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Weekly War Protest Enters Year 10

Added by **Scott Stiffler** on April 30, 2015.

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Chelsea Neighbors United to End The War gathered on April 28, just as they have every Tuesday for the past decade.

BY WINNIE McCROY | When the U.S. invaded Iraq, a group of concerned Chelsea residents gathered at the corner of Eighth Ave. and W. 24th St. to protest the military action. Ten years later, Chelsea Neighbors United to End the War continues their weekly protest. Known as Chelsea Stands Up Against the War, it takes place every Tues. from 6–7 p.m. as the group holds

banners, hands out newsletters and tells passers-by why war is ruining our country.

FROM OUR SISTER NEWSPAPERS

chelseanow.com said, "This is awful, we need to do something to speak out," recalled longtime member Bob Martin. "We got together for coffee at Paradise, and that's when the idea of our weekly 'stand-up' started."

THE VILLAGER

Martin has been a stalwart member of the peace movement; Xeroxing weekly newsletters and

Police get tougher with Baltimore solidarity marchers; Arrest 143

Rodriguez as an amazing member; saying that they shared similar

"A signal moment" for art: First Lady and mayor dedicate new

Whitney Museum

Growing up in Honduras, which he called "the original banana republic,"

"The Visit" will stay with you

hunches of bananas Rodriguez sees similarities saying that these war effort

The positive power of games

who own munitions and other tools of war

"Vengeance" is violent, absurdist fun

"Protesting is important because in my point of view, wars are not justified

chelseanow.com: "A large part of the public believes that people outside of the U.S. are their

enemies, which they're not, really. The U.S. has a history of supporting regim

what we're going to exploit. We are actually creating the enemies that we

"Vengeance" is violent, absurdist fun

Although he doesn't fault the behavior of those who retaliate against

The positive power of games

I was the victim of a slide show

Police Blotter, week of April 30, 2015

Transit Sam week of April 30, 2015: May Day protests & 5 Boro Bike

Tour

This "artificial menace" that leaders create has allowed terror to eradicate Constitutional rights,

Homeland Security and the Patriot Act have nullified many resources U.S. citizens can use

to protect themselves from authoritative oppressive practices. Participating in this weekly

protest lets Rodriguez express his voice that the funds used for war would be better spent on

education, healthcare and infrastructure.

The recent front page article in The New York Times in which President Obama apologized for the death of two civilians in a drone strike perfectly summarizes Anne Finkelstein's reason for participating in the protest. Although she doesn't make it to many protests anymore, this longtime graphic designer updates their weekly newsletter.

"A lot of people consider the war over, but every week something new comes to light — for example, the news last week about the drone strikes," said Finkelstein. "Every week, this group finds something to say about what's going on that most people don't know about."

Finkelstein pointed to founding member Chuck Zlatkin as someone that has been with the event since the beginning, and maintains his commitment, despite having since relocated to Washington, DC.

"The first week in May marks 10 years, and we haven't missed a week," said Zlatkin. "Some people initially understood why we were out there in the beginning, and some were hostile to us. In time, people have seen that we serve as a beacon for them. We can't force anyone to change, but we can be there and available for people to discuss the issues. They respect us for being out there and persistent, and over time they examine their own attitudes about the war."

Among those who stop by are young people who are deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, and those who return from tours of duty; relatives of soldiers, visitors from other countries — and their neighbors, who are glad that the group has not given up.

"A lot of people share these concerns, but there aren't a lot that have the level of commitment to stand on the street in all kinds of weather," said Finklestein, noting that the group was even out during Hurricane Sandy. "I think it's extremely important that they continue, because although the situation changes, the basic underlying point remains, which is that our tax money is being used to kill people without our explicitly agreeing to it."

When the group began the protest, numbers were greater, but as years passed, fewer people attended — sometimes 20, sometimes just two. But hostility toward protestors has declined, said Zlatkin, with more people stopping by to ask them about the issues. Having a weekly newsletter, which lists the numbers killed and injured from fighting, American dollars spent, plus a new article tackling different issues around the war, has helped the group be "accountable and transparent," as Zlatkin said.

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“For each of us, there is a different reason to why we keep coming back,” said Zlatkin. “Maybe in this instant society, to be committed to something that takes a long period of time is a reward in itself.”

“For me, it’s the ongoing struggle to get people to see the connections that drive the economic machinery in this world, the connections between that and war,” said Rodriguez. “I’m not a saint or a martyr, I’m just a human being doing what he can to make a change.”

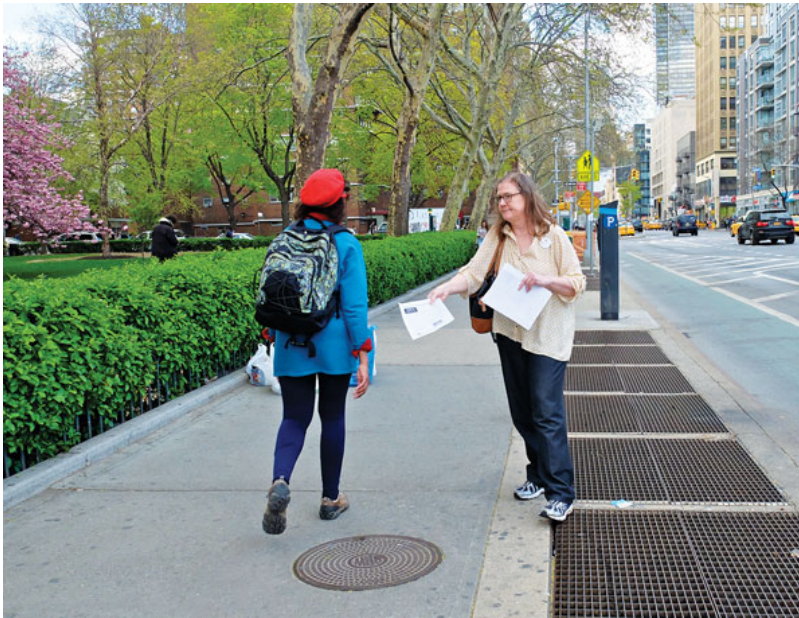


Photo by Jenny Rubin
A protester hands out the group’s weekly newsletter.

Their goal, said Martin, is to add their local voice to the continuing picture that our leaders aren’t getting right, saying that these conflicts were just part of the continuing stream of messes that the military gets into. Martin stressed that he did not place any fault on those serving in the military.

“At this point it’s a question of people being engaged and involved in what impacts us, and not giving up and feeling their voice is meaningless,” said Zlatkin. “Citizen action is what this nation is about, and what’s done in our name affects what we do. You can stand with us, with something else, but if you don’t take a stand, then you are letting people make decisions about your lives that are not connected at all with you and your community.”

Join Chelsea Stands Up Against the War every Tuesday from 6–7 p.m. at the corner of Eighth Ave. and W. 24th St.



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