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Anti-War Week Marks War Anniversary

By Will Harrison
STAFF WRITER

Students Towards a New Democracy held numerous events and decorated campus for Haverford Anti-War Week. They invited speaker David Gibson from Coalition for Peace Action, adorned classroom boards with phrases and facts pertaining to the war, and chalked outlines of dead people and slogans in front of campus buildings. Anti-War Week was held on the four-year anniversary of the Iraqi War.

STAND sought to empower students and increase dialogue and awareness about the war. "A lot of people are being told that their voices don't matter," STAND member Rob Korobkin said. "You do deserve an outlet for your voice and we provided the paper and pen."

Korobkin was the lead organizer of Haverford Anti-War Week.

The major on-campus events, the die-in and the teach-in, occurred last Tuesday. At the die-in, 21 STAND and community members pretended to die by lying on the bricks in front of Founders Hall. Participants wanted to show solidarity with those who have lost their lives in the war.

Ashley Brichter '10 first suggested the idea of a die-in. "I think what [the die-in] does is really ignite dialogue, because it is something radical, but it's not violent, and it doesn't antagonize people," she said.

Brichter participated in a die-in at her high school at the beginning of the war.

When Edwin Starr's song "War" (What is it good for? Absolutely nothin'!) played on the speakers, all of the die-in participants arose from the dead.

Students then spray painted t-shirts with slogans such as "make babies, not war," listened to music and made additional chalk drawings. Student Activities Coordinator Jason McGraw designed a T-shirt and President Thomas R. Tritton and Dean of Student Life Steve Watter made appearances.

"One thing I'm proud of was that a lot of people stepped up," Korobkin said. "Andrew [Hartz '08] is really up on current events, and he was able to write something, he was able to do something he was good. Mica Baum-Tuccillo '09 is a great artist and she was able to do her thing."

The reaction from students and community members was mixed. "I thought it was all very poorly advertised," Rebecca Morgan '10 said. "[The die-in] seems a little gratuitous, it's superfluous to the point they are trying to make."




Other students were frustrated by the die-in as well. "It felt really good to see that there is in fact an activist presence that put up those signs," said a freshman who wished to remain anonymous, "but at the same time, I thought the die-in was kind of self indulgent, because people know that people are dying in Iraq, the fact that you're on Founders Green listening to music with your friends isn't really doing anything."

Assistant Registrar Donna Ferguson was surprised at the emphasis on oil and the angry tone of STAND's literature.

"We were plastered with little pinups in Chase...I didn't realize they were doing any events to mark the anniversary...I was concerned that everyone thought [the Iraq War] was an oil based thing," Ferguson said.

The die-in was followed by a speaker in the Dining Center Sunken Lounge. Coalition for Peace Action member David Gibson has been a peace activist for over three decades, working on issues such as halting nuclear proliferation.

Gibson was accompanied by colleague David Lamb, who had previously worked for the United Nations.

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The two spoke to a group of over 20 students about their work as peace activists, their view of the Iraqi War and the peace movement in general. The talk lasted for an hour.

Gibson spoke of the need for patience in the anti-war movement. He noted that the largest protests in world history occurred in response to the current Iraq War. He also said that activism was proceeding at a much faster pace then during the Vietnam War.

Lamb told the audience that the United Nations and its members have already announced their intention to assist in Iraq once the US military presence had left. Lamb also stated that the majority of Iraqis want the US military to leave the country, but admitted that the current government would "certainly fall."

Both speakers mentioned on a number of occasions a connection between the Iraqi War and oil.

One sophomore who wished to remain anonymous said that Lamb was more straightforward with the information he discussed and wished that Gibson had "stuck more to facts...rather than a sensational method of delivery."

Although a number of students attended both events, other members of the community were unaware of the proceedings. In an interview with The Bi-College News, Dean of the College Greg Kannerstein '63 said, "I'm not sure [the anti-war week] made a great impact on the community. At the level of the faculty and staff, it's not having a huge effect."

Provost David Dawson concurred with Kannerstein. He said that the activities "didn't rise to a level of prominence."

However, members of STAND said that they did not wish to alienate community members. "[If] anything... would have [risen to the level] that [Dawson and Kannerstein] are talking about, they would have been mad at [STAND], so we found a happy balance," Brichter said.

Ultimately, Korobkin believes that anti-war activism does not have to be somber. "I had people come up to me and say 'I'm having a good time, I don't know how I feel about that, isn't that bad?'" he said. "But the peace movement is about life and having fun."

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