

May/June 2007

Peace Matters

There Is No
Peace Without
Justice

Annual Rice and Beans Potluck Dinner
Sunday May 6, 2007, 5:30 p.m.
Hanscom Park United Methodist Church
4444 Francis Street
(just south of 44th and Center Street)

The annual rice and beans potluck dinner is a chance to share a meal in solidarity with people who survive each day with so little. It is also the major fund-raiser for the Omaha chapter. Please bring your favorite food to share, checkbook and an open heart.

A special presentation by Frank Cordaro of the Phil Ber-rigan Catholic Worker House in Des Moines, is titled, "The Changing Face of StratCom: From Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) to Global Strike Force -- a call to continued resistance at Offutt Air Force Base."

Marylyn's Birthday Bash May 29

By Virginia Walsh, NFP Member

Marylyn Felion, former chair of the Omaha NFP board and a leader of the campaign here to abolish the death penalty, will celebrate her 70th birthday with us!

Marylyn will return to Omaha from her California home the last week in May, and we are planning a birthday bash. You are **so** invited. On **Tuesday, May 29, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at First Unitarian Church**, 3114 Harney St., we will meet for an evening of togetherness, delicious friends, delectable foods, and remarkable memories.



Thank Sens. Hagel and Nelson



Recently the Senate passed a bill that included a binding timeline to start withdrawing our troops from Iraq with YES votes by both Sens. Hagel and Nelson. This has caused a LOT of Nebraskans to call them to complain about their vote. Please call both Hagel and Nelson to tell them THANK YOU for voting to bring

our troops home. Please also write a letter to the editor of the Omaha World Herald, thanking both senators, by sending an e-mail to Pulse@OWH.com.

Sen. Chuck Hagel in Omaha: 402-758-8981

Sen. Ben Nelson in Omaha: 402-391-3411

It will be a "No Gifts But" party. No gifts, but do bring an hors d'oeuvre, hot or cold. Samples of cold: veggie tray, fruit tray, cheese tray, deviled eggs, and cucumber sandwiches. Samples of hot: barbecued meatballs, barbecued cocktail franks, fried ravioli in marinara sauce, etc. Also, if you own any of Marylyn's paintings, could you bring them so we can display her work on one of the walls? Most importantly, if you have a memory of direct action with Marylyn, or a song or poem, share that with us during the open mike session starting at 6:00 p.m.

We were so lucky to have her here and now we can say so!

Gandhi Award

By Victoria Peterson and Carol Schmid, NFP Members

Mr. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, was the main speaker at the University of Nebraska School of Social Work luncheon of Friday noon, April 6. The Rev. Carol Windrum received the Gandhi award this year and spoke briefly.

Once a social worker in India, Mr. Gandhi addressed the social workers and students in attendance. He came to the

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United States in 1988 and in 1991 founded the Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence. Mr. Gandhi challenged this audience (as he does with all he touches) to live lives that depart from our culture of violence. He stressed that nonviolence is not the opposite of violence—it is a way of life ... a way of looking at the world.

His grandfather used to say:

- ✂ Keep your thoughts positive, because your thoughts become your words;
- ✂ keep your words positive, because your words become your behavior;
- ✂ keep your behavior positive, because your behaviors become your habits;
- ✂ keep your habits positive, because your habits become your values;
- ✂ and keep your values positive, because your values become your destiny.



Peg Gallagher, Tim Fickenscher, Gandhi award winner Carol Windrum with Arun Gandhi at the awards ceremony

About 25 years ago the Rev. Carol Windrum, after receiving a calling to peace causes, convinced the United Methodist Church in Nebraska to start a peace and justice ministry. She assumed the unfunded position, later receiving funding. At first it was the nuclear freeze. Economic issues have lately become important. She ministers and teaches in both urban and rural areas of Nebraska.

Joe Volk, Quiet Diplomat

By Elaine Wells, NFP Member

The first thing one notices about Joe Volk is his bow tie, and then his calm, friendly demeanor and his clear, fascinating presentation of first-hand experiences with world

Answer:

Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament scholar and author, speaking at the First United Methodist Church on March 24, 2007

leaders. In February he and representatives of 12 other American religious groups discussed many issues with Iranian Ayatollahs, the Deputy Foreign Minister, and President Ahmadinejad. On March 30 Mr. Volk lobbied Nebraska's congressional delegation and spoke to over 70 peacemakers at Augustana Lutheran Church. He shared the following facts and impressions.

When Ahmadinejad verbally attacks Bush or the United States in public, his approval ratings rise. Maybe that's because Iranians recall that the CIA overthrew their democratically-elected government and installed the Shah of Iran and his secret police in 1953. We also installed Saddam Hussein, and supported his invasion of Iran and the killing of 100,000 Iranians. Finally, a U.S. frigate shot down a civilian plane with 300 Iranians aboard, and although we apologized, we gave a medal to the frigate's commander.

"In person, however, Ahmadinejad was centered, made eye contact, had appropriate affect, and enjoyed discourse in a way that President Bush probably would not," stated Volk. Ahmadinejad said, "Iran is prepared to talk with the United States any time, any place, on any topic if the United States shows good will," which means that the United States would back off its stated goal of overthrowing the current Iranian government.

The United States supported nuclear power for Iran when its population was only 35 million, but we oppose it now that Iran has 70 million people and needs much more energy. Iranians don't understand why they are not allowed to produce nuclear power while the United States and France do it at will. Unlike the United States, Iran is in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and after negotiations Iran would accept intrusive inspections so Europe and America could count all nuclear materials going into Iraq.

Nebraska plays a big role in U.S. policy in the Middle East,



KFAB's talk-show host Scott Voorhees with Joe Volk

Volk said. So it is critical that we talk about these issues and urge our congressmen to promote regional diplomatic talks on the Middle East. We should also support them when they vote for nonmilitary solutions, for they endure criticism when they do so.

Congressional Visits Oppose Military Intervention In Iran

By Anne Else, NFP Member

The NFP Palestinian Rights Task Force organized delegations to visit Rep. Lee Terry, and the offices of Sens. Chuck Hagel and Ben Nelson, asking them to promote dialogue with Iran instead of military intervention. The visits were scheduled to coincide with the Nebraska tour by Joe Volk, Executive Director of the Friends (as in Quakers) Committee on National Legislation. Volk, along with 12 other national religious leaders from the United States accepted the invitation of Iranian Muslim clerics to visit Iran in late February and to meet with various groups as well as with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Members of the Omaha delegation felt the visits were constructive and that Joe Volk spoke with a very high degree of measured credibility that was persuasive and informative. Michael Kelly, professor of international law at Creighton University, was one of the delegates accompanying Volk to all three offices. Kelly reported, "Rep. Terry was particularly impressed with the emphasis on talking to Iran if at all possible and indicated his agreement with that philosophy."

Kelly also said, "Sen. Hagel's office Deputy Chief of Staff Thomas Janssen was grateful for the delegation's support of the senator's recent stands on funding of the war in Iraq which called for a timetable to withdraw troops. **He indicated that their office would welcome further similar support, such as letters to the Public Pulse, to counter the reaction by those who don't want to end the Iraqi occupation.**"

The Omaha delegates included two Muslims, one of whom was a native of Iran (now a U.S. citizen), the bishop of the



Part of the crowd listening to Ms Sheehan answer questions

Peace Matters Committee:

Editor: Mark Welsch

Assistant Editor: Victoria Peterson

Layout: Carol Windrum and Tim Fickenscher

Episcopal Diocese, a Methodist minister, a member of the Unitarian Social Concerns Committee, the head of Creighton's Justice and Peace Studies Program, as well as members of the NFP Palestinian Rights Task Force. (See page 1 story)

Cindy Sheehan and the Third Omaha Peace and Justice Expo

By Jo Peterson, NFP Member

Wow! What a day! Over 800 people filled the Milo Bail Student Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha on Sunday April 15 for the third Omaha Peace and Justice Expo (OPJE) and Cindy Sheehan's keynote address. Attendees could also visit the 73 booths displaying a wide range of peace and justice activities and organizations, listen to wide-ranging and knowledgeable presenters at the 13 workshops (including one by Tim Rinne about StratCom) hear music by various artists, network, reconnect and recharge. A wide spectrum of individuals and organizations that promote peace and justice sponsored the OPJE under the leadership of an eclectic coordination committee.

The theme of Sheehan's talk was sacrifice. Among other hardships, she lost her son Casey in the war in Iraq in 2004, and she challenged those present to share from their core, not just from the extra time or money that they could spare. "The greatest threat to democracy is a citizenry not involved," she said. In this country we are all too comfortable, she said, referring to sacrifices made during World War II when people patriotically endured rationing of essential products and bought war bonds.

She invited folks to join in a "10,000-Mother of a March" on May 14, the day after Mothers Day, in Washington, D.C., to demand an end to the occupation in Iraq and risk arrest by refusing to leave until the congressional leadership agrees. The inadequate provision for service persons concerns her, and for returning service personnel she is planning a treatment facility, but her current focus is impeaching George Bush and Dick Cheney, since they have vowed not to end the war during their time in office.

Her website is www.gsf.org.



Jo Peterson during the question and answer with Cindy Sheehan

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Question: Who said, "Denial is the primary pathology of our society?" (See *inside*.)



Calendar of Events

Every Wednesday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Peace Vigil at StratCom/UNO, 6825 Pine St. (three blocks east of 72nd and Pine Sts., which is 16 blocks south of Dodge St., east of UNO Scott Technology Center.) This is a cooperative effort with the Omaha Catholic Worker House. For more info contact Jerry Ebner, omahacw@hotmail.com 502-5887.

May 3, 7:30 p.m. Holland Lecture Series at UNO's Scott Conference Center at 6450 Pine St. (a few blocks east of the Wednesday vigils). Dr. Henry Pollack's topic is: "Earth's Changing Climate: What is in Store for the Future?" Free admission. Information at: www.firstuuOmaha.org.

May 3, 6:00 p.m. Peace Seekers and Pizza, 7:00 p.m. time for discussion, reflection and leadership support at 4924 Chicago St. Contact person is Jo Peterson at 350-3019.

May 5, 6:00 p.m. Potluck meal, 7:00 p.m. meeting of the Progressive Omaha group at 4924 Chicago St. All progressive people are welcome. Contact person is Jack Dunn at 551-2552.

May 6, 5:30 p.m. NFP Omaha Rice and Beans Potluck Dinner at Hanscom Park United Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St., one block south of 45th and Center Sts. (See front-page story.)

May 7, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Peacemakers Task Force at First United Methodist Church, Room 112, 7020 Cass Street. Enter the eastern-most door on the north side. More info from Elaine Wells at 415-9500.

May 9, 6:30 p.m. (Every second Wednesday of the month) NFP Omaha Leadership meeting at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Ave. All are welcome. Contact person is Mark Welsch at 453-0776.

June 2, 6:00 p.m. Potluck meal, 7:00 p.m. meeting of the Progressive Omaha group at 4924 Chicago St. All progressive people are welcome. Contact person is Jack Dunn at 551-2552.

June 4, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Peacemakers Task Force at First United Methodist Church, Room 112, 7020 Cass Street. Enter the eastern-most door on the north side. For more info from Elaine Wells at 415-9500.

June 7, 6:00 p.m. Peace Seekers and Pizza, 7:00 p.m. time for discussion, reflection and leadership support at 4924 Chicago St. Contact person is Jo Peterson at 350-3019.

June 13, 6:30 p.m. NFP Omaha Leadership meeting at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Ave. All are welcome. Contact person is Mark Welsch at 453-0776.

July 14 in Omaha – Peace March Across America – Contact Elaine Wells at 415-9500 if you want to help with a potluck, host a walker in your home, or walk with them for a little while.

Palestinian Task Force meetings. Contact Anne Else at 556-5184 for location, date and time of meetings.