

World affairs, hometown journalism

Rosendale welcomes sneak preview of *Bordering on Treason*

Anne Pyburn Craig
BSP Reporter

Disclosure, as they say: Back in 1999, my fellow mom and bar-napkin-poetess Lorna Tychostup introduced me to the *BlueStone Press*. It was through her recommendation that I met Lori Childers and was first published in these pages. Two years later, she was the first to include my work in the *Chronogram*. It was a huge honor to be the beat reporter for the *BlueStone Press* on June 12.

A sneak preview fundraiser event for *Bordering on Treason*, a documentary by indie producer Trish Dalton about local photojournalist Lorna Tychostup and her experiences in covering the Iraq war, drew a full house to the Rosendale Theatre last Tuesday to watch 20 minutes of the film and participate in discussion with the producer, the subject, and two of the people Tychostup credits with nurturing her reporting career in its earliest days.

In early 2003, as the United States was preparing to bomb Iraq, Tychostup and her fellow activists Manna Jo Greene and Michelle Riddell formed the Hudson Valley Peace Brigade and announced their intention to travel to Baghdad and see for themselves what was what. Somebody knew somebody who knew somebody, and the moms ended up as a Fox News story, flaunting their nonviolent intentions in the face of Sean Hannity's oozing condescension. ("How would you feel if your mother was going to a war zone?")

On returning from her first trip alive, unrepentant and with compelling photos,



Lorna Tychostup went to Iraq in 2003 on the eve of war and returned many times despite facing a possible million dollar fine and imprisonment. The film *Bordering on Treason* should be finished later this fall in part due to a NYS Council of the Arts grant.

Tychostup, the most outspoken of the three, was invited back on the air and accused of giving aid and comfort to the enemy, "bordering on treason." Her response that she had gone to Iraq to see for herself, rang oddly rational in the overheated and combative atmosphere. And she was going back, despite facing a possible million dollar fine and imprisonment.

"It's not like we had a ten thousand dollar travel budget," editor Brian Mahoney of *Chronogram*, where Tychostup was senior editor at the time, told the audience. "Lorna is a force of nature, and *Chronogram* got caught up in her slipstream. We started with a fixed idea- Bush is bad, Saddam is

bad, war is worst of all. Not that any of that was completely wrong, but it turned out to be a trenchant and complicated story, and she kept on re-forming her opinions."

"It's about this community, the people in it, and their stories," observed Lori Childers of the *BlueStone Press*, where Tychostup's straightforward prose began appearing in the second-ever issue. "Lorna gets it that it's not about Lorna, which is why her stuff is so powerful."

Tychostup's return voyages to Iraq through the course of the war and her absolute refusal to color inside the lines- whether by sticking to her official "handlers" and inside the approved press schedule or by tailoring her reports to fit any particular preconceived agenda- led filmmaker Dalton to make her the focus of what had been a more general documentary about the war. Dismissed by Hannity as a purveyor and consumer of "liberal propaganda," Tychostup would find herself chastised by some on the left for reporting that some ordinary Iraqis actually appreciated United States intervention.

That experience informed Tychostup's response to one audience member who introduced herself as an investigative reporter based in the Middle East and complained of what she felt to be "inaccuracies" in one of Tychostup's stories. It was, Tychostup noted without rancor, not the first time someone had disagreed with her take on matters. When the woman pressed her point, Tychostup suggested a discussion at a forum organized specifically for that debate rather than a hijack of this particular occasion, a suggestion met

with applause from the rest of the audience. It was vintage Tychostup- direct and unsparing without rudeness or bluster.

And if the reactions of most in the audience are any indication, vintage Tychostup may well make for a hit documentary piece. At the event and on the fundraiser's Facebook page, viewers expressed amazement, delight and the desire to see more- for which we'll have to wait until next September.

For her part, Tychostup said, she's relieved that the filming is over and her life a bit calmer. "People have asked me will I go to Afghanistan, and I am not a war zone junkie," she said. "Watching the film is actually a little uncomfortable for me. And I got enough education in Iraq to keep me busy this lifetime."

"I knew Lorna, and I happened to see this project on the Indiegogo web site, and I knew we should bring it here for a night," said event organizer Mary Goggin. "I reached out to Ann Citron and Stephanie Ellis from the Theater Collective and it was a big yes."

One wonders if Fox News will be gracious enough to offer a bit more airtime and celebrate the film in which several of its on-air personalities have minor supporting roles, Tychostup is not waiting around for their validation. "This is my mom," she announced to a crowd of well-wishers after the show. "She's 87 and I haven't killed her yet!"

Take that, Sean Hannity.

For more information, visit www.borderingontreason.com. **BSP**

Rosendale Planners will comment on HRVA by July 12

Robert Ford
BSP Reporter

Rosendale planners will have until July 12 to furnish their comments to the town board about a request by Hudson River Valley Resorts to have 780 acres on Williams Lake rezoned to Planned Conservation Development.

HRVR eventually wants to construct 154 homes, a resort, and hotel on the property. If the board grants the developer's request for a zone change, it will have to begin presentations for site plan approval before the town planning board.

The planning board was originally sup-

posed to present comments to the town board this month, but because of scheduling conflicts the town board has decided to give planners until July 12 to make their comments.

In other business, residents continue to voice concern about the cost of finding out what problems exist at the pool that make it unusable. It's been estimated that costs for such an investigation will cost more than \$8,000 and amount that people believe could better be spent on actually building a new pool.

Town board members have decided to employ Weston & Sampson, a Massachusetts-based engineering firm for

\$8,500. It will cost an additional \$49,000 to have the firm determine if the pool is salvageable or should be replaced.

In the spring, it was determined that the pool was unusable in the condition its now in, and the town shut it down, forcing residents, and the Rosendale Rapids Swim Team to scramble to find places to swim.

The Rapids have cut a deal with the Wiltwyck Golf Club to use its pool for practices and all meets will be away.

For residents, the Ulster County Pool on Liberty Road in New Paltz and the New Paltz town pool are welcoming the Rosendale folks. **BSP**

Community to host a potluck for the Gale McGovern Memorial Wheelchair Lift

The Rosendale Theatre Collective (RTC) is renovating to be fully wheelchair accessible. Included in this plan is a wheelchair lift to the seating area, which they plan to dedicate as a memorial to Gale McGovern who worked tirelessly to help the RTC succeed in its early days.

McGovern devised and successfully implemented her fundraising plan to have multiple hosts offer multiple potluck parties two years ago, which played an

important role in allowing the RTC to purchase the theater. As they seek to recognize McGovern, the goal is to emulate her efforts by raising money for her memorial lift through pot-luck parties.

Here's the project:

Find 40 or more people to host fundraising potlucks at their homes. Each host sends an invitation (either snail mail or email, which the RTC will provide) to his or her circle of friends and acquaintances.

Each invitee is asked for a suggested donation, whose amount is up to each host. It can be anything from \$10 to \$30 or more--whatever the host is comfortable with asking.

The RTC provides someone for each



McGovern

potluck to make a brief fundraising pitch and answer questions.

All of the potlucks take place during the month of July.

Multiplication is a wonderful thing when you're fundraising. If there is one potluck attended by 20 people at \$10 each, that's \$200 raised. If there are 40 potlucks at \$200 each, that's \$8,000.

RTC is looking for community members who can host one of these potlucks? Many from the community may have given already given a donation toward the purchase of the Rosendale Theatre, but by July, the RTC hopes that those same people and many more may be ready to give again, in the form of having a house party.

Information on hosting a potluck or any other questions can be emailed to potlucks@rosendaletheatre.org.

Defensive Driving Course

The Rosendale Youth Program will host a two-night course on defensive driving for anyone with a license on Monday and Tuesday, June 18 and 19 at 6 p.m. at the Rosendale Youth Center. Participants must attend both sessions. The fee is \$40.

Those who take the course can save 10 percent on their vehicle liability, collision, and personal injury protection insurance premiums for three years. They may also reduce up to four points on their driving record. To register, call Kathy Wade, Director of the Rosendale Youth Program at 658-8982.

Don't sweat the summer energy bills

This free workshop by Jeremy Schneider of the New York State Public Service Commission will be held at the Stone Ridge Library on Tuesday, June 19 at 3:00 p.m. As part of the Commission's Energy and Outreach Service, the discussion will offer simple steps to lower energy waste and utility bills. It will also cover some utility bill payment options and financial assistance programs. For info, contact Jeremy.Schneider@BeamNY.org or call 914-419-1982.

Candle Light Baccalaureate

The event for the graduating class of 2012 will be held at Christ the King Episcopal Church on Wednesday, June 20. The service will begin with a musical prelude at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Baccalaureate Service at 6 p.m. The church is located at 3021 Route 213 East in Stone Ridge. For more information, call 687-9414 or visit ctkstoneridge.org