

escaping to the U.S.

This was followed by a prayer blessing from Father John Kiernan, a Catholic priest with fifty years of experience. Kiernan is a beloved local figure, with a long history of social protest, especially during the U.S. interventions in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980s. After he spoke, local college professor Walter Cummings played a haunting version of taps on his trombone. The crosses in the field seemed to loom larger than life.

The march itself was a joyous, boisterous and rowdy affair, with more than 100 participants joining in. There were thoughtful provocative signs ("when Jesus said 'love your enemies' he meant 'don't shoot them.'"), drums, and lots of spirited chants as the march wound down North Avenue. The response of the overwhelming majority of passersby was favorable, with lots of thumbs up and horn honking.

The march ended at Mesa State College where Eman Khamas gave a powerpoint presentation about civilian life in Iraq. She has spent the past couple of years documenting war crimes, human rights abuses, and tragic mistakes. Many stories involved men who were wrongfully imprisoned by the U.S. Army, and were beaten and/or tortured. She had photographic evidence of bombings that took place in civilian areas, with many women and children as casualties. The presentation was somber and heartbreaking, yet Khamas professed optimism for the future.

A potluck dinner was then held at the Confluence Collective, a local politically radical active group, living in a large old Victorian house, which easily absorbed the 65+ attendees. Khamas, Naboa, and Siddeek mingled freely as anecdotes and stories were swapped all around.

In her interview with the Red Pill, Khamas mentioned the sorry state of the Iraqi media. "The Iraqi media is completely controlled by the U.S. Army; we hear nothing but propaganda everyday." She said that the siege of Fallujah and the Abu Ghraib scandal had galvanized much of the public opinion against the invading army. "Chemical weapons were used against us (in Fallujah), and innocent people were tortured in military prisons. The Iraqi people said 'enough' to all the atrocities and abuse." She asked a rhetorical question: "do you think that a rational Iraqi might stand up to resist a hostile foreign invasion?"

Yet somehow Khamas finds hope for the future. "I have been in your country for six weeks, and I have met many people who oppose the U.S. involvement in Iraq. They, like you, are doing something about it."

This event was bittersweet. It came off flawlessly, raised positive energy, and got good press coverage.

However, the reason for the demonstration is an ongoing war full of insanity and death. The greatest possible outcome is for us to apply enough pressure on our government to plan a withdrawal, so that we will not need a 4th anniversary demonstration.



State of Disunion

NUMBER OF RETIRED GENERALS that have publicly called the war in Iraq a mistake: 6	NUMBER OF DOLLARS worth of public benefits immigrants use every year: 5,000,000,000
NUMBER OF MARCHERS in GJ's largest Klan rally in 1924: 800	ISSUE NUMBER of this Red Pill: 25
NUMBER OF MARCHERS at the GJ immigrant rights march on April 10, 2006: 4000+	NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS or their staff that have been killed in Iraq: 91
NUMBER OF DOLLARS wasted in Iraq: 276,000,000,000	NUMBER OF DOLLARS George W. Bush successfully sued Enterprise Rent-A-Car for, in 1999: 2500
NUMBER TAX DOLLARS immigrants pay a year: 90,000,000,000	PERCENT a visit to the student health center has increased: 400

CALL TO ACTION

The Red Pill is looking for volunteers: graphic designers, writers, poets, cartoonists, artists, and photographers are needed. Get your work published now. Help distribute The Red Pill in your community, church, and school: contact us at editor@gjredpill.org. You can also do your part to keep us in print by donating time, paper, film, copies, and of course money (it doesn't print itself).



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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH TAKE

GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO

The Red Pill



WE ARE

EVERYWHERE

TWENTY-FIFTH ISSUE

APRIL 2006

VOL. 4 NO. 7

SLOW DOWN... YOU MIGHT BE GOING THE WRONG WAY

Mesa State is at a pivotal crossroads. In its evolution from a small junior college to a four-year institution serving more than 6,000 students, Mesa has continued to make an accessible, affordable education available for the largely uneducated low-income demographic that defines Western Colorado. All that may be about to change.

Many Mesa State students are unfamiliar with the controversy surrounding President Tim Foster's hiring two years ago. It shall suffice to say that Mr. Foster is a shrewd politician, and his back-door appointment provided a telling start to his presidency. In the two years since, Mesa has undergone dramatic institutional restructuring, moving from the certain, efficient and desirable form of bureaucracy appropriate to such an institution, to a collection of small administrative fiefdoms filled by Foster appointees and well positioned to conceive radical change unchecked by public input. The history of this period is one of smoke and mirrors, shifty accounting and a growing chasm between "less affluent" student interests, faculty input, and administrative priorities. The full extent of Foster's mission is difficult to decipher, but a storm has appeared on the horizon that should concern each and every Mesa State student.

Strategic development has been all the rage this academic year. With the construction of a new dormitory, the school has expanded its recruitment appeal, housing capacity and ability to absorb increasing enrollment rates, which the administration hopes will continue despite a 2% drop in the Fall of 2005. However, most students aren't aware that in a period defined by scarce resources, artificially strapped state budgets, dilapidated housing conditions for the majority of the on-campus population, classrooms in need of repair, and faculty salaries among the lowest in the state, the priorities reflected in new construction and campus development appear to be those of an out-of-touch elite administration and not those of the students. The new dormitory, courtesy of Tim Foster, will be one of the most posh in Colorado, with double units 300 sq. ft. larger than those in the current flagship, Monument Hall, and each suite replete with 36" flat screens and leather armchairs. Officials confirm that the plan is to attract more affluent,



academically superior students. A double room will cost residents \$1,900 a semester, and the "oversized" single unit will cost \$150 more than a single in Walnut Ridge Apartments. But for those low income students saddling debt or working three jobs to get an education, this use of resources is an affront. Students don't pay tuition to Mesa State to fund elite development projects, they pay for an education. If costly expansion of the Foster kind can strengthen the institution and the quality of that education by increasing revenue and recruiting better faculty, then so be it. That's a big "if," and we are only getting started.

The administration's strategic growth plan calls for \$118 million (some put the figure at \$146M or higher—such is the ambiguity and secrecy of development plans) in projects over the next 5-10 years. Nearly three of every four dollars of these monies are dedicated to athletics and recreation center development. Documents obtained by

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the Red Pill indicate that this includes an \$8M soccer stadium, a \$5M pool in Saunders Field House, \$25M in Recreation Center renovation and expansion, \$6M in athletic fields, \$5M in new tennis courts, \$1M for a athletics performance lab, and \$42M for a sports arena and events center to be attached to the Field House. All told, plans will divert a total of \$92 million in state resources, private donations, and tuition-fee revenues to athletics and structural expansion. By contrast, \$14M is allocated to fund construction of a new classroom building, \$6M for Houston Hall renovations, \$6M for student center renovations, \$250,000 annually for endowed professorships, \$50,000 annually for a lecture series, \$1M for the arts department, \$1M for technology, and \$1M annually to maintain current financial aid levels. Not included in these plans is a much-needed parking structure to solve the parking problem—a building commonly estimated to cost \$5M or more. Students should take the time to consider this strategy and whether or not it represents the appropriate approach to growth at Mesa. Will dedicating massive resources to a recreation center and athletics development, or as Mr. Foster has publicly said “let’s treat them like their in a flippin’ health club,” improve education in the long run? If donor sources exist for a \$75,000 water fountain and \$92M rec center, why can’t they be found for scholarships, quality faculty recruitment, study abroad assistance, and Rait and Pinon Hall renovation? Focusing on these areas would improve the college experience for more students, especially those “less affluent” consumers Mesa is

supposed to serve. Also unresolved is the question of whether the recruitment of more affluent students to bolster the school’s revenue base and prestige will be accompanied by an increase in tuition and the exclusion of those barely able to afford an education today.

Other issues in growth have elicited concern. Rumors indicate that Halliburton, that noble corporate citizen, is negotiating for naming rights to Western Colorado Community College (formerly UTEC) or future main-campus structures.

Safety issues on campus have prompted the development of a camera system, which various administration officials confirm may include anywhere from thirty to several hundred cameras on campus and in residence halls. That project could cost hundreds of thousands.

In 2005, Student Health Center visits rose 400%, from \$5 to \$20 while service remained just as condescending, offensive and unhelpful as before. We are not typically ones to gloat, but where was the Criterion on that one?

Much of this controversy depends on competing values, visions and goals for the future of Mesa State. Students should recognize their role as stakeholders in this process, not only for the four or so years they will spend at the school, but for the prestige a Mesa State degree will (or won’t) hold down the road. It is imperative that they engage the administration, for development without representation of their interests is dangerous indeed. •

THREE YEARS LATER: GJ STILL SAYS NO TO WAR

March 19th, 2006 marked the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. This tragic milestone was commemorated in an all day ceremony and march in Grand Junction on Saturday, March 25th, sponsored by A Voice Of Reason, and The Confluence Collective. It was a wonderful western Colorado spring day, and hundreds attended.

The day began with a local band, The Piper, playing rock music as people filed into Lincoln Park.

Across a large grassy lawn, 2,323 small white crosses—one for each American casualty—had been



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Friday, April 21, 2006

Pre-Earth Day Float on the Colorado

For more info contact Andy:

256-7650

Saturday, April 8, 2006 • 8AM-4:00PM

“Love your Mother” Earth Day Celebration

Sponsored by Grand Valley Earth Day Coalition and the Confluence Collective.

Western Colorado Botanical Gardens 641 Struthers Ave.

For more info contact Eric: 245-3720

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE IN ESPANOL

Something historic took place on Monday April 10th, 2006, when over 4000 people marched and rallied for humane immigration reform. As the Free Press reported, Monday’s march was the largest gathering of people in Grand Junction’s 126-year history; political or otherwise. More people turned out on Monday than attended Cheney’s campaign rally at Walkerfield in 2004, and more than the 2000 people who showed up at the first ‘Support Your Troops’ rally back when the war was popular. There is some debate to the number of people who attended, organizers estimated 4000+ people in attendance, while Grand Junction Police Department Sergeant Scott Stoneburner put the number at 3100 people. It was hard to get accurate count because the march was limited to the sidewalk and stretched from Sherwood Park to Lincoln Park, and it lasted for almost 2 hours according to Stoneburner.

Originally, the group who organized the march, Justice for Immigrants, requested a permit to march in the street, but the city and the police denied the permit despite the fact that the march route is an official parade route. Phone conversations continued with the police and the city until Monday morning. “It went well...considering we moved 3100 people down North Avenue during mid-day traffic in an hour and forty-five minutes,” Stoneburner said. “We could of done better, you guys[the organizers] did great.”

Both regionally and nationally, protests and marches drew record numbers of people to the streets. A 50,000 person march in Salt Lake City was Utah’s largest political protest ever. Millions of immigrants both legal and illegal flexed a new-found political muscle. At the march in Grand Junction, the crowd

spoke of the upcoming general strike and boycott on May 1st. In what some organizers are calling “A Day Without a Mexican,” immigrants will show this country what immigrants contribute to the society on May 1st by not participating.

To many Grand Valley residents, the strength and size of the march was surprising. It was a surprise to the organizers as well, who began meeting at the Riverside Taskforce only one month prior to the march. Jesus Seda along with 25 others were at the first meeting. “We were thinking 500-1000 people, not 4000,” Seda said. Seda credited the large numbers to a word of mouth campaign. “We sent it out to the Churches and pulled together and spread the word. We didn’t have much help from the mainstream media until the very end,” Seda said. Seda also said that his group was organizing in the communities of Delta, Montrose, Olatha, Hotchkiss, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, and elsewhere. Seda said that families from as far away as Utah and New Mexico made the long drive to march in Grand Junction.

Children were kept home from school to attend the march, and many local businesses shut their doors so employees could attend, other places let their Hispanic workers off early to attend the march. Some of the local businesses that shut down for the march include: La Bamba, Los Jilbertos, Shiner’s Car Wash, G & G Paving, El Tapitio, and many other construction companies. Even the busy North Avenue McDonalds covered their Hispanic workers’ shifts so they could attend.

The sea of American flags and white shirts was a vibrant, joyful and peaceful response to the violence of criminalization, a 700 mile wall, and mass round-ups. •

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painstakingly laid out. Each one listed the soldier’s name, age, hometown, and had a small photo of them. The emotional impact was devastating. It is painful to envision a similar display representing the 100,000+ dead Iraqis.

The first guest speaker was Rafe Naboa, an Iraq War Vet from Colorado Springs, and a member of “Iraq Vets Against The War.” Naboa waxed eloquently about his experiences “in country”, and spoke with authority about the groundtruth for our soldiers over there. In an exclusive interview with the Red Pill, Naboa fleshed out the details of his service. “At nighttime, I was a forward observer for

artillery, coordinating artillery strikes,” Naboa explained. “In the daytime, I was out in the community arranging civil affairs projects for the Iraqi people.” His biggest surprise came in his dealings with the armed group “M.U.K.,” which was led exclusively by women. “They were like Muslim Amazon War Women from Kirkuk.”

A powerful moment came when local resident, Sid Siddeek, read aloud a prayer for peace from the Koran, in Arabic. In 1962, Siddeek was arrested in his hometown of Mosul, Iraq, for illegally possessing the famous book “1984.” He was tortured and kept in solitary confinement for six months at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison before

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Monday, May 1, 2006 • 7:00pm

MSC Grand Junction Alternative Media will be screening Michael Franti’s new film

“I Know I’m Not Alone.”

At the Saccomanno Lecture Hall, Science Building MSC.

Tuesday, May 2, 2006 • 7:00pm

MSC Grand Junction Alternative Media’s Documentaries for Change Film Series will be screening the Vietnam Era classic “In the Year of the Pig.”

At the Saccomanno Lecture Hall, Science Building MSC.