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Anti-war protests dwindle in Lansing

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Anti-war protests dwindle in Lansing

By DANIEL STURM

"There's an awful lot of hate out there, especially on the pro-war side," said Jim Caras, a retired Michigan state tourism officer. "I had two of my anti-war yard signs vandalized."

Three weeks now into the war, the peace movement continues to struggle against the tide.

During an April 3 guest lecture at Michigan State University, former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker had just begun to speak about what he called his "views of a private citizen" when he was interrupted. In the audience of 400 people at the Wharton Center, a group of peace activists yelled "James Baker is a war criminal."

They interrupted Baker as he'd just begun to talk about how "to win peace" after the United States had defeated Hussein's troops. Baker proposed that the United States take over government for one year, and allow the United Nation a role reduced to relief work. After a one-year occupation, Iraqis would then probably be allowed to govern their own country, after making a "pledge not to build weapons of mass destruction."

On April 6, a peace vigil organized by the Greater Lansing Network Against War in Iraq drew 50 protesters out to the Grand River median, holding banners and carrying candles. Demonstrators criticized the role of the U.S. media in serving as propaganda tool for the American troops. Kathie Kuhn, a member of People for Positive Social Change at Lansing Community College, said that mainstream TV shows explosions over Baghdad but few of the people injured and none who've been killed by the bombings. "And what about the thousands of Iraqi people who'd been killed by sanctions, and by bombings in the last 12 years?"

Kuhn placed her peace sign under the arm of Cassiopeia, the sculpture of a contemplating young woman located in front of the Peanut Barrel on Grand River. She'd done the same action at an earlier peace vigil, Kuhn said, and a woman passing by took the anti-war sign and started yelling at Kuhn. "She hit me with the sign, and I had to fight really hard to get it back into Cassiopeia's arms." Snow flakes had been falling on the sculpture, melting beneath her eyes, she said, as if Cassiopeia was saddened by these very troubling times. According to Greek mythology, Cassiopeia was an Ethiopian princess, who angered Poseidon by saying that she was more beautiful than the Nereids. Poseidon sent a sea monster to prey upon the country.

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