

March 20 March for truth. Augusta. *See article for details.* Can't go? Visit www.peacebridges.org for an alternative.

March 25 *Hearts and Minds.* Film. Blue Hill Library, 6:30PM, FMI: 326-4405.

April 14 Peninsula Peace and Justice meeting. Liberty School, Blue Hill, 6:30PM, FMI: 326-4405

April 22 *500 Dunam on the Moon.* Film. Liberty School, Blue Hill, 6:30PM, FMI: 326-4405

On-going vigils

Blue Hill Town Hall, 5-6PM, Sundays.
Congregational Church, Deer Isle, 4-5, Mondays.

Peninsula Peace and Justice provides a community forum for local and global issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. The group strives to create a space where growing awareness may be realized as inspired action.



The Search for Peace by Gunda Schroeder

Join the Peninsula Peace and Justice (PPJ) mailing list:

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