

The Almanian.

ALMA COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 108
ALMA, MICHIGAN

Volume CLXXVI

Number 5

Alma College, Alma, Michigan, 48801

Wednesday, April 28, 1971

Alma Delegation Numbers over 75

STUDENTS MARCH ON WASHINGTON



(Photo by Kay Consolatti)

By Kay Consolatti

After twelve hours of riding, sleeping, singing, laughing, and rapping, over forty-one Alma College students arrived on the University of Maryland campus and moved into Damascus Hall—our condemned home for the weekend! We were greeted and made comfortable by University of Maryland students and reunited with other Alma students who had arrived earlier.

The mood for the entire weekend had been established as we neared Maryland, as the stream of cars heading for D.C. began to thicken, and the familiar signs of peace and power gained prominence. This excitement and anticipation grew even more the next morning, as Alma College students boarded a special reserved bus and rode to D.C. and the rally.

Surrounded by pink, white, and purple blossoms, throngs of youth and older people lined up along Pennsylvania Avenue, so many in fact, that the march started an hour earlier than scheduled. We took our place among the estimated 250,000-500,000 demonstrators, chanting "Peace, Now", clapping and yelling, giving the peace sign to T.V. cameras, sharing food and drink with neighbors and marching—marching alongside the grotesque and wicked looking caricatures, the flags and signs declaring "Enough—Out Now" and "End the Draft." Old people freaks, G.I. veterans, Chicago businessmen, members of Women's Liberation—all marched through D.C. and swarmed over the Capitol grounds, sitting on the lawn, climbing trees, lampposts, and statues.

The forty-seven speakers all had their say, denouncing the government and demanding "immediate and total withdrawal from Vietnam", for forty-seven different reasons.

Mrs. Martin Luther King, Angela Davis' mother, a former veteran of Vietnam, the mother of a P.O.W., and members of the Chicago Seven were among those that spoke.

A ring of policemen surrounded the Capitol and the march route, just in case—but there were no incidents. The tired demonstrators were besieged by pamphleteers, solicitors for contributions, food vendors, and button sellers. Self-appointed, individual clean up crews took the initiative of restoring the grounds from the debris of paper and garbage, but the wind proved too strong an opposition.

The sunburnt and thirsty crowd listened to the speeches, some slept, others talked, many finally left. But they reconverged later that night around the Washington Monument, to listen to music, smoke, share food, drink, and company, in tents, blankets, sleeping bags, vans and cars.

They roamed the streets of D.C. and one observing black man asked— "Where are all these kids going to sleep? Will you tell me that!"

What remained of the afternoon march—the feeling—was reflected in the concern of each person for the other. "Do you have a place to stay tonight?" was a familiar greeting, or "ask any policeman for directions, they're great tonight. They're really beautiful. Good luck."

The feeling—it remains.

We Almost Did It

By Robert J. Vandenbos

Although the Constitution of the United States guarantees all citizens the right to petition their government, I must confess that up to this time I had exercised that right very little. Feeling that the continuation of the Vietnam War is both unjust and unnecessary, I wanted to express my views more explicitly to my government than what could be done through marching alone. With this goal in mind, I departed with three other Alma students-- Paul Silver, Mark Carroll, and Tom Brennan-- last Wednesday night, and headed for the nation's capitol.

Appointments with Michigan Congressmen and Senators, as well as some administrative officials, had been previously arranged for Thursday and Friday, April 22 and 23. Topping the list of people we were to talk with was Henry Kissinger, the President's chief advisor on foreign policy. This appointment was for 4:30 p.m. Thursday, and stood confirmed when we departed for Washington one day prior to the conference. There was a great deal of apprehension about how to approach a person of Mr. Kissinger's status. A large amount of study was done in preparation for the meeting, in hopes to be able to converse knowledgeably (at least) with this expert in foreign policy. I was also a little bit nervous that the meeting was to occur in Mr. Kissinger's office in the White House, which is located only two doors away from the Oval Office of President Nixon.

After driving all night long, we arrived in Washington at 6:00 a.m. Having nothing better to do, we sacked out on the couches of the University of Maryland student union until about 8:00 a.m., at which time the student government office opened and we found out where we were to stay for the next three nights.

(Cont'd on Page 3)

ENOUGH!

OUT NOW



APRIL 24, 1971



Where Is Alma's Conscience?

by Paul VanValkenburg

The March is over and 75 students have returned safely to Alma College, to their friends and studies. But, the Spring Peace Offensive and the Southeast Asian War is still going on.

There were hundreds of thousands of people in Washington with one message, PEACE NOW. I wonder if those people just shouted it to an empty building. The question that is unanswered in my mind is "are mass marches effective? Will the American people be moved enough to demand that their government withdraw all its military personnel from Southeast Asia?" Over seventy percent of the American people want an immediate end to the War, but the President and Congress refuse to bring it to an end. However, they do get prime time to pacify the people.

The most effective part of the Spring Offensive is the action of the G.I.'s and Veterans. They realize what the United States military has done to Vietnam. We have committed genocide and incurred an ecological catastrophe on Vietnam. They know it is wrong. Many have been there and their conscience will not allow them to sit by and let the war continue. They did not go to Washington for one day; they went for one to three weeks. They are not just marching, but also seeing Congressmen and Senators, and in some cases being arrested. When will the American people and Alma College reach this level of conscienceness?

During the next two weeks the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice will be participating in a number of activities leading to the presentation of the People's Peace Treaty to the Senate. If they refuse to ratify it and stop the War, the Coalition will stop the government. In their minds other methods of protest have failed. Something more forceful must be done. What method will make an impression on our government?

The next nationwide activity will be a Moratorium on Business as Usual, scheduled for Wednesday, May 5. This will be a war protest and a commemoration of Kent State and Jackson State. It would be fitting for those opposed to the War to not go to classes and plan some activities for the campus and community that day. Perhaps we could even present a resolution calling for the end of the War to Alma's City Council! Congressman Cederberg from this district is one of Nixon's puppets. Does he really represent the people of this area? Do the people know what he is doing?

Let it be known that the American people and the Vietnamese people are not enemies, that the War is being carried out in their name but they do not support it. But, let it also be known that the American people continue to pay income taxes and telephone excise taxes that support the War and that they continue to buy War Bonds, now called Freedom Shares that support the War, and that they buy the products of companies who have made millions of dollars from the destruction of the people and land of Vietnam, and that the young men of the country continue to let themselves be drafted to fight in the War. Where is your conscience America, Alma included.



"Do the American People Only Have Power Once Every Four Years"

by Dally Sachs

Seventeen months ago I marched in Washington with 200,000 other people asking for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam. Five days ago I was in Washington again, this time with a few more people, but still with the same demand. The character of the April 24 march had to be different and it was.

In November, 1969 there was a feeling that the march would convince the government that the war had to end. Last Saturday many of the people marching knew their influence on government policies would be minimal, but they went to Washington anyway. Maybe it was far out to see 100,000 people smoking dope on the lawn of the Capitol, perhaps the speakers and literature really had something to say, and it was good to hear Country Joe again, but perhaps most importantly the march provided a rallying point for the Movement; the Movement to end oppression by the U.S. which has pervaded the country for the last seven years. The people had a chance to be with each other, to find out what was happening; it was an individual thing, but it was also everyone's thing.

The majority of the American people want the U.S. forces out of Vietnam, and they want them out now. Luckily they won't have long to wait. Soon the presidential election will be here, and by then Nixon, in order to insure his reelection, will have announced the date for withdrawal of all

ground troops. But is this enough? What about the U.S. advisors and the air support which will stay in Southeast Asia, and our other troops everywhere in the world? Do the American people only have power once every four years? Watch what happens in Washington during the next two weeks.

If you are concerned, join with others across the country in a nationwide strike on May 5; spend your day examining the manifestations of U.S. oppression both at home and abroad, and how you can effectively work against it. Attempt to find some power in the people.



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Photos by Kay Consolatti

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Washington March: Picnic or Protest?

by Katie Kerr

Last May five students from Alma College went to Washington to voice their dissent with President Nixon's Cambodia venture and Kent State.

This past weekend, April 24, 10 and 20 times that original 5 went to Washington. Unfortunately, so many of the people at Washington seemed to think it was a picnic, a holiday, a good time. And that's all it was for most. Nobody, except for those who worked to organize the march, committed themselves.

Too many people went to Washington, not from a deep personal belief, but because their friends were going or because everybody else is climbing on the bandwagon. From last May's experience a few com-

parisons were evident. For a start, April 24's theme did not hold the unity of the crowd. Enthusiasm while walking through the streets was dull. Shoutings were minimal with few participating. As for Saturday night, the main objective of the crowd was to find some good dope, cold beer, a fine girl, and some good music. Matters could have changed some if a few persons had not tried to deliberately push dope.

Why in the hell did all of us go to Washington if it was not to show our disapproval of Nixon's policies and to show our dissent? Do you really think OUR objectives were met? Do you really blame Nixon for not being in Washington for the big party?

Vandenbos (cont'd)

In accordance with the wishes of the government officials we were to see, we began telephoning for final confirmations on appointments.

The first call went to the State Department, where we had been hoping to see Marshall Green, the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. "Yes, we have your appointment set up for 1:00 p.m. You will be speaking with Mr. Kirk, who is the assistant to Ambassador Sullivan, who is the assistant to Marshall Green," came the reply. "Not bad," I thought, "we've got a golden opportunity to speak with the assistant to the assistant to the assistant."

After this event, I was a little hesitant to call Mr. Kissinger's office, for fear of a similar response. This fear soon proved to be all too well founded. I reached Mr. Kissinger's appointment secretary, who began what sounded like an often used speech: "Mr. VandenBos, Mr. Kissinger has instructed me to tell you that he is very sorry that he will be unable to meet with you. He has been called out of town on official business. Mr. Winston Lord of Mr. Kissinger's staff will be happy to substitute for Mr. Kissinger at the scheduled time if you so desire." Who in the hell is Winston Lord, I thought to myself. But I replied cordially that we would certainly enjoy talking with him. A few other appointments were confirmed without much difficulty.

At 1:00 we were escorted up to an office in the Department of State, and introduced to Mr. Kirk. Acting as spokesman for the group, I briefly explained where we were from and outlined the ideas the Alma student body had approved in the resolution "Proposals for Peace". Mr. Kirk, then responded to each point in turn, reiterating almost exactly the standard Administration position on Vietnam. He felt the U.S. could not set a date of withdrawal without jeopardizing the incentive for a negotiated settlement. Should the pullout be immediate, and the South collapse as a result, he stated that the U.S. would incur a reputation of deserting its friends. The ramifications of such a reputation would be immense. When questioned about the possibility of the South collapsing after the completion of Vietnamization, Mr. Kirk felt such an occurrence would not adversely affect the U.S. in the eyes of the world. Personally, I felt that after 9 years in Vietnam, we had more than honored our commitment to aid South Vietnam. I can not see that staying another year will significantly alter our position in world opinion.

After undergoing a close security check, our appointment with Mr. Kissinger's assistant was held in the Situation Room at the White House. I was surprised that Mr. Lord was so young, and estimated him to be around age 30. We had a very frank discussion for about 1 1/2 hours. As to be expected, Mr. Lord was also a believer in the hard line foreign policy of Mr. Nixon. Although I felt the discussion to be beneficial, I sincerely doubt if any beliefs on either side were changed. Certainly, a person should not be expected to alter his views drastically after one discussion. But it is rather discouraging to feel that you had little or no effect. But I am hopeful that as a part of a continuing expression of opinion, some effect will be realized. A vast out pouring of opinion will eventually have an effect. Such a large outpouring must necessarily be composed of minute and individual parts, whether they are letters, telegrams, petitions, or discussions.

Another conference worthy of mention was with Congressman Gerald Ford. This meeting occurred Friday, in the Minority Leader's office in the Capitol Building. Mr. Ford left me with the impression of a pure politician, more so than anyone in the conversation. Mr. Ford responded to a question, leaning forward in his seat as if taking us into his confidence and saying, "Boys, (he always called us 'boys' or 'fellows') let me tell you something. We are ending the war. In fact, this war is nearly over!" He emphasized this final statement raising his voice and striking his desk with his hand. Inwardly, I reflected that I had heard the same statements as early as 1965. As we were leaving, Mr. Ford remarked that he had two sons who were our age, and that they didn't always agree with him either.

Everything he did seemed geared to establishing himself as our friendly and concerned representative in Washington. Was this trip worth it? I am firmly convinced that it was. After talking with people you are used to reading about, your image of them is more realistic. Government is reduced from a nebulous entity to a more concrete process.


"We have stayed too long in Vietnam and bled too much. The time to get out is now."

Senator Vance Hartke - April 24, 1971 Washington D.C.

Participants Give Thoughts on March

by Terry Lee

**END
THE
DRAFT**



Some 250,000 to 500,000 strong they came to Washington D.C., our nation's Capitol. With one common voice they called out for ~~peace~~ **NOW-peace** that would end the frustrating ten-year Vietnam war. Their outcry was echoed up Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House to the steps of our domed Capitol; indeed the whole city reverberated with the peace plea. America had sent her people to one of the largest demonstrations ever witnessed in D.C.

And Alma sent her marchers, too. They trooped there by busload and by private car. Arriving in the district April 24, the Alma contingent merged with the masses to chant for the peace they and the others so desired.

The march affected our capitol, our nation. Those who participated felt it in different ways. Alma's crusaders were no different. In a broad gamut of quotes and statements, here are some of the expressed opinions of those who went.

"What can I say! It was truly one of the greatest things I've ever witnessed. I hope it has some effect. Oh, and I really was impressed with the representatives from various spots throughout Michigan."

"In relation to last year, there was a completely different undertone. Last year the march took place after Cambodia and the kids were upset. They went with the idea of a violent confrontation. This year they were still against the war, but it was freer, more fun."

"Impressive, especially the number of people who took all the time and expense. I don't think it did much good in relation to Nixon and the majority of Congress."

"Right on! Power to the people. I think it was worth it, I wish we could've stayed longer. I was impressed by the number of people and the fact there was no violence."

"It was larger than I expected. I think it surprised alot of people. This proves the student movement is not dead. I think it'll have little effect however."

"The march was fantastic. The speeches subsequent to the march were somewhat of a letdown though. It was more of a "feeling" thing."

"It was a rather quiet and solemn demonstration. The people weren't really super-active. It was a moderate-left gathering."

"I would like those who stayed in Damascus Hall to know I was disgusted with the trash they left, especially the food. The march was great. The organization involved was fantastic. Every type of facility needed was provided."

"I guess I could say in a way I was surprised. I had been prepared for the worst. The people were restless with the nice weather, but the general feeling was to

keep it peaceful. The only trouble I knew of was with a small Nazi group."

"I dug it!"
"It didn't seem like it was really serious. Too much dope and drinking. It seemed like a big picnic."

"Stress the wide variety of people-of all ages. The size was impressive. There were all types-youth against war, facists, communists, gay libbers, women's committees and unions. I saw UAW."

"I was really impressed by the organization for us; I was glad I went. It was worthwhile in that it was an expression of how people felt about the draft and the war. I was amazed at the amount of people who kept it non-violent."

"I had a good time. I wish there was more unity. The number accomplished something. I really was astounded by the GI's and union people. May 5, I hope, will be more effective."

These are only statements from a few people out of the large Alma crowd that went. But this small cross-section is probably representative of the thoughts of all. It might be repetitious to ask each individual his version. Let it suffice to say that April 24, Washington D.C., bears an indelible mark on many memories.

Keep Truckin' Boys

by Chuck Cook

With a "forward ho" and a "leave us not be bussed" our modern day covered wagon departed from Albion at 1:30 p.m. Friday for Washington. You see, fifty Albion College students and I drove two U-Haul like Ryder trucks to the week-end march. Little did we suspect that D.C. lay 17 hours away!

Albion students surrendered their mattresses to form a huge bed in the back end of the trucks. This type of arrangement was, of course, much more conducive to student interaction than a bus would provide and people reacted accordingly (?).

Our trip was a real gas, literally, as we had to stop every 100 miles for gas. Also, we were stopped twice in Ohio both going and coming back by duty bound, curiosity seeking state troopers.

While in D.C. I was impressed (depressed is better) by the week-end away from home attitude of many people. Particularly dismaying were the many young people present who had visions of Goose Lake and Woodstock frolics in their minds-visions assuredly realized at the Saturday night concert.

However, I felt the march was very significant in the fact that so many thousands of people could come together peacefully. The fantastic meaning was there, if only it is not lost. To give you an idea of the numbers of people marching we arrived at the Capitol lawn at 10:50 and fought our way through the thousands of people already there to the Capitol steps. When we left the Capitol area at 2:30 and retraced our steps back down Pennsylvania Avenue, the street was still jammed with marchers on their way to the Capitol. Incredible!

Further observations: 1)minority group representation was slight at the march; 2)it was very ironic to say the least to see the Alma College crew sitting less than 20 feet away from me on the Capitol lawn, considering the throngs of people present; 3)sleeping in a church basement with freaks from who knows where needing a place to crash is an okay experience; 4)racing along the up and down Pennsylvania turnpike in a rocking truck with twenty-five people is far out; 5)I hope never again to see as many blue uniforms in one place as there were on the corners of D.C. streets; and 6)it is amazing to see a shell gas station attendant pump 21 gallons of gas into your truck's 20 gallon capacity tank.

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