

that's who has a house, so the losses are so wrenching.

We saw more children in the clinic today. I kept on handing out bottles of water with vitamin fizzy stuff in it to the kids especially, but also to parents.

The shock, the love, the camaraderie here at the clinic, the support of the pagan cluster, are all feeding me.

I used to "own" a home and land, run a private practice, have tons of stuff, debt up the wazoo, "security" etc. and it didn't bring me the sense of overall congruity and joy that this life is. ...

That's it for now... peace out.

» **Saturday 8 October 2005, 6:38 PM**

Today I went to the 7th Ward which is on the other side of the river where destruction was greatest. Ward 9 was the worst, I haven't been there yet. Today I helped staff a clinic under a highway overpass. The folks were receiving tetanus and hep A shots, food, and counseling from yours truly. We were seeing people who had either just gotten back to New Orleans and were on their way to see their house for the first time, or had just seen it. Most people had lost everything. We saw a number of families. I must have spoken with at least 25 or 30 people.

I also finally met Mama Di, one of the pillars of the community. She's a Rasta woman who, it turns out, knew my mother years ago during the times when the [Black] Panthers lived in our house in Connecticut. She told me that she heard the three levees being blown up after Katrina, and that she knew for a fact that the levy was blown in 1965. So, I hear a lot of stuff, but firsthand knowledge is pretty conclusive. We discussed the idea of me training community folks to lead peer support groups, and that this would begin to be feasible in a few weeks.

I am in the process of arranging to stay here longer than previously planned. I'm not sure how that'll work yet but I am working on it.

I listen all day to amazing stories and I try to remember them to share here, but there are so many and it's all so intense that I forget. Forgetting is healthy, too, because I can't carry all that around with me.

Right now I feel as if I'd had 10 cups of coffee. I haven't. Most of the clinic staff has gone to play

soccer with the folks from the collective house on Atlantic Ave., which will afford me time for a shower and time to do this writing.

Emotionally this is one of the most intense and fulfilling experiences I've ever had. I feel a lot, generally, but in this situation I am having to be pretty contained, which is good. I am not being too porous. ... I ground and release. I cry. I rant to the folks who are my support. I continue to be amazed at how clear it is that the people here have been literally sold down the river by the government. Really, there should be revolution in the streets of the US. ...

» **Sunday 9 October 2005, 10:50 PM**

Another day in Algiers, New Orleans. Today the clinic hosted a block party with food, clothes to give away, art stuff, barbecue, and socializing. People hanging out in this city which some say is dead and others say is coming back to life as the people return.

I counseled a few people, and then took the afternoon to enjoy the party, which did me a world of good. I feel about 1/3 full instead of 4/3 full now at the end of the day as I prepare for sleep. This is my third night sleeping in my tent in the back yard of a neighbor. I had been sleeping in the clinic, in the room where all the treatment happened; steeping in the energy of the clinic. I feel much better sleeping out here.

George W. Bush, the rotten fuck, will be in New Orleans tomorrow, continuing to support the removal of the poor (mostly black) folks so Donald Trump can build his new casino. Trump is also in town, I have heard. It's obscene. ... Think about it. One of the first things lawmakers in this state did was to change the law in favor of a rich casino owner. This, in the face of the destruction of people's lives, is just more evidence of the rotten core of the politicians, developers, and money worshippers. ...

I was talking with some other volunteers here tonight about what we'd like to have for dinner, a wonderful complete meal, and it hit me how privileged I am. I get to eat what I want if I go out and get it. My money and my white skin grant me access to pretty much anything. I was talking with a man from Texas who is here volunteering, a black man. I shared about the stories I was hearing and how awful that is. He, rightly so, said "Yeah well that's hard for you but every time I go into a store I am followed around. I wear this brown suit (his skin) for life." I asked him how he

deals with the pressure and he just laughed. High blood pressure is one of the major "illnesses" that black people suffer from. Duh! Talk about pressure!

I am aware that my blog entries are increasingly angry. I think my anger is an appropriate response to a completely inhuman situation. Anyone who isn't angry is asleep. ...

» **Monday 17 October 2005, 7:14 PM**
[an email, not a blog entry]

Greetings from Algiers. I'm still at the clinic, heading back to California tomorrow, then back here in a few weeks to stay for a while.

There is an opportunity here to create a community integrative health project, which is very exciting!

I'm hoping to manifest some regular donors so the project can be sustained. We are covered under a 501(c)3 so donations are tax deductible through Global Exchange <http://www.globalexchange.org>

Would you be interested in becoming a donor on a monthly basis? Any amounts of money would be put to good use. If you're interested, drop me a line and/or send donations to

Common Ground Clinic, PO Box 3216, Gretna, LA 70034

This email is going to a list of about 50 folks. If half of those people donated \$25 a month that'd be \$625 a month. This would mean so much to the people in this community.

Every night I see white cops stopping black people in their cars or on the street. When I asked two men my age how many times in their lives they'd been stopped they both just laughed. One guy told me he'd been stopped 12 times in the month before Katrina hit, and only 6 times since; an improvement!

Most of the people I have been meeting have never had health insurance, so this clinic is providing care that is much needed. Health issues include diabetes, high blood pressure, heart conditions, asthma, psychological issues, HIV, and much more. Anything you can give would translate directly to an improvement in quality of life for thousands of people. ▼

Walter I. Zeichner is a witch, permaculturist, and activist. You can read his blog at www.walterzeichner.com/Blog/index.html.



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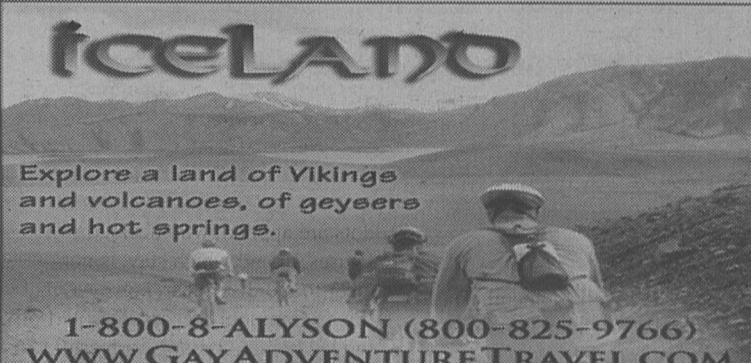
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