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Anti-War Protesters, Brave The Elements And Bare All In Central Park



(New York-AP, February 7, 2003) — The snowstorm closed schools and delayed airlines, but didn't deter 30 women who stripped for peace in Central Park on Friday.

Braving 20 degree temperatures and heavy flurries, the anti-war activists - ranging in age from 20 to 50 - gathered shortly after 7 a.m. beneath a park overpass at 72nd Street, where they shed their coats, scarves, hats - and everything else.

Squealing and jumping up and down to stay warm, they ran stark naked into the park and lay head to toe over letters - "No Bush" - they had etched in the 3-inch snow.

Two minutes later, the women regrouped under the overpass, got dressed, hugged and shared thermoses of steaming hot coffee and tea.

Spontaneously, 12 of them sprinted out naked again, this time spelling out the word "war."

"This was exhilarating," declared Heidi Cuppari, 29, owner of a Manhattan pet supply company. "I was thinking about all the people who are going to be in war in hellish situations and I thought I could take a little snow."

The storm began early Friday and was expected to increase in intensity, blanketing the metropolitan region with 4 to 6 inches of snow before ending by mid-afternoon, said Jeffrey Tongue, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

The Department of Sanitation deployed 350 salt spreaders ahead of the morning rush hour but roads remained very slippery. "If motorists are driving in they should use extreme caution," warned department spokesman Keith Mellis. "And if they can use mass transit that's even better."

Most schools were closed in the northern suburbs and Long Island, as were some private schools in the city.

Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman said LaGuardia Airport reported about 50 cancellations and delays of about two hours on incoming and outgoing flights. Newark had 93 cancellations and one to three hour delays. At Kennedy, no delays were reported



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but about 10 flights were canceled, he said.

Alternate side of the street parking was suspended.

The Central Park peace demonstration was organized by Wendy Tremayne, an unemployed Manhattan artist.

"I was going to start a campaign to get everyone to send stinky socks to Bush to let him know that war stinks. But there's nothing like getting a bunch of women on something," Tremayne said.

On her Web site, Tremayne still urges people to "just grab an envelope, add postage and mail a stinky sock" to the White House.

There were no police. But a lone bird watcher spotted the naked group through her binoculars from 60 feet away.

"It was definitely a nonviolent protest, with a taste of the 60s in it," said an amused Nancy Pindrus.

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