

Anchors Away!

Monthly Newsletter of the Save Senn Coalition Volume 2, Number 2 October 2006

The Senn H.S. Student Voice....

Luci Salinas, junior-- The military academy in Senn High School is an unfair thing being done to all of us. The government thinks they can do whatever they want without our consent. It is important to show them that we care. For the students who care on this issue, we will get there, though it will not be easy. If we stay dedicated and focused, we can accomplish our goal.

Schools should not be militarized, especially for younger kids. By fighting on this issue, we will be closer to demilitarizing the schools, and will be helping kids at other schools.

In Iraq, the war is not a necessary thing for the U.S. to be doing right now. The government should concern itself with other issues that are important, like helping with social problems and environmental issues.

Ashish Kafle, sophomore—The military academy should be removed from Senn H.S. It is disrupting the high school. For one thing, it is taking too many classrooms. And it is taking more of the building each year. People are angry about this.

For another thing, students don't want to be influenced by the military to give away their lives for military service. Education is not supposed to be like a military school.

The military academy should not have come into Senn High School without asking permission of the students. We want it removed.

Derrick Carter, senior-- I don't like that the military academy is taking more and more of the school. I'm cool with the teachers there, but they really need to get into their own building.

The military is dealing with a war that is messed up. The people are being asked to fight for Bush, but Bush is not giving good enough reasons for this war to want to go there.

B.M., junior— I wish we could get the whole school back. The military academy is really making the school more and more crowded here at Senn! For example, in 6th period lunch, they take up the whole place and there is no room for us to sit. I wish they would leave our building already!

On the military and the war, I think the war in Iraq is getting out of hand. What is the point of it? It's really sad, with what is happening to the soldiers, etc. I hear a lot about it on the news every day. I wish we could get them all home.

Nathaniel Okpoge, senior—The military academy in Senn is not a good thing. It is taking space from Senn. Senn is getting smaller each year, losing classes and space, so it's making people leave school.

I am also not happy about the war in Iraq because it is causing loss of life for nothing. I can't see the reason for the war. It is not working out.

Voices of Students meeting every Tuesday in room 307 after school.

Come and be active on the important issues that face students.

Rickover Naval Academy Cadets Ask Questions...

Some cadets came up to one of the *Anchors Away* distributors on September 12th and said that they were just trying to get a college prep education, and what was wrong with the military in our view. We encouraged them to write out their questions and views as a letter to the editor or article to *Anchors Away*, but they have not done so yet. Here are our answers to their questions--

There are many ways to get a good college prep education, including by going to Senn H.S.. Going into a military training program is not a good way, especially when the military is both (1) engaged in illegal and unjust wars, just as in Iraq, and

(2) when the military is trying very hard to convince young people to join in the active military for that purpose.

Military training in the U.S. is usually training to be part of a group that follows orders, does not think for itself. As Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to refuse deployment to Iraq, has said: "The American soldier must rise above the socialization that tells them authority should always be obeyed without question." He also said, "The military is an institution of fraternity and close-knit camaraderie. Peer pressure exists to ensure cohesiveness but it stamps out individualism and individual thought." (See his speech at couragetoresist.org)

A Report on The Town Hall Meeting On September 26th

The Town Hall Meeting (9/26) on the issue of the military academy at Senn High School, and the demand of the people that the Board of Education listen to the views of the overwhelming majority of students, faculty, parents, and community was quite lively and successful. Some 100 people turned out, including some representatives of the Board of Education and school administrators.

As you know, there has been an ongoing issue about the military academy that the government, through Mayor Daley and Alderman Mary Ann Smith, put into Senn High School over the objections of the majority of the community. The objections of the majority of the community were expressed in a referendum in the election last March, in which 4500 people, 70% of the voters, called upon the Board of Education to have a process of hearings about removing the military academy from Senn. Overwhelming objection had been expressed in a series of public meetings and demonstrations by students, faculty, and the community, including one thousand students in Hands-Around-Senn, but the Board of Education obviously had not listened.

At the 9/26 forum courageous teachers and students spoke up.

The discussion focused on four main points—(1) the importance of consideration of input by the Senn community, (2) the negative effects on Senn High School due to the Rickover Naval Academy, (3) the quality educational programs at Senn that need to be taken into account before restricting the growth of the school by the expansion of the military academy, and (4) the problem, as a matter of public policy, with having a military academy in a public community school such as Senn.

In the discussion, there was mainly opposition to the military academy at Senn. This included many exposures of Board of Education disinformation and excellent points of opposition to the Board contentions and arguments. For instance, the statement was made that there was a waiting list for military academies in the city, implying parental support for RNA, when the fact is that RNA has not even made its enrollment quota in its first two years. A second point involved a Board of Education statement that the school is not a recruiting ground for the military, when the fact is that generally speaking 40% of students in military programs are recruited into active military service.

The Senn Referendum Follow-up Group went to the Board of Education meeting the day after the forum to call for continuing the process of discussion, but received a chilly reception, to say the least, with the new president of the Board, a Daley appointee, Rufus Williams, saying there had been sufficient process.

This shows that the section of the town hall forum at the end was very important—a call for ideas on what actions to take from this point onward.

The struggle continues to address the issues of RNA at Senn. Concrete action steps were listed and will be addressed at the next meeting of the Senn Referendum Follow-up Group. We need your voice. Join us!

There will be a planning meeting of the Senn Referendum Follow-up Group on Tuesday, October 10 at 7 p.m. Please let us know if you are interested in being part of planning. For information, call 773.250.3225

On the Nature of Military Education and the Military

Col. Rick Mills, head of military programs in the Chicago Public Schools, talked at the Town Hall meeting about what is and isn't taught in the curriculum (for example, they claim not to teach students how to shoot guns, but to teach leadership and citizenship, etc..) However, this covers over the hidden curriculum of military schooling in Chicago—the curriculum of uniforms, marching, strict rules, chain of command, and uncritical acceptance of authority; the kind of history *not* taught; and the barrage of flags and other nationalistic symbols that adorn every square foot of the military academy's walls. This teaches students what doesn't need to explicitly be taught in the classroom: "THIS IS *THE* PATH." --from a Senn teacher

Here is a statement from Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia, one of the thousands of US military resisters to the illegal and unjust war in Iraq. He was imprisoned for his opposition to the Iraq war. "I was afraid of waking up one morning to realize my humanity had abandoned me...To those who have called me a coward I say that they are wrong and without knowing it they are also right. They are wrong when they think that I left the war for fear of being killed. I admit that fear was there, but there was also the fear of killing innocent people, the fear of putting myself in a position where to survive means to kill, there was a fear of losing my soul in the process of saving my body, the fear of losing myself to my daughter, to the people who love me, to the man I used to be, the man I wanted to be."

NOT YOUR SOLDIER CHICAGO COUNTER MILITARY-RECRUITMENT YOUTH TRAINING

Youth are invited to plan a campaign strategy for counter military-recruitment in Chicago.

Trainers are from the National Not Your Soldier Project from San Francisco and New York.

Friday, October 20, 5-10 p.m. and Saturday, October-21 from 10 a.m. -5 p.m.

Organized by American Friends Service Committee, 637 S. Dearborn.

Call 312-427-2533 or e-mail econafsc@igc.org for information or to register.
