



## Vermont Guardian

### *For The Independent Mind*

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#### **Static quo: Authors take aim at media in new book**

By Shay Totten | Vermont Guardian

Posted November 2, 2006

WATERBURY — For avid listeners of WDEV, one of the state’s oldest commercial radio stations, hearing a fundraiser to keep a program on the air might seem out of place.

But, recent pleas to listeners of the nationally-syndicated Democracy Now! program hosted by Amy Goodman are exactly what people have been hearing during the 5:30-6:30 p.m. time slot on the station, which airs on 550 AM and 96.1 FM.

Now, Goodman and her brother David Goodman, who lives in WDEV’s hometown of Waterbury, are hosting a public event in Barre on Sunday to help raise money to keep the program on the air both on WDEV and on WGDR-FM, Goddard College’s radio station in Plainfield.

The pair are in the midst of an 80-city book tour promoting their latest tome, *Static: Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders and the People who Fight Back*, which was recently added to the New York Times bestseller list. The pair’s last book, *The Exception to the Rulers*, was also a New York Times bestseller, and Book Sense voted it the top political title of the 2004 election season.

When *Exception to the Rulers* was published, *Democracy Now!* was heard on 250 stations around the world. Today, it’s on more than 450 stations.

David Goodman, who is an investigative journalist in his own right, told the Guardian that the tour continues to inspire the pair.

“The thing that has been so amazing to us is the more conservative the place, the more rural the place, the bigger the audience is,” he said. “We were in Salt Lake City a few weeks ago, and it’s not known for its progressive politics, but 1,000 people turned out to hear us speak.”

In Fresno, CA, 500 people turned out and in Boise, ID, where the program is only heard as a cable access TV program, 400 people turned out.

“We’re thrilled and very pleasantly surprised at the reaction,” he said. “What is going on is that we are seeing firsthand the enormous hunger out there for independent, unembedded media in this country. People who are watching the evening news and reading the daily paper don’t even know what they don’t know, but they know they are not getting the straight story from the corporate media.”

While the pair focuses much of their attention on how government “spin” makes it into the mainstream media, the pair also takes a critical look at the war in Iraq, government detention and torture policies, and other hot button issues, and often through the eyes and voices of those affected by the policies.

Goodman said the book is not just another leftist analysis, and appeals to a wide variety of people.

“The lines between conservative and liberal are really breaking down; it’s not easy to categorize who is reading our book or listening to Democracy Now!” he said. “There is a real groundswell of not only political resistance and ferment, but people are really seeking out other forms of and other sources of information.”

At book tour events, Goodman said soldiers, or their family members, often come up to the pair. And, many of them end up being interviewed on Democracy Now!

Goodman said Static is very much a sequel to Exceptions to the Rulers, and delves a little deeper into the role that the major media have played in what he dubs “propaganda.”

“We’re trying to explain how it is that the world’s freest media, and certainly richest media, is little more than a conveyor belt for the lies of our government,” said Goodman. “And what’s interesting and important to note is that it wasn’t, as many journalists say, they were given bad information, it’s that the corporate media was really integral part of the propaganda machine of this government.”

Goodman said reporters like Seymour Hersh are of a dying breed — true investigative journalists.

Other major media outlets, such as The New York Times and Washington Post, are only now beginning to take responsibility for their role in beating the drum for invading Iraq. “But, it’s hard to call them mea culpas, they really kinda culpas,” he quips.

And, he said it’s become “fashionable” for media to now lay blame at the president’s feet, so more are doing so.

Prior to landing on WDEV, Democracy Now! was only heard on WGDR in Plainfield and a few public access TV stations in Vermont.

A petition to get the program on the air on Vermont Public Radio, though netting thousands of signatures, failed when management decided not to carry the program.

That’s when Ken Squier, the owner of WDEV, stepped in.

“Ken is a great believer in the notion that a radio station should serve the community and it was with very much the sentiment of the community in mind that he took this on,” said Goodman. The Shelburne-based Lintalhac Foundation funded the program’s first year on the air to see if there were listeners and if those listeners would support the program.

Goodman said the program has been a great success, and “owns” the timeslot in commercial radio in northern Vermont.

The response to the program’s pleas to WDEV listener has been great, and Goodman expects they will raise enough money to keep the show on the air for the foreseeable future. “But we’re not going to take any signs for granted ... we have no magic sugar daddy.

What: Amy & David Goodman book tour and Democracy Now! fundraiser

Where: Old Labor Hall, Barre

When: November 5, 12:30 p.m.

Information: Tickets are \$10 for the event, \$50 for a ticket and a book or \$150 for a ticket, book and brunch for two. All proceeds will be used to fund the air time of Democracy Now! To order tickets for the event, call (866) 218-4749. Checks, in advance, can be mailed to: Democracy Now!, PO Box 91, Waterbury, VT 05676.

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**Northern Vermont:** PO Box 335, Winooski, VT 05404

**Southern Vermont:** 139 Main Street, Suite 702, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**Contact:** 802.861.4880 (ph) | 802.861.6388 (fax) | 877.231.5382 (toll-free)

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