

March 2006

There Is No Peace
Without Justice

Peace Matters

KICKOFF

by Virginia Walsh, *Omaha Board*

On February 20 the first meeting of the newly formed NFP Anti-War Taskforce took place at my house. Fifteen members gathered to shoulder the work of showing sustained Omaha opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Our chapter had found we needed more time to concentrate on anti-war strategies than is available in general NFP board meetings.

Community

Our yard sign campaign was our first topic. To date we have been calling our NFP members

pairs of people are mobile billboards. NFP has two banners that say IRAQ: U.S. OUT, U.N. IN and one that reads WAR IS TERRORISM TOO. Our members signed up in pairs to display these banners in various locations with high visibility.

Lastly we planned a letter drive. Cary Vigneri will chair this effort to make effective and sustained use of our access to the Public Pulse. She is head of the Feet to the Fire subcommittee.

As we adjourned, another meeting was planned for Monday March 6 at 7:00 PM, at Elaine Wells' home, 5005 Read St., when we will report progress to date and focus on the Third Anniversary rally on March 19 at Memorial Park. Join us to say no to this war.

The Cost of War for Nebraskans: What can we do about it?

By Amanda E. Flott, *Omaha Coordinator*

What a cruel thing is war...to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world.

- Robert E. Lee

March 19th will mark the 3rd anniversary of a war that should have never happened. It is a war based on lies that has resulted in thousands of lost lives both to the United States and Iraq. This unjustifiable excuse for democracy has betrayed the core foundation of our country's values and left Americans disgusted with their own helplessness. But most importantly, it reflects the importance of hegemony and dominance our country strives for at all costs. The results are ghastly. 21 Nebraskans who sought to fight proudly for a country they believed in lost their lives. This

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to see if they wanted signs, and about 60 signs have been installed in that way. Additionally, both Unitarian churches in Omaha have offered signs to their congregations. To broaden our outreach, NFP now has prepared fliers showing a photo of the sign and describing how to order one. Members of the task force took these fliers to mail to friends/relatives and to people in other organizations they know.

Banners were our next topic. Just as yard signs are mini-billboards, so banners held up by

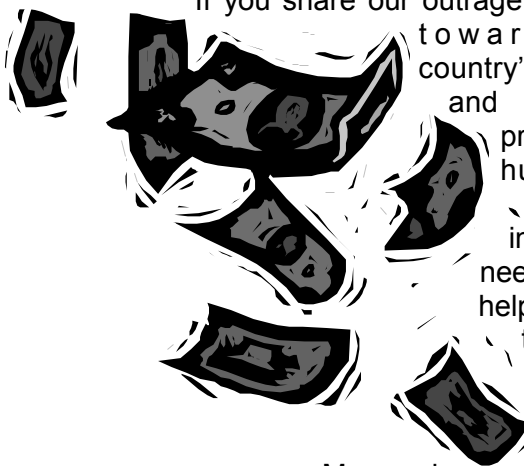


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includes 4 people from the Omaha Metro area. This may seem small in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians or the rest of the 2,500 brave American soldiers who have perished. But the point is these lost lives were all preventable. The cost of war in Nebraska is not just a body count; there are consequences in all walks of life, affecting each and every one of us daily. Omaha residents have contributed nearly \$411,476,598 tax dollars for inadequate machinery and protection for our troops. A dollar amount that continues to grow every second we continue the U.S. occupation with Iraq. With that financial relief, Omaha could have hired an additional 7,130 teachers for our public schools, added 3,704 housing units to those in need of shelter, and supported 19,947 students with 4-year college scholarships—our future humanity lying in their hands.

This year, the third anniversary of the Iraq War, is a crucial opportunity to deepen and broaden our grassroots work for peace and social justice. It is time to make this the last anniversary of this war that never should have happened. I urge you to join Nebraskans for Peace March 19th at Memorial Park on the North Side of Dodge at 3pm to say "Three Years TOO Many!" This day of direct action will feature speakers, music, and fun for all ages. We will be collecting donations for an organization called Iraqi Water Fund which helps sanitize the impacts of war on water treatment plants so that Iraqis can have clean water. We will also be letter-writing our Nebraska representatives urging them to step outside of party lines and do what's best for peace.

If you share our outrage and shame towards our country's leaders and want to provide REAL humanitarian aid to those in Iraq in need, please help us spread the word and join us on Sunday, March 19th. Every person in solidarity is another success in our global movement for peace and social justice. I hope to see you there!



ONGOING SPEAK OUT AT STRATCOM - 53 positive responses VS 4 Negative!

By Sandi Ross



Gina Zebolsky continues the Anti-Nuke Vigil commemorating the August 9, 1945 U.S. bombing of Nagasaki on the 9th of each month. February 9th

I was honored to join her; I want to share my experience that day with you.

I arrived first and in my naiveté I faced the traffic leaving StratCom rather than the general public on Ft. Crook Road. Gina was bringing the signs and since I was wearing my red, white and blue tee shirt stating PEACE IS PATRIOTIC, I just opened my coat and gave the peace sign.

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Being a Peace activist requires improvisation! My experience was fantastic, as far as I was concerned. I had 53 positive responses (I would have been happy with one). All of those people smiled, some waved or nodded AND 12 GAVE ME THE PEACE SIGN! I only received 2 obviously negative responses, 2 people gave me the finger and 2 shook their heads like, "Get real, woman!" The responses of the general public on Ft. Crook Rd. were not nearly so positive. I find that really interesting. My guess is that those involved in the war and/or facing direct participation in it have a more realistic view of war and don't just buy all of the pro-war rhetoric.

Those of us who choose peace over war need to be very active, especially at this time, in educating the public. Please join us on the 9th of every month from 4PM to 5PM at StratCom's Kenney Gate HW 370 and Ft. Crook Rd. to demonstrate that there are more than 1 or 2 Nebraskans who are outraged about this aggressive, illegal occupation of Iraq by the USA! As Thomas Jefferson said "DISSENT IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF PATRIOTISM".

Palestinian Health Care Workers in Omaha April 3

NFP will host three Palestinian health care workers at a free dinner at First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney Street, on Monday, April 3, at 5:30 p. m. Dinner will be free for anyone wanting to attend, but donations will be accepted to help create another clinic for the Palestinians. Donation checks can be written to the New Mexico Conference of Churches and will be tax deductible. RSVP to Anne Else, 556-5184, Musa Al-Hindi, 551-0674, or Amanda Flott, 453-0776. If you cannot attend and wish to donate, please mail your check to: NFP, Omaha Chapter, PO Box 34823, Omaha, NE 68134

Wisam Hasanat is a nurse who works at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation and Surgery that serves many who are wounded by Israeli settlers and soldiers. Areej Ja'fari works with the Women's Health Committee in Dary Rafat Village. Talal Shihadeh,

Human Rights

who has more than 17 years of nursing experience, works at Beit Jala General Hospital. Talal is also a founding member of Ibdaa Health Committee and serves as its Director of Public Relations. He worked at Agosta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem for 14 years, but due to the construction of the apartheid wall, was denied a travel permit to get to his job there.

The September 2004 Report of the UN Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People reported, "mobility restrictions at checkpoints directly led to the death of 24 women and 27 newborn babies. A further 46 women had to deliver their babies at checkpoints."

Answer: Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt), statement on "The War in Iraq", read on Senate floor 10/25/05. Leahy was one of 23 senators who voted against the resolution that authorized the invasion of Iraq.

Peace Matters Committee:

Editors: Amanda Flott and Virginia Walsh
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ANTI-WAR TASKFORCE Promoting the General Welfare: A one-day conference

By John Kretschmar

As members of Nebraskans for Peace know, there can be no peace without justice. This annual conference is sponsored by UNO's William Brennan Institute for

Economic Justice

Labor Studies. Each year it explores social and economic justice issues.



The target audience is community activists, academics (faculty, staff, and students), and representatives of

organized labor. The hope is to uncover some commonalities and overlap in the agendas of each group.

This year's conference will be held at UNO's Milo Bail Student Center on March 11. The opening speaker is Ed Hill, President of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). This union represents workers in construction, public sector and manufacturing. Mr. Hill will speak on "The Fight for America's Future."

There are three workshops (everyone will attend each one):

- The Wal-Marting of America,
- Unionism 101, and
- Human Rights and the American Dream.

The closing speaker is Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich. She will focus on the importance of becoming active in creating a community where the ideals of a just society can become a reality.

Registration (which includes materials and lunch) Before March 3:

General admission \$30
Students \$20

After March 3:

General admission \$40
Students \$30

To register or learn more call 595-2344 or visit the web site at <http://laborstudies.unomaha.edu/lbrconf.html>

Calendar of Events

2nd **Peace Seekers** 6:30pm at Jo Peterson's house, 4924 Chicago. A monthly support group for peace people. If you are coming and you want pizza contact Jo, 556-9057, by Wednesday.

4th **Practical Democracy** discussion and Potluck Dinner, 7pm at Peg Gallagher, 4821 Chicago #14

8th **International Womyn's Day**

9th **Peace Vigil** around McKinley Gate at Offutt Air Force Base. Contact: Gina Zebolsky 884-7598 and Sandi Ross 292-0450

9th **Board Meeting** 6pm, Augustana Lutheran Church 38th & Lafayette, lower-level multi-purpose room. All members welcome.

9th **Letter writing Event** for Members 730pm Augustana Lutheran Church Parlor Room

11th **General Welfare**. This annual conference is sponsored by UNO's William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies. Each year it explores social and economic justice issues.

19th **Three Years Too Many! Rally** Against US Occupation in Iraq, Memorial Park North Side of Dodge St. 3pm. We will be collecting money for the Iraq Water Foundation.

20th **Palestinian Rights Meeting** at Hanscom Park 7pm

25th **State Board Meeting** in Grand Island

26th **Social Justice Organization Fair**, First Unitarian Church 3114 Harney St.

Dear readers: What would you like to see in Peace Matters? Send ideas, letters or articles of 100-300 words (subject to editing) to Amanda Flott, NFP Omaha Office / PO Box 34823, Omaha NE 68134; tel 453-0776; e-mail nfpomaha@nebraskansforpeace.org. FAX 551-4011.

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Question: Who said, "The Iraqi insurgency has steadily grown, in part because of our presence there."? (See *inside*.)

