

MAIN LINE SCI

Haverford School hosts town meeting on world democracy

By DAVID ROBINSON

How do individual choices change global problems? What actions are dysfunctional in today's world? These are only two of the questions addressed by Jane Goodall of the Jane Goodall Institute, Lower Merion's Jonathan Granoff of the Global Security Institute, and Ashok Gangadean of the Global Dialogue Institute in a global responsibility roundtable titled: "A Call to a Sustainable Democracy."

Previous global responsibility forums were held at Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges, but thanks to Joe Cox, head of The Haverford School, Centennial Hall became the locus of this global town meeting.

The morning began with introductory remarks by Goodall, Granoff and Gangadean, followed by questions, breakout sessions for discussion and dialogue by members of the audience, and reports from these groups.

The afternoon session brought Rep. Joe Hoeffel, U. S. Senatorial candidate; Audrey Kitagawa, U.N. advisor; and Craig Eisendrat, Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy, together with Goodall, Granoff and Gangadean for a democracy forum.

Through the day, on tape and with live performances, musical inspiration was provided by Paul Winter, a globally revered musical treasure, best known for his annual winter and summer solstice concerts performed around the world.

Gangadean, Haverford College philosopher, welcomed the gathering. "We are in the midst of a profound human revolution," he said. He explained that, globally, mankind is learning we are all connected, and to be a human is to be a citizen of the world, physically and culturally. At the heart of democracy is

the ability to experience one another, honor our diversity and engage in deep dialogue to co-create a world that works for all of us. He reminded the audience that the first two town meetings for global responsibility were called, "Reason for Hope" and "Moment for Choice." The aim of this call for a sustainable democracy was to engage, connect and empower each participant toward a global perspective and citizenship.

After listening to her introduction, filled with accolades, Goodall reminded the audience that she had no idea as a child that she would do any of this work. She always loved animals and learned a lesson about all of life when she brought earthworms into bed as a young child. Her mother didn't get mad. She said, "They will die without their earth."

Goodall spoke of her desire to go to Africa. With Dr. Leakey's help, she got there and was able to study chimpanzees. "In the 1960s, we didn't know that the chimpanzees' DNA differed from ours by only 1 percent, that we can get blood transfusions from chimps if the blood type matches, or that they can be infected with all human viruses. Studying them, I learned that they are so like us, they help us understand ourselves." She spoke about how far we have come in the study and understanding of the connection between plants, animals and humans. She also said that she believes animals have that same spark of the divine we call "soul" in man.

From an estimated 2 million chimpanzees, years ago, their number has now dwindled to less than 200,000 as loggers destroy their forests, villages intrude on their homeland, and hunters kill any and all animals to make "bushmeat." Outside, she noted, the developed world has ethnic conflicts, chemicals are in our bodies that were never there

before and many people have a feeling of hopelessness. "My Roots and Shoots programs show we can change our views and choices for the animals environment and other people," she said. The program began with 18 high school students in Tanzania in 1991 and now has 7,000 groups around the world with members from pre-school through university, from prisons and offices, who feel empowered as a group. "We, as consumers, have a choice not to help destroy forests, use child labor or hurt animals through the testing of consumer products...and we must vote. The corporate world thinks only to the next earnings report. We must think for the next seven generations and what kind of world we are going to leave them. Man has always faced impossible tasks and made changes. As I looked into your eyes, while Paul Winter was playing this morning, I could see the eyes of others around the world and I see we can make a difference."

Granoff spoke of the need for global dialogue and debate as central to globally responsible citizenship. He noted that Robert McNamara, the former



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At center stage of Centennial Hall, from left, are Ashok Gangadean, Jane Goodall and Jonathan Granoff.

secretary of defense, spoke of the fact that in Vietnam we had neither consensus with our allies, nor an understanding of our enemy. International debate and dialogue were missing.

Currently, Granoff said that our nuclear weapons are "worse than any problem they seek to solve." He said the existence of these weapons is a threat, the same way a mugger's gun is a threat in a robbery. He quite aptly demonstrated that telling others not to build these weapons, while we continue to build and maintain them, is like a

smoking parent telling a child to quit smoking. One fault with our nuclear policy is that there is no conversation, dialectic or debate.

He called for debate on the nuclear issues, on the over-fishing of the oceans, the disparity of wealth, conservation, and the infrastructure of our nation. There is no debate when one side says "I don't need to hear more," and he pointed out John Stuart Mills' argument that closing off listening to another means "I know all," but Mills said that only God knows all, so that to say "I don't need to hear more" is to blaspheme.

Granoff closed with the idea that only God can judge evil, but we define the conduct that can and cannot be done by laws, with the U.N. internationally, Congress nationally and in our own civic space, locally. He said it is time to speak up and step out, using love, reason, wisdom and caring as we become the volunteers for America's future.

For further reflection and information on global citizenship, visit www.janegoodall.org; www.gsinsitute.org; www.global-dialogue.com; or www.asustainablefuture.org.

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