

GUEST VIEWPOINT

Now they're his wars

President Obama as responsible as Bush for Iraq, Afghan occupation

By John Marciano

With a new president in office for six months, perhaps we can stop to think about the Iraqi people — and, increasingly the Afghans. In his "Anti-Empire Report," William Blum states, "... thanks to this lovely little war more than half the population of Iraq is either dead, crippled, traumatized, confined in overflowing American and Iraqi prisons, internally displaced, or in foreign exile." These tragic people now are the "concern" of Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

Obama and Biden have supported the invasion and occupation. Biden was a Senate cheerleader for Bush's war resolution of October 2002, and voted for every dollar to fund this slaughter, whose eventual cost may top \$3 trillion. After coming to the Senate in January 2005, Obama joined Biden in voting "aye" to every funding request for the aggression.

After perhaps a million Iraqi deaths, Obama supporters must confront Blum's assertion: "No American should be allowed to forget that Iraqi society has been destroyed." Democrats who have supported this destruction would be outraged if Sen. John McCain were continuing it. In the coming months and years, as more Iraqis and Afghans are killed by U.S. forces, will citizens finally wake up to the Democrats' history of cruel and violent policies? Since the party's founding, it has been committed to genocide against the First Americans, empire and white supremacy.

Tens of millions of voters rejected racist appeals in a historic and powerful election, as liberals and even leftists worked to bring about Obama's victory. They are being lulled to sleep, however, by his sham Iraq war withdrawal that will leave tens of thousands of combat troops and more than 100,000 mercenary "contractors" there — while escalating a war in Afghanistan that will ultimately end in defeat.

Where are the anti-war voters who opposed the Bush-Cheney criminal assault on Iraq and Afghanistan? Where are the Moveon.org members and other liberals who could not contain their anger at these policies? Does such anger over death and destruction in Iraq and elsewhere only arise when the bombs have "made by Republicans" written on them?

Uruguayan writer and journalist Eduardo Galeano cuts to the heart of the matter: "Obama's victory was universally celebrated as a victory in the battle against racism.... Will Obama, the first black President of the United States, realize the dream of Martin Luther King, or the nightmare of Condoleezza Rice?"

I think the answer is clear: We are now engaged in two illegal and unconstitutional wars in violation of the United Nations Charter, yet most liberals are mute about the killing now that we have a Democratic president — one who disgraces the memory of Dr. King by attempting to wear the mantle of the martyred antiwar and human rights leader.

Marciano, a longtime Ithaca resident, now lives in Santa Monica, Calif.

OPINION POLL

Do you agree with the government's desire to vaccinate students at school this year against swine flu?

Last poll: U.S. House Democrats want to raise taxes for the wealthiest 1.2 percent of Americans to pay for health care reform. Do you agree with their approach?

Yes: 45.6% | No: 54.4%
Total votes: 592.

Go to the Viewpoints section at ithacajournal.com and cast your vote.

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Jared Makrancy, left, and Jon Negley conduct water-quality measurements on Cayuga Lake near Frontenac Point about 10 miles north of Ithaca.

KEEPING WATCH ON THE WATER

Cayuga monitoring involves much teamwork

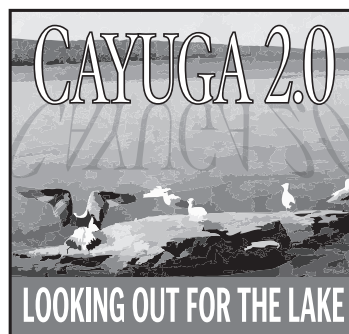
The Tompkins County Water Resources Council-Cornell University Partnership is kicking off a monthly series of guest columns today focusing on the health of Cayuga Lake and its watershed. Assessing the health of any of the Finger Lakes is important and not a black-and-white issue. For example, a recent study on Canandaigua Lake, generally considered one of the healthiest of the Finger Lakes, shows a 40 percent increase in phosphorus levels over the last 13 years.

The Partnership acknowledges the complexities of Cayuga's ecosystem and its diverse natural and manmade components. None of it can be summarized in a news item or with a singular spotlight on any given component regarding its health. In short, this is a complex subject that requires the community's focus, intellects and open minds.

Today's article will update you on the work of the Partnership and implementation of our Monitoring Plan. Future articles will cover such topics as tributaries, wetlands, phosphorus, history of local waters, modern lake-friendly farming and how you can get involved. Please join us in this endeavor to learn more about our Finger Lake.

The Monitoring Plan

The landmark Partnership between the Tompkins County Water Resources Council and Cornell University formed out of a desire to find a better way to protect Cayuga Lake. Last year, we rolled out a Monitoring Plan for the Southern Basin of Cayuga Lake. It is a balanced approach to the present and future health of the southern basin, relying on hard science, resource sharing and broad public inputs. The plan evolved through a series of public meetings where the grow-



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Cayuga 2.0 is a series of monthly guest viewpoints about the health of the Cayuga Lake watershed and the challenges and opportunities related to it. The viewpoints are provided by the Tompkins County Water Resources Council.

► Next month's installment: A piece of Six Mile Creek's history.

ON THE WEB

- Sites with more information about Cayuga Lake:
- www.tompkins-co.org/planning/committees/WRC/index.htm
 - www.cayugalake.org
 - www.cayugawatershed.org
 - floatingclassroom.blogspot.com
 - www.cityofithaca.org (Search for wastewater information)
 - www.communityscience.org/index.html
 - www.cayugalake.cornell.edu
 - ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/11045
 - fi.hws.edu/
 - www.canandaigualake.org

ing concern about aquatic plants was evident. In response, the plan recommends a series of special food web studies, highlighting macrophytes, plankton and the impacts of invasive species, such as zebra mussels.

Other highlights of the plan include collaborative monitoring and education with Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Facility, Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization, Finger Lakes Institute, Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom and Community Science Institute.

Accomplishments

We are working steadily to implement components of the plan. Some highlights:

- Cornell's Remote Underwater Sampling Station (RUSS) unit is collecting data 24/7.
- Initial evaluations of duplicative monitoring sites have

begun.

► New equipment is in place to determine stream flows for load calculations.

► Enhanced monitoring is under way to determine possible causes of poor water quality in the southeastern portion of the lake where stormwater drainage is a probable contributor.

► The Finger Lakes Institute has released a new report on the state of the Finger Lakes.

► The Partnership is pursuing grant funding to target weeds, algae, sediment and phosphorus in Cayuga Lake.

► We are working with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Cooperative Extension and Cornell University to make datasets and reports available to the public via e-commons@cornell.edu.

What's next

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation representatives were consulted as the plan was developed and have been invited to local forums on the partnership plan, with the hope that they can help guide us in this community-based planning effort.

This new, strategic approach toward environmental stewardship will become an important source of information for citizens, researchers and resource managers. Publicly distributing research findings via the Internet and through this series of articles will allow the community to take action to improve existing water quality and avoid future problems.

The monitoring plan is posted on the Tompkins County Planning Department's Web site. Its URL can be found accompanying this article, along with other useful sites. We welcome your ideas and input and hope you enjoy this series of articles. Feel free to attend a council meeting or contact us through the Tompkins County's Planning Department at (607) 274-5560.

The WRC meets at 4:15 p.m. on the third Monday of the month at the Ithaca Tompkins Transit Center, 737 Willow Ave., Ithaca.

Proto is chairman of the Water Resource Council. Johnston is chairperson of the Monitoring Partnership.

DARTS & LAURELS

Medical help for brother

Laurel: From Steve Ellner of the Town of Ithaca to Cayuga Medical Center (with special thanks to Dr. Stallone) for the excellent care my brother has been receiving. He was found on the floor of his apartment, unconscious and unresponsive, and rescued by a neighbor (thanks, Norman!) who called 911.

The staff at Cayuga Med, at all levels, has been professional, courteous and responsive while working hard to bring my brother back onto his feet.

Trash tossers, speeders on Aiken Road

Dart: From Steve Kraus of Trumansburg to the inconsiderate drivers using Aiken Road while Route 79 is closed.

It is understandable that they want to shortcut the posted detour. However, Aiken Road is not their garbage dump. If they don't want their garbage inside their car, what makes them think we want it on the road in front of our properties?

We also are not pleased with their lack of consideration in regard to speeding and dangerous passing on what was once a quiet country road. This dart also goes out to local law enforcement as well as the New York Department of Transportation for not doing a better job responding to the complaints about these problems.

Congregations' book donations

Laurel: From Mary Milne, program coordinator at the Family Reading Partnership in Ithaca, to Area Congregations Together (ACT) and the many families who donated books in this year's Faith in Books drive.

Local congregations donated 738 gently used children's books that are being placed on more than 25 Bright Red Bookshelves in the community, available free for children and families to select and keep.

More than \$340 was also given for new shelves and red paint.

Special thanks to participating congregations: First Baptist Church, First Congregational Church, First Presbyterian Church, First Unitarian Church, Forest Home Chapel, Immaculate Conception, Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Lansing United Methodist Church, Temple Beth-El, Tikun V'Or.

We are also grateful to the many community members who donate gently used children's books throughout the year. You are bringing the joy and the power of books to thousands of children in our community.

Books are always needed to keep all the shelves stocked. Find both the collection crate and bookshelf locations on our Web site at www.familyreading.org.

WRITE TO US

We welcome letters no longer than 200 words. Please include your name, address and a daytime telephone number. We edit for brevity, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Edited letters should address a single idea. We reject anonymous letters, poetry, Internet pass-alongs and form letters.

Writers are limited to one letter within 30 days. Letters and articles may be published in print, electronic media or other forms. We regret we cannot return or acknowledge unpublished letters.

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What do you think?

Comment on today's letters: ithacajournal.com/viewpoints

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Saturday, Aug. 1, 2009. On this date:

► In 1933, the National Recovery Administration's "Blue Eagle" symbol began to appear in store windows and on packages to show support for the National Industrial Recovery Act.

► In 1936, the Olympic games opened in Berlin with a ceremony presided over by Adolf Hitler.

► In 1981, the rock music video channel MTV made its debut.

DOONESBURY

