



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

FOUNDED IN 1915 / First President: JANE ADDAMS

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Grace Aaron, Treasurer
Louise Katz Sullivan, Membership Chair

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Florence Johnson, Corresponding Secretary

May 2006

WILPF LOS ANGELES BRANCH MEETING

presents

Judy Alter, Ed.D.

Author and Researcher

speaking on

Do Our Votes Count? Problems and Solutions

In addition to answering the above question, Judy will discuss Diebold in Los Angeles County, Parallel Elections, Citizens' Petition for Hand-Counted Paper Ballots at the Precincts, and the Voters' Confidence Resolution.

Saturday, May 20th ♦ 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

SANTA MONICA PLACE COMMUNITY ROOM (3rd Floor)

Between 2nd & 4th Streets/Broadway & Colorado

(Enter parking on Broadway or 4th Street — parking sections 4h & 4j are nearest to Community Room)

EVENT & PARKING ARE FREE ♦ EVERYBODY WELCOME — BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Founded in 1915, WILPF is the oldest and largest international women's peace and justice organization. WILPF works to achieve through peaceful means: world disarmament, full rights for women, racial and economic justice, an end to all forms of violence; and to establish those political, social and psychological conditions which can assure peace, freedom, and justice for all.

Calendar

PROTEST FOR PEACE

AT VANDENBERG SPACE COMMAND

Saturday, May 20th ♦ 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. ♦ Front Gate at Vandenberg Air Force Base,
at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and Casamila-Lompoc Road
(6 miles north of Lompoc in Santa Barbara County)

Join Medea Benjamin of Code Pink, Bill Mitchell of Gold Star Families for Peace, and
Que Keju from the Marshall Islands to protest global domination from space.

Sponsored by Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space and WILPF.

For parking and carpooling information, contact www.vpeaceidf.org.

For more information about the protest, contact MacGregor Eddy at (831) 206-5043

President George W. Bush The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1111(speak to machine) (202) 456-1414 (speak to person) Fax (202) 456-2461
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Senator Barbara Boxer 112 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3553 Fax (202) 228-0026 Local (213) 894-5000 E-mail: senator@boxer.senate.gov

Senator Dianne Feinstein 331 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3841 Fax (202) 228-3954 Local (310) 914-7300 E-mail: senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Write to Representatives: Rep. _____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

CAPITOL SWITCHBOARD: (202) 224-3121

This number will connect you with all Representatives and Senators

Scanned Paper Ballots are NOT Hand Counted Paper Ballots

by **Judy Alter**

Don't be fooled by the mistaken idea that paper ballots (known as optical scan or opti-scan ballots) counted on SCANNERS are the same as paper ballots that human beings count using their hands, eyes, and minds.

Secure, accurate, and transparent elections in democracies require three steps:

- voters hand-mark their ballot in private: the "secret" ballot;
- voters cast (put) their ballots into the ballot box in public;
- responsible election officials or poll workers count the ballots in public.

Only MARKING a ballot is done in secret; CASTING and COUNTING are done in PUBLIC.

When voters mark ballots with a pen, as we do here in Los Angeles County (Inka-vote on opti-scan cards), these ballots are cast into a ballot box at the polls and sent to County Election Headquarters to be counted on SCANNERS. Absentee ballots are mailed to County Election Headquarters to be counted on SCANNERS.

Many people use scanners in their homes and offices, and know that scanners produce their images on computers to which the scanners are connected. When operating scanners, people see that scanners make exact copies of the documents scanned into them. People, therefore, have

Scanned Paper Ballots continued on page 3

International Women's Peace Conference **“Voices for Peace, Ecology, Dignity, and Life”** **Havana, Cuba — November 22-26, 2006**

We know “another world is possible.” Yet our vision of this new world is too often obscured by the oppression, injustice and violence of what passes for the “real world.”

WILPF, the only international women's peace organization, has been working for more than 90 years to ensure that peace becomes a reality for the peoples of the world, through international solidarity in defiance of the call to war and other forms of violence and injustice. We invite people the world over to share and celebrate the struggles and successes of women from many countries and backgrounds whose work gives us hope for the future. Please come to WILPF's International Women's Peace Conference in November 2006 to join our actions and our voices for a better world. As our conference motto says: “Voices for peace, ecology, dignity and life.”

This conference is a project of International WILPF, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. All of the 35 national WILPF sections joined in launching this conference at the International Congress of WILPF in Sweden, August 2004.

The focus of the conference is to celebrate the successes of women providing for their families and communities. More and more civilians are killed or displaced by violent conflicts, resulting in poverty, environmental degradation and loss of livelihood. Disarmament and demilitarization are pre-requisites for abolishing poverty, meeting everyone's basic needs, establishing a fair and sustainable economic system, and creating a culture of ‘enough’ as an integral part of the culture of peace we strive towards.

The *International Women's Peace Conference: Voices for Peace, Ecology, Dignity, and Life* will be held in Havana, Cuba, where impressive advances in improving the quality of life of its citizens have been made — in the face of tremendous odds. Examples of such women's initiatives, from Cuba and many other countries and cultures, will make this conference like no other. It will enrich our palette with the colors of all these diverse, grassroots initiatives, allowing us to paint into reality the other world we know is possible.

Understanding that meeting human needs is essential for building peace, our specific objectives include the

following:

- Celebrate and share the successful peace initiatives of women around the world who are improving everyday life and future perspectives for individuals and communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Examine case histories, best practices, and lessons learned from both successes and failures.
- Create a program of action to build an alternative world order in which women achieve a better world. Identify the tools currently available to actualize this vision, including international legal instruments, treaty bodies, and local organizing tactics.
- Identify the specific obstacles and challenges that are currently preventing a permanent peace and the development of inclusive frameworks for a dignified and fulfilling life. Develop new tools to overcome these obstacles to a better world.

For more information on the conference, contact WILPF International: voices@wilpf.ch.



WILPF-U.S. believes that all of us have the right to travel to Cuba and should be able to exercise this right freely. This would enable us, for example, to attend conferences like this WILPF International gathering in Cuba, just as we sent a delegation of 60 members to the 2004 International Congress in Sweden. However, those of us from the U.S. who plan to participate in this global gathering for peace will need to undertake personal research and decision-making about the process of attending and the possible consequences. WILPF-U.S. no longer has a license to offer members for research travel to Cuba, as we did in 2000-2003. Our last request for license renewal was never granted.

For information on the current legal restrictions on free travel, we recommend consulting the following websites: www.lawg.org, www.globalexchange.org, www.ffrd.org, www.marazul.com. The full text of the regulations can be read and downloaded at www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/.

Cuba Conference continued on page 4

In reality, it is not hard to travel to Cuba — the blockade shuts out the U.S. but lets in all the rest of the world. U.S. citizens engaging in travel to Cuba without a license need to be prepared to join the community of U.S.-Cuba travelers who support each other and provide legal assistance to withstand pressure and threats of significant fines from the Treasury Department (Office of Foreign Assets Control).

The Bush administration has eliminated almost all licensed options for travel to Cuba, even cutting out the majority of family visits from Cuban-Americans.

Write to Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein and your Representative to demand that Congress lift these restrictions on freedom to travel immediately!

Scanned Paper Ballots continued from page 2

proof that the scanners work properly. Users also know that both computers and scanners need software to operate. After purchasing and installing the necessary scanner software, users can test to see if the software works properly.

In contrast to commercially bought and sold scanners, the scanners that count our paper ballots use SECRET/PROPRIETARY software that elected officials cannot examine. Voters, therefore, do not know whether or not the software works as it should work, to count votes accurately.

Precinct scanners, used by some counties, print out a tally at the end of Election Day. The internal tally uses SECRET/PROPRIETARY software. The totals are also recorded on a “smart card” or memory pack that uses SECRET/PROPRIETARY software that transfers the totals to a computer. Then the computer, using SECRET/PROPRIETARY software, transfers the precinct totals or absentee totals to the central tabulator that also uses SECRET/PROPRIETARY software.

Much controversy swirls around electronic voting machines, such as touch-screen or push-button (direct recording electronic) machines, known as DREs. Voters operate DREs in the same way as a bank ATM (automated teller machine). Because of the controversies about inaccurate totals, vote shifting, and insecurity, some state legislatures are now banning the use of DREs for voting, but are proudly switching to scanners. Just like DREs, however, scanners count our ballots in SECRET — not in public. Central tabulators tabulate the precinct scanner tallies in SECRET not in public. This computerized secret counting is not transparent and is not democratic. Voters have no way of knowing how ACCURATE or SECURE the election results are because the vote counting of optical scan (paper) ballots is not public.

Computer experts, hired and paid by the vendors such as Diebold, ES&S, Sequoia, and Hart Intercivic, test the software. The computer experts must sign non-disclosure agreements. These experts, therefore, are not allowed to disclose to the public whatever problems they find.

Imagine the public tolerating secret testing for other consumer products such as cars or space heaters!

State election officials hire inspectors to test how well the scanners perform: do they count ballots accurately? BUT, these election officials cannot guarantee that the software they test is the same software that is used on Election Day.

The U. S. Government Accountability Office found electronic voting machinery, including scanners, to be unreliable, insecure, and easily hacked (October 2005).

A paper ballot that is hand-counted by human beings is a hand counted paper ballot. An optical scan hand-marked paper ballot that is counted by a scanner using secret/proprietary software is, indeed, a paper ballot — but it is not a hand counted paper ballot.

Any ballot, even if it is on paper, that is not publicly counted, is an undemocratic secretly counted ballot; voters have NO idea how accurately their ballot is counted.

In contrast to DREs that provide no paper ballot, voters think that having the paper ballots counted on scanners will enable them to recount the ballots if any questions arise about the election outcome. True, scanned paper ballots make recounts a possibility. But election officials charge thousand of (excess) dollars and make honest recounts of optical scan ballots very difficult. Remember Ohio in 2004 and Florida in 2000?

When the public sees or hears the words “paper ballots,” they assume these paper ballots are hand counted — but they are not. These paper ballots are counted on scanners with SECRET/PROPRIETARY software.

We need to un-privatize and un-computerize our elections. Scanners use the same software as the computerized touch-screen or push-button electronic voting machines. Don't be fooled by the mistaken idea that opti-scan cards counted on scanners are the same as paper ballots that human beings count using their eyes, hands, and minds.