
Bienville House Center for Peace and Justice

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Fall 2015

Bob Dorroh Remembered

James Robert “Bob” Dorroh, a long-time board member of the Bienville House Center for Peace and Justice (BHCPJ), died from complications from Hodgkin's Lymphoma on June 26, 2015. His memorial service was held on July 18 at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge.

Bob Dorroh was born in Marion, Alabama, and grew up in Texas, where he received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. He was a gifted mathematician who collaborated with mathematicians across the country in making significant contributions in the field. Bob believed working and collaborating with others had a remarkable advantage.

In the mid-80s, Bob and Diana Dorroh, Bob's wife and partner in peace and justice efforts, worked with the Coalition Against Military Intervention in Nicaragua (CAMIN), a Bienville House project. In 1988 they joined Peace Brigades International and became Witnesses for Peace in Central America. They traveled to El Salvador and Nicaragua to protest our country's Central American policies and provide, as Americans, a buffer against violent and *shameful* actions brought on by those policies. The Dorrohs were among those who frequently gathered with the sisters of St. Joseph at the Governor's Mansion to stand against state-ordered and Governor-allowed executions. Bob served on the Board of



Pilgrimage for Life, and in the early 80's participated in a walk from Angola to New Orleans led by Sister Helen Prejean to protest the Death Penalty.

Bob took the lead in organizing the BHCPJ response to the first Gulf war. He led protests and was the organization's principal spokesperson. For these efforts and more, he and Diana received the Wade Mackie Peace and Justice award from BHCPJ in 1997. Later he wrote many letters to the editor against waging war on Iraq and joined

BHCPJ members and others at the Federal courthouse to protest an invasion into Iraq.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Bob worked as a case worker helping evacuees at the makeshift trailer park in Baker called Renaissance Village. In 2007 Bishop Muench presented Bob the Catholic Charities Volunteer of the Year award for his work there. Bob and Diana worked on many projects for Together Baton Rouge, especially the CATS tax and health care initiatives. Bob was a member of the Health Care Team, which advocated for the expansion of Medicaid in Louisiana.

A member of the Unitarian Church from 1979, Bob served as its president twice and always stepped up to the plate. One example was chartering a bus to Jena, LA, to ensure church members would be present in numbers for a demonstration of support for six young men in Jena.

Bob was widely read and liked to recite poetry. I was surprised to learn he also wrote poetry and pleased that some of his poems are included in this newsletter.

Bob was a social reformer, although he didn't always fit the stereotype. He was a conservatively dressed mathematician who was honest, kind, patient, apprehended beauty, encouraged others to

take the high road, and never did things for praise or his own advancement. We are grateful for Bob Dorroh's presence in our lives.

The Reverend Steve Crump
Senior Minister
Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge

The Mathematician

I paid with a piece of my heart to be in this place,
where the path is razor thin,
and a chasm separates two worlds,
both unforgiving of inattention.

If you don't understand the price,
then you may be puzzled by our ways.

I keep two sets of reprints in good order -
one for distribution and one for judgment day.

Bob Dorroh

The Rainy Season

Memory of the steep hillside, rutted road, and loose stones,
Lingering sensations from the Nicaragua sun,
The image of two-legged pack animals,
And the absence of spigots in the house,
Made me hesitate at the sight of water
Offered by its owner.
“Where does the water come from?” I asked.
“*Del cielo,*” he replied, pointing to the sky
and with gusto I began
to wash away the mud
that covered my clothes and body.

Bob Dorroh

**Bienville House speaker on immigration, borders, and justice
coming to Baton Rouge and New Orleans
on October 9th and 10th**

This fall, Bienville House continues its tradition of bringing to Louisiana speakers on important contemporary issues of justice and peace. This fall, with anti-immigrant rhetoric boosting presidential hopefuls and U.S. Senator and Louisiana gubernatorial candidate David Vitter authoring a bill to revoke ‘birthright citizenship’ for children born in the U.S. to undocumented immigrants, the topic is American immigration (in)justice.

Over the weekend of October 9th – 11th, Walter Emrys Staton, M. Div., intern minister at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix, Arizona, will speak at LSU, the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, and the Community Church Unitarian Universalist of New Orleans.

Rev. Staton will speak in Louisiana on “Expanding the Border Between the United States and Mexico – Enforcement Beyond Fences.” He will, in his words, ‘share some first-hand stories and experiences from his years of being engaged in humanitarian aid and immigrant justice work in Southern Arizona. His stories will cover both the buildup of a multi-layered strategy for border

security, and the growing resistance to U.S. immigration enforcement coming from immigrant communities. Starting with the walls and fences built between the United States and Mexico, the border extends not just from Texas to California, but north and south as well. From Central America to the American Midwest, border enforcement is present in a vast network of detention centers, federal courts, local law enforcement agencies, and checkpoints.’

Please attend one of these three speaking engagements in October (details below) and spread the word about this important speaker to your acquaintances, social media, and interested organizations in our community. Thanks go to the Social Justice Committee at the UCBR, the minister of the Community Church Unitarian Universalist of New Orleans, and the Speakers’ Committee of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU for offering venues for this speaker.

Contact Brian Marks at brian.marks@whyr.org with questions.

Friday, October 9th, at 3:30pm

Department of Geography and Anthropology

E130 Howe-Russell Geoscience Complex at LSU

(across Tower Boulevard from the LSU Union, corner of Tower and South Campus, first floor)

Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Friday, October 9th, at 7:00pm

Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge

8470 Goodwood Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Saturday, October 10th, evening [time not yet finalized]

Community Church Unitarian Universalist of New Orleans

6690 Fleur de Lis Drive, New Orleans, LA 70124



More about our speaker: Emrys Staton is a native Arizonan who has spent the last ten years engaged with immigrant justice movements in southern Arizona. Staton's activism has included leaving humanitarian supplies in the desert for people crossing the border, providing first aid and food to people deported to Mexico, helping with blockades to prevent deportations and police raids, and supporting immigrant-led movements to end law enforcement practices that target undocumented communities. He has appeared in federal court twice for charges related to his activism, including a littering ticket for leaving jugs of water near the border that was appealed all the way to the 9th circuit court. Staton holds a B.S. in Geography and Regional Development from the University of Arizona, and a Masters of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology. He is currently the intern minister at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix, and plans to continue doing community based work as a faith leader.

Our past speakers and awardees – Louisiana's largest debate on the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Kathy Kelly, Roy Bourgeois, Bill Quigley, and last year's speaking tour by former Arab League Ambassador Dr. Clovis Maksoud – reach hundreds of people directly and many more through media appearances. These speakers bring perspectives on issues seldom heard in our region, and they only happen through your support for Bienville House through volunteering your time and financial generosity.

Father Roy Bourgeois
 – founder of School of the Americas Watch and advocate for women priests –
wins the 2014 Wade Mackie Peacemaking Award

Bienville House's 2014 Wade Mackie Peacemaking Award winner was Father Roy Bourgeois, a native of Litcher, Louisiana and dedicated activist for justice in Latin America and within the Catholic Church. At an October 25th ceremony held at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, Father Roy received the award from fellow Wade Mackie winner (for 2005) Bill Quigley. Along with Roy's family, attendees enjoyed a delicious supper and the hospitality of the Unitarian Church and heard him give a powerful and moving acceptance speech. Father Bourgeois described his military service in South Vietnam and its effect on his understanding of war and injustice, his joining the priesthood as a Maryknoll father, and years in Bolivia where he came to a greater appreciation of the relation between military dictators, American military aid and training, and the deep poverty and brutality inflicted on the poor of South America. We also heard him explain his founding of School of the Americas (SOA) Watch in response to the murder of so many religious and lay people by El Salvador's U.S.-trained and armed military and police, his years in federal prison for protests against the SOA, and his 2008 decision to come out openly in support of the ordination of female Catholic priests, which led to his 2012 dismissal from the Maryknoll order. All of us there found Father Roy an inspiring and important voice that Baton Rouge needs to hear, even if *The Advocate* didn't cover the event because, so we were told, Bourgeois "wasn't local" and Jim Engster gave him a brief and rather hostile interview. [Thanks to the one Baton Rouge TV station that did cover the event and the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge for help with media outreach].



Photo: cta-usa.org

- Brian Marks

Winner of 2015 Reich-Henderson writing contest announced

Last year Bienville House received five entries from high school students in Louisiana for the Reich-Henderson writing competition, instituted some years ago in honor of Bienville House activists Dr. Robert Reich and Paula Henderson. We are pleased to announce that Ms. Elizabeth Foy, a student at Archbishop Hannan High School in Covington, Louisiana, is the winner for 2015. Ms. Foy will receive a cash award from Bienville House for her essay on volunteering in Guatemala with her family to provide dental care and her reflections on poverty and privilege.

Former Arab League Ambassador to the U.S. and UN visits Louisiana

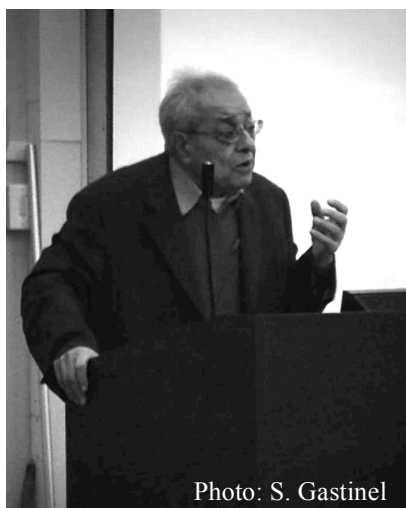


Photo: S. Gastinel

Last November, Bienville House sponsored the Louisiana lecture tour of Dr. Clovis Maksoud, professor of International Relations at American University and ex-Ambassador of the League of Arab States to the United States and United Nations. Dr. Maksoud gave two talks in Baton Rouge and two more in New Orleans at universities and to community groups. He was also a guest on the Jim Engster radio show and Baton Rouge Community Radio. He addressed the topic of “The Paradox of a Globalised and Fragmented World: Case study, the Arab World” and spoke about contemporary globalization, the Arab Spring, wars in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, and the need for more internationalist and Pan-Arabist solutions to political conflicts rather than foreign military interventions or narrow ethnic, religious, or sectarian nationalisms. He also spoke about the Israel/Palestine conflict and his advocacy of a single democratic, secular state to resolve that struggle. Dr. Maksoud was heard by several hundred

people during his visit and met with LSU’s Model Arab League student chapter, who got to meet one of the actual Arab League’s most distinguished diplomats. His visit was financially supported by your vital financial contributions to Bienville House.

Op Ed: Louisiana’s foreign policy

Living here in Louisiana trying to make American foreign policy more humane and just, or just being politically active at all, leads in my experience to certain inevitable questions. ‘What’s the point of trying to do that *here*?’ is one version of the argument, another being ‘What are you going to accomplish *in Louisiana*?,’ usually followed by some comment about the reactionary political representation we are plagued with in the state.

Fair enough. Our opponents in office and their core supporters – the militarist, *herrenvolk* citizenship, fundamentalist, hard-right voters and

donors they’re acting on behalf of – don’t seem to share our deflated pessimism. They believe in what they’re about, they’re not ashamed to say it loudly, and they believe they can bring about change. And I know the arguments about the influence of money and Fox News and the vested interests and all the rest. So do we just stay home and be depressed or move to Vermont or California? I don’t think so.

I think there’s more bluster than substance in our supposedly untouchable leaders when somebody in the state simply calls them out. Governor

Jindal was going to play George Wallace against the U.S. Supreme Court's same-sex marriage ruling this summer, and he did – where he could influence marriage licenses being issued, at a state office in Orleans parish – for a few days. But one person in Baton Rouge just up and started calling all 64 Clerks of Court across the state and within a day or two had, by doing no more than staying on the phone and explaining what the law was, convinced them all (save one, who folded a couple days later) into issuing licenses. As this intrepid caller described it, Jindal's whole Executive Order and posturing evaporated into 'Sound and fury, signifying nothing.'

Another thing is that those arch-conservative Louisiana elected officials, however much they insist (and we too often believe) they're all about the Duck Dynasty charade of 'God, Guns, and Gays' for local consumption, are deeply, personally engaged in the global justice issues Bienville House has addressed for the past 37 years. What's more, they're in leading positions influencing U.S. policy, and they're *diametrically against everything this organization stands for*. I think that means we Louisianians who want peace and justice have a vital place here speaking truth, educating, challenging them on our issues in our state. Immigration and citizenship, militarism and nuclear weapons, racial justice and sanctuary for the persecuted, all the issues motivating Bienville House since 1978, they're all Louisiana issues. Why? Because our Louisiana representatives have made those 'foreign' issues central to their agendas in government. They are the sources of their power and the fuel for their ambitions. Foreign affairs and war and peace aren't side issues for them: They profit by them and get stronger the more they get a free pass in their districts about them. They shouldn't be dismissed as side issues for Louisiana progressives either.

Let me give you a few examples.

John Fleming is the Representative in the 4th Congressional District in Northwest Louisiana. I didn't know much about him until he was quoted last year paraphrasing former VP Dick Cheney's off-the-record plan for yet another American ground invasion of Iraq. Turns out, Fleming is among the principal advocates for the nuclear

weapons lobby in Congress (Barksdale Air Base in Bossier City is headquarters of the Air Force's nuclear command and home to dozens of nuclear-capable bombers). He's on the House Armed Services committee and its Strategic Forces subcommittee overseeing nuclear forces, is co-chair of the Congressional Long-Range Strike Caucus, and brought another four other Louisiana Congressmen into that caucus as of 2012 (Boustany, Cassidy, Alexander and Scalise, making Louisiana reps 1/3 of the caucus' total membership). This caucus' purpose is promoting America's maintenance and improvement of weapons of mass destruction: ICBMs, cruise missiles, nuclear weapons plants and research labs, and especially for Fleming, building 80-100 new 'next-generation strike bombers' to replace the B-52, B-1, and B-2. This new bomber will be a \$55 billion program to outmatch non-existent Russian and Chinese next-generation strategic bombers that haven't been built yet, won't be for at least another decade, still won't be as capable as the existing B-2 if they do, and might never be constructed if the U.S. weren't competing largely with itself in a nuclear delivery technology race that goes on 25 years after the Berlin Wall fell.

Bienville House was founded in 1978 as the Center for Disarmament Education. This was the height of the Cold War when the Carter and Reagan administrations accelerated provocative American nuclear development and military deployments to the point in 1983 that Soviet leadership so feared an imminent first strike disguised as a NATO training exercise they almost started World War Three to preempt it. Fleming was dangerously wrong in his 2010 open letter to President Obama on U.S. nuclear policy when he argued Reagan used American nuclear superiority and threats of first use of atomic weapons to peacefully win the Cold War. In Korea in 1950, Cuba in 1962, the Mideast in 1973, or Europe in 1983, overwhelming American nuclear superiority has repeatedly brought the world to the cusp of nuclear war. Russia collapsed from within because it squandered its resources on militarism and its people stopped believing in its government's endless, brutal, destabilizing war in Afghanistan, the same war America helped to kindle and

sustain, is still fighting today, and from which grew the cancers of Al-Qaeda and ISIL. The presidential goal of nuclear disarmament was first introduced not by Barack Obama, but Fleming's hero Ronald Reagan. He must be credited (along with Gorbachev and the global peace movement) for the steep arms reductions and vision of zero nuclear weapons those two leaders proposed in the late 1980s after pulling back in revulsion from how close the superpowers came to destroying civilization earlier that decade.

We need to call out Fleming and Louisiana's other atomic congressmen for worshiping at the false idol of America's nuclear weapons supremacy at this time when the world must either move decisively towards restricting all nations' nuclear weapons and delivery systems - not just Iran's - or face growing nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and South and East Asia. Fleming wants a return to the W. Bush administration's loosened criteria for U.S. nuclear weapons use, criticizing Obama for daring to declare America won't nuke countries who don't use nuclear weapons against us, don't have them, and aren't developing them. What irony then to hear Louisiana's delegation (minus Cedric Richmond, who to his credit voted for the Iran nuclear agreement) piously denounce the mere possibility of Iran building ballistic missiles or an atom bomb in 15 years in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Fleming and his partners are working hard to keep America's nuclear arsenal ever-more capable and potent decades into the future contrary to our obligations in the NPT to (eventually) dismantle our weapons. And how predictable that ex-Senator Landrieu, who got more political contributions from the nuclear arms industry than even John Fleming, cashed in on her political connections to sabotage the Iran nuclear deal. Landrieu is a board member of the \$20 million AIPAC front group 'Americans for a Nuclear Free Iran' stood up hurriedly this summer, stocked with Democratic ex-congress members, and who ran TV ads to target wavering politicians' districts.

This issue of the newsletter brings news of the death of Dr. Bob Dorroh, a long-time volunteer with Bienville House and many other causes. I hadn't known until his memorial service this

summer that he, along with others active in the organization during the American wars on Central America in the 1980s, had travelled to Nicaragua. There, he saw first-hand what murder and mayhem the weapons our taxes paid for were doing in our name to poor, struggling people who wanted to live in dignity in a country with real independence and democracy where their children would have a chance to improve themselves. In those years, many Americans went to Central America to stand in the way of this outrage. Many of us also welcomed refugees from those countries fleeing the violence that flowed from the U.S. in league with the feudal oligarchs of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. This was the sanctuary movement, trying to protect refugees the government declared 'illegal immigrants' who were otherwise being deported back into the carnage of U.S.-backed repression.

Last November we honored with the Wade Mackie Peacemaker Award Father Roy Bourgeois, among those who did the most to expose the American military's training the most vicious killers targeting the church people and poor workers and peasants that stood up for justice in Central America.

The nuclear disarmament movement and the Central America solidarity movement were the motivating causes of Bienville House's first 15 years. They were not distant to Louisiana then, and they have not left us now. For just as Louisiana's representatives have taken up the cause of nourishing and augmenting America's nuclear weapons, our state legislature and Congressional delegation are leading the charge to criminalize, hinder, and scapegoat undocumented immigrants in America today.

We all saw the surge of adults and unaccompanied minors from Central America crossing the U.S. border last summer. Those same countries where the indigenous, the church and the social movements were crushed with such brutality 30 years ago have today the highest murder rates in the world. The paramilitary death squads' offspring are the gangs and cartels operating in societies where civil war normalized such extreme violence. The impunity of the corrupt and self-serving governments of Central America are the

results of hollowed democracy and thwarted social reform dating from those years. The Central Americans fleeing to the U.S. are the consequence of American wars just as much as the Afghans and Iraqis trying to reach Europe and Australia.

So what are Louisiana's leaders doing about this? The 'pro-traditional marriage' state legislature last session passed HB 836 into law barring undocumented immigrants from getting married in Louisiana. The same legislator who introduced HB 836, Valarie Hodges (District 64, Denham Springs) also got passed HR 175, which created a study group on the economic impact of illegal immigration on the state. Who's going to be on this study group? No immigrant advocates, but there will be representatives from business, from the state police, the chiefs of police and sheriffs' associations, the D.A.'s association and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Two private parties will also be there: The Center for Security Policy and the Eagle Forum. And who are they? Eagle Forum is (and I really could not make this up if I tried) Phyllis Schlafly's organization. Yes, *that* Phyllis Schlafly of the anti-ERA, Moral Majority, Take Back America crusade of the '80s. And the Center for Security Policy? It's a think tank run by Frank Gaffney, another flashback from the '80s New Right, a protégé of Richard Perle and 'Scoop' Jackson who held several high positions in the Reagan-era Pentagon and since has gone deeper and deeper down the Islamophobia conspiracy rabbit hole, including discovering that Grover Norquist and Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin are Muslim Brotherhood clandestine sleeper agents, Obama is not a citizen, Shariah law is coming to America, and so on. That's who the State of Louisiana is relying on to enlighten its official, legislatively sanctioned study group on illegal immigration. Obviously the whole thing is a sham with a pre-determined conclusion that undocumented people are a huge and unsupportable burden on Louisiana, if not a fifth column of saboteurs, Jihadists, and others intent on destroying the country.

Remember Governor Jindal's pre-presidential announcement junket to London back in January? Sure, it was a publicity stunt, and lots of people

chuckled at his 'double-down' claims that European cities had 'no-go zones' where Muslim gangsters and Islamic courts operated with impunity and barred entry to ordinary citizens, police, and emergency services. Jindal claimed Muslim immigrants were refusing to assimilate and integrate into European society, seeking to 'colonize' Europe and 'overtake the culture,' and that the U.S. faced such a future if it didn't 'wake up' to an existential war with 'Radical Islam' and demand cultural assimilation from its immigrants. Jindal spoke in London to the Henry 'Scoop' Jackson Society, a British neoconservative think tank founded in 2005 to champion the then-flagging agenda of aggressive Western military interventions in the Middle East, NATO eastward expansion, free market globalization, and such. In recent years, the Jackson Society and ideological confidantes like the Gatestone Institute, the group from which Jindal got the idea of his London speech and which Jindal's office cited effusively in its attempt at documenting the reality of Europe's 'no-go zones,' have intertwined the neo-con agenda of invading the Mideast with the nativist, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, border security politics surging in the contemporary American and European right. You might call it 'Bringing the War on Terror home.' It's at the same time the globalization of the Republicans' 'Southern strategy,' wherein Hungary's authoritarian leader declares a European 'silent majority' backs his *Festung Europa* of razor wire, transit camps and 'only Christians allowed' immigration. Groups like the Gatestone Institute here, their equivalents in Europe, and politicians like Trump and Orbán speak the same rhetorical formula any historian of the segregationist South immediately recognizes, with 'illegals,' Muslims, asylum-seekers, and 'anchor babies' replacing past American and European racialized enemies but doing the same things: 'They're taking over the country, they're rapists, we must defend Christian civilization from chaos and barbarism, they will under-mine us from within...' And just as Southern segregation and South African Apartheid were sold geo-politically as bulwarks of anti-Communism, the new nativism, cross-pollinated with neoconservatism, frames border militar-

ization, birthright citizenship and ‘no-go zones’ as existential battles in a larger global war on ‘Radical Islam.’

And so enters David Vitter, who has much more important things to be criticized about than his sex life or his temper. Vitter is the chairman of the U.S. Senate Border Security and Enforcement First Caucus, a caucus that tellingly has no members from U.S./Mexico border states and is almost entirely made up of Republicans from the Deep South. This year Vitter also became deputy chair of the Senate Judiciary committee’s immigration subcommittee. He and his Enforcement First caucus have a long list of measures to make life so unbearable for undocumented immigrants they will, as Mitt Romney put it, ‘self-deport.’ Vitter defines this as the ‘attrition through enforcement strategy.’ This strategy includes more deportations from the interior of the country, blocking federal funds to localities who don’t let local police hand over residents to ICE for deportation, and changing the Census to exclude non-citizens from the count or ask everyone their citizenship status. Vitter’s been pushing bills and amendments for these things every year since he helped found this caucus. This year he’s co-author of the bill to revoke birthright citizenship for all babies born on U.S. soil, a right supported to varying degrees in common law, the 14th Amendment, and numerous Supreme Court

cases. Vitter wrote a 2011 op-ed to CNN explaining his legal logic, embracing a racist 1884 Supreme Court decision that denied Native Americans U.S. citizenship as they did not owe sole allegiance to the American government. Ending birthright citizenship would change 147 years of American law, strike against the egalitarian vision of citizenship in the 14th Amendment, and permanently deny citizenship to young undocumented Americans, or ‘Dreamers,’ who know no other country save the U.S., often only speak English, have lived the large majority of their lives here and were raised as Americans. Do they ‘owe allegiance’ to Mexico or anywhere else they’ve never visited simply because their parents were undocumented?

We’ll have a chance in October to learn more about the border, and how it reaches into our communities here in Louisiana through the ‘interior enforcement’ which not just Vitter and his ilk, but the Obama administration too, have been escalating in recent years. I hope you’ll come out to hear Rev. Staton, Bienville House’s guest speaker on immigration justice, in Baton Rouge on October 9th or New Orleans the next evening. The issues that concern us are global, but what happens here locally can change them for the better as well as the worse.

Brian Marks

The Bienville House Center for Peace and Justice is online!

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<http://www.bienvillehousecenter.org>

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