

Happy 90th Birthday LMOGA

On the eve of the BP trial in New Orleans, the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association (the major industry trade and lobbying association in Louisiana) threw itself a 90th birthday party at the Ritz Carlton. We brought them a 7 ft cake with a special filling inside – our modern day Huey Long (local writer/actor Andrew Vaught) -- who jumped out of the cake and delivered a brilliant, hilarious, satirical reproach of the oil industry for eating all of Louisiana’s “cake” and not inviting anyone else to the party. The sidewalk filled with oil executives, environmental groups, press and onlookers as he was cheered on. http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2013/02/exxonmobil_baton_rouge_refiner.html



Scenes from a Redaction

When Exxon demanded that the EPA redact a scathing report on their Baton Rouge refinery – including information on chemicals released in the community and worker injuries – we partnered with Cripple Creek Theatre to do a public dramatization of the report to bring it to the public’s attention.



Art-to-Action at the Network of Ensemble Theatres Microfest

We teamed up with Guardians of the Flame and took 35 local and national artists to the heart of Cancer Alley for an intensive Art-to-Action workshop. Six groups each created a mini-play in less than an hour.



Crude Oilusion

Louisianans are more likely to come out for a parade than a protest, so we created our own Mardi Gras Krewe. With custom “bucket” drums designed by artist Clyde Casey, our DRiL Team of dancers, giant pelican puppets and handmade oyster shell throws, we rolled to an electrifying crowd of thousands in Krewe Delusion (right behind famed Krewe de Vieux).



Pimps and Prostitutes Parade for Big Oil

Our Pimps and Prostitutes Parade for Big Oil greeted House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and four other congressmen at the New Orleans airport after a highly touted junket to a Shell offshore rig. We captured the story and led the evening news. <http://www.wvlv.com/video/featured-videos/Scalise-hosts-congressmens-tour-of-oil-production-in-Gulf-of-Mexico-154238755.html>



Oil Monitoring Group

The Oil Monitoring Group citizen coalition (modeled on human rights monitoring) deploys to oil industry-government events. At the June 20 Oil and Gas Lease sale, we were recognized by Dept. of Interior Secretary Salazar (below left), lauded by BOEM staff (below right) and quoted in the Associated Press. We did it again November 28. See how we shifted the story:

<http://www.wvlv.com/news/local/Oil-and-gas-lease-sale-in-Gulf-attracts-more-than-157-million-in-bids-181261941.html>



Steve Plume

We collected 2500 letters from Louisiana residents asking ExxonMobil Refinery Manager Steve Blume to make his refinery safer. He has refused to accept the letters. So, with the United Steelworkers, we presented them to “Steve Plume” on the Louisiana State Capitol steps. We now have 6000 letters.



Happy Redacted Holidays, ExxonMobil

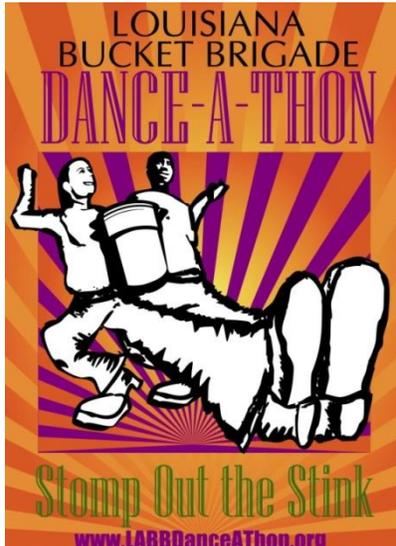
Our Refinery Efficiency Initiative exposed a 30,000 lb release of benzene at the Baton Rouge ExxonMobil refinery. When the EPA investigated, Exxon demanded that major portions of the EPA report be redacted. We held a press conference with residents – who signed a giant redacted holiday card to ExxonMobil and sang “chemical carols” in the community, at an oil lobbying group and an oil exec’s home. One community member said “that made me feel so good inside.” See article/video:

http://www.nola.com/news/baton-rouge/index.ssf/2012/12/exxonmobil_refinery_safety_con.html



“Stomp Out the Stink” Dance-A-Thon

150 people danced twelve hours for clean air at our Art-to-Action fundraiser. We raised awareness, raised money, and had FUN!!



<http://www.latimes.com/videogallery/71936493/Community/Tyler-dances-for-the-Louisiana-Bucket-Brigade-and-you-can-too>

Crude-Step-Two-Step Flash Mobs

With dancers trained in “Crude Step Two Step” at the Dance-A-Thon, we took to crowded Saturday night New Orleans streets with several flash mobs to highlight petrochemical accidents that happened during Hurricane Isaac. Fifty+ people danced for clean air as 200+ watched, enjoyed and joined in!!



Rubber Duckies

How do we address the uncomfortable reality that oil companies' logos are all over our community events, like "New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival Presented by Shell", or this Rubber Ducky Derby for the local food bank? (This was especially horrible since hunger went up 25% in coastal parishes after the BP oil spill.) Let's not just ignore it. Let's talk about it. We floated these duckies along the bayou behind our kayaks and canvassed the crowd, and we got people talking. The response: 95% positive.



Xavier University Art-to-Action Projects

Art-to-Action is working with Xavier University Department of Communications students and professors as they explore innovative ways that communication, performance and art can transform the way that people think about industrial pollution in Louisiana. 18 students developed creative communications solutions in an "art-to-action laboratory" as their final projects -- original strategies to "change the narrative" -- a puppet show, a "refinery restaurant" and a "new neighbor pollution pie". A spring semester upper-level communications course will explore these concepts and strategies in greater detail.



Today's Menu: Angola

When the New Orleans trade commission threw a swanky luncheon event to match up Angolan "local content partners" with US oil and gas businessmen— a notoriously corrupt practice — we signed up, changed the menu and the conversation.

- *Today's Menu: Angola* -

Starters: Help Yourself

Texas Tea with a Slice of Black Gold

25% of US oil imports will come from Africa by 2015.

Seafood Sampler

Angola's waters are home to some of the greatest biodiversity in the world.

Main Course: Surf and Turf

Like in Louisiana, many Angolans depend on fishing to survive.

Oiled Fish

"Most of the fishermen are now out of business and the oil leakages are now affecting in-land rivers next to the coast." – Angolan fisherman

Yours and Mined

Onshore facilities in Cabinda are surrounded by a ring of mines, the product of civil conflicts fueled by oil and gas. (Just like Angola's infamous Conflict Diamonds. Do you want to be in that number?)

For Dessert: Have Your Cake and Eat it Too

Upside Down Cake

Angola ranks 168 out of 182 countries for transparency and is in the bottom fourth percentile for control of corruption.¹ "Corruption pervades Angolan society and commerce and extends across all levels of government."²

Cherry on Top

Houston's Cobalt Energy is being investigated by the SEC and DOJ for violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act because its Angolan content partner is owned by three government officials.³

Pot de Crème

IMF is investigating a US\$32 billion discrepancy in SONANGOL accounts from 2007-2010.⁴

Aperitif: When All is Said and Done

Just a Few Drops to Finish

54% of Angolans live on under \$1.25/day.⁵ 161 out of every 1000 Angolan children die before the age of five⁶, and the oil industry's destruction of fisheries and farms makes their prospects worse.

Angola is still rebounding from greed for power and diamonds.

***Be honest. You'll make a few guys richer, and most Angolans poorer.
And if you keep this up, how will you make it to heaven?***

¹ Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index.

² U.S. Department of State, "2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes," March 2008, at 83-84.

³ Financial Times, April 15, 2012. "Spotlight Falls on Cobalt's Partner."

⁴ Reuters, January 25, 2012. "IMF finds most of Angola's missing \$32B."

⁵ UNDP Human Development Index Statistics, <http://hdrstats.undp.org>

⁶ Ibid.

Down by the River



Tulane students and LABB volunteers presented progress on the project to the public December 8.

The Lower Mississippi is one of the most transformed – and polluted -- environments in the western hemisphere. Great resistance movements launched by injustice and racial oppression also emerged from these soils– the largest slave revolt in North America in 1811, and the modern fight for environmental justice that launched in the 1980s and continues to this day.

The scale of environmental change along the river between Baton Rouge and New Orleans is mostly hidden from view behind levees and floodwalls. *Down By the River* offers an innovative web-based digital platform and digital car/bike/walking tour that invites users to “see, hear, smell” the riverscape and re-envision the lower Mississippi and its history, creating a starting point for new conversations about its present and future:

- **Web-based platform** features interactive multi-layered “storytelling” through historical and current maps that encourage users to engage and explore. The user can navigate across themes, time periods, events and geography, listen to oral histories, and connect his/her own dots.
- **Digitally-guided environmental-historical bicycle and driving tours** along Mississippi River Road and levee path. With mobile devices, users access the web platform for annotated maps that illustrate how to read the landscape and its industrial and agricultural history plus sites of historical significance for African American environmental history, such as the route of the 1811 slave insurrection. Printed versions will be distributed to local libraries, schools and tourist offices.
- **Site-specific performances** of original theater pieces developed by local partners at NOCCA at Xavier.

Down By the River collaborators include: Dr. Kristin Wintersteen (Tulane University), Dr. Richard Campanella (Tulane University), Leon Waters (Louisiana Museum of African American History), Dr. Ross Louis (Xavier University), Lara Naughton (NOCCA), and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade team.

We are currently planning and researching Down By the River. Concept sketches and documents at www.downbytheriverproject.org show our progress.