



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

APRIL / MAY / JUNE 2022 VOLUME 50, NO. 2

Niskithe Prayer Camp Statement: Our Next Steps

Written by Erin Poor (Cherokee) / Edited by Kevin Abourezk (Rosebud Lakota)



Fourteen days ago under cover of darkness, we raised seven tipis on Snell Hill and established the Niskithe Prayer Camp. With those lodges, we stated unequivocally that we will not tolerate erasure in our city government, and we will not accept exclusion from conversations that impact our sacred ceremonial sites. With our camp, we declared we are still here, we are strong, we will remain.

In the two weeks since, we have held many ceremonies, praying for our community, for our Mother Earth, and for hearts to open. We engaged in near-constant education, as we shared who we are, how we pray, and why we rise. We shared our story with hundreds of visitors at camp, and thousands more through social and news media. We advocated to city leaders for our ceremonial sites, for the land, and for our religious freedom. We shared our stories of ancestral resistance with the Bishop of the Lincoln Catholic Diocese. We gathered around rocks, fires, and drums. We sang. We endured terrific storms, near-freezing temperatures, and blistering heat. We grieved and we laughed. We were given a glimpse into a more connected way of living. We listened to each other's stories of heartache and rebirth and experienced profound moments of enduring kinship. In all things, we were Spirit-led.

Today we have better, stronger relationships with our city leaders and our community. We have the beginnings of a plan toward more meaningful representation of Native voices in city government, and we have a commitment from the Mayor to continue to work with us to honor our culture and protect our ceremonies. Yet there is so much more work to do.

conclusion on page 2

inside:

	Engaged Buddhism: A process, not a dogma	p. 6
	Please Call Me By My True Name	p. 7
Sauce for both Goose and Gander		p. 3
	What's HOT in Global Warming?	p. 8
POISON IN NEBRASKA The Alt-En Disaster		p. 5
	The CO2 Pipeline Boondoggle	p. 10
	HARD TRUTH	p. 16

Nebraskans for Peace's state office in Lincoln is located on land that formerly belonged to the Otoe Tribe.

Nebraska Report

The Nebraska Report is published four times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

Newspaper Committee:

Brittany Cooper, Editor; Ron Todd-Meyer; Paul Olson; Susan Alleman; Lois Todd-Meyer

Layout: Michelle O'Dea

Printing: Fremont Tribune

Website: Brittany Cooper; Susan Alleman

Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: Nebraska Report, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501-3466.

Nebraskans for Peace

NFP is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

NFP Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Staff

Maggie Ballard (Vice President), A'Jamal Byndon, Mallory Cranwell, Frank Cordaro, Henry D'Souza, Tessa Foreman, Tom Genung, Patrick Jones, Bill Laird, Rich Maciejewski, Patrick Murray (Treasurer), Kathy Niece, Paul Olson, Byron Peterson, Luisa Palomo Hare, Del Roper, Judy Sandeen, Renee Sans Souci, Danielle Savington, Don Tilley, Ron Todd-Meyer (President), Mark Vasina, Brian Whitecalf, Ryan Wishart, JaQuala Yarbro. Brittany Cooper (State Coordinator); Susan Alleman (Organization Administrator); Phone 402-475-4620, nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org; Mark Welsch (Omaha Coordinator), P.O. Box 6418, Omaha, NE 68106, Phone 402-453-0776, NFPomaha1970@gmail.com.

Nebraskans for Peace Chapter & Affiliate Contact Information

Crete Chapter	Pat Wikel.....	402-826-4818
Lincoln Chapter	Paul Olson	402-475-1318
Omaha Chapter	Mark Welsch	402-453-0776
Scottsbluff Chapter	Byron Peterson	308-225-1589
Southwest Nebraska Chapter	Dennis Demmel	308-352-4078
Central Nebraska Peace Workers	Del Roper.....	308-384-3266

Contact the NFP State Office for information on the UNL, UNO, UNK, Creighton & Nebraska Wesleyan University and Hastings & Doane College Chapters

Niskithe Prayer Camp, conclusion

We will continue to strive for structural change in our city. We plan to engage in coalition-building with faith leaders and environmentalists to strengthen our advocacy for the land and for the places in which we pray. We will deepen our understanding of our treaty rights and pursue legal avenues to protect our sweat lodge and the sacred land on which it stands. We will seek the rematriation of land in this region to Indigenous stewardship. And we will continue to engage in direct actions so no one ever forgets: We are still here.

To do that work, Niskithe Prayer Camp must evolve and enter a new phase of its life, one that is more integrated into the fabric of our community. We will take down the tipis from Snell Hill beginning tomorrow. On Wednesday, to demonstrate our continued commitment to our work, we will lower the last tipi, the anchor of our camp, the lodge made by our brother Leo Yankton, known now by his spirit name Hoksila Luta. We will march in prayer with his tipi from Niskithe to City Hall, and then on to the Cathedral of the Risen Christ. At each stop we will invite the leaders inside to pray with us. Then we will return the tipi to the place Hoksila Luta called home while on this earth. We invite the public to join us on this walk and to commit to an ongoing relationship with us. We offer our commitment to you in return. As long as the grass shall grow and the water runs, the spirit of Niskithe Prayer Camp will endure.

To everyone who came to the camp and to all those who supported us, we thank you. We are overcome with gratitude. Your prayers and solidarity are deeply appreciated. As we evolve, we ask you to evolve with us. We need your solidarity and support now more than ever. We ask that you continue to walk with us, that you continue to see us, and that you continue to advocate for a better world for the generations to come.

Please also consider showing your support by signing the petition. You can find it at [Change.org](https://www.change.org) and search Support Indigenous Human & Civil Rights in Nebraska (US).

WibthahoN. Pilamaya yelo. Wado.

The logo for change.org, featuring the word "change.org" in white lowercase letters on a red rectangular background.

Sauce for both Goose and Gander

by Paul A. Olson

A few weeks ago, I published the following letter in the *Lincoln Journal Star*:

I was pleased when Justice Roberts, at his confirmation, spoke of our being “a nation of laws and not of men.” ... However, outside our borders, men and not laws decide. President Biden and NATO leaders have taken to calling President Putin a war criminal. He becomes a punishable war criminal only when an international court convicts and sentences him, but the U.S. and Russia recognize no international courts. The U.S. did not accept the World Court’s judgment in 1986 when it convicted the U.S. of “unlawful use of force” in the Contra War. We have not joined the International Criminal Court, which tries those who “commit genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.” If the U.S. arrested Putin, it could not accuse him of his crimes in international courts because we do not belong to ICC, which tries them. We act as if international court decisions applied only to other nations. We say we respect laws and not men, but until we join the ICC, enforcing international law, we do not, talk about trying Putin has no international authority.

Curtis Bryant, of the NFP Anti-War Committee, and Rich Maciejewski of the NFP board have also written newspaper letters on this issue.

Some online comments on my letter insisted that joining the International Criminal Court (ICC) would violate our sovereignty. But if we do not recognize the ICC’s authority over war crimes, violations of international law, and crimes against humanity, how are we to prosecute Russia for Ukraine? Let me be clear: *I believe that Russia has committed crimes against humanity and violated international law in the Ukraine war. I believe that Mr. Putin and his senior advisers and generals should*

be tried in the International Criminal Court.

There may be momentum in Congress to recognize and to fund the court; even Republicans are creating resolutions about it, but few have called for it to have authority over all countries. However, on February 20, 2020, Representative Ilhan Omar introduced the following resolution in the House of Representatives (quoted in part):

Whereas crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes are uniquely heinous and of global concern;

Whereas the United States has been a global leader in the field of international criminal justice for atrocity crimes since the Nuremberg Trials;

Whereas the fundamental principles of the rule of law and accountability for atrocity crimes are central to the United States values and interests at home and abroad;

Whereas the United States has demonstrated its commitment to these values and interests by tangibly supporting numerous domestic, international, and hybrid courts for atrocity crimes, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Extraordinary African Chambers, and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon;

Whereas the United States further demonstrates this commitment by being party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United Nations Convention Against Torture, and the Geneva Conventions; . . .

Whereas the United States signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on December 31, 2000, but has yet to ratify the statute and join the Court as a

full member;

Whereas the International Criminal Court is an important institution in the global fight against impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide;

Whereas the International Criminal Court operates on the principle of complementarity and as a court of last resort;

Whereas because of these principles, cases are not admissible before the International Criminal Court where they are being genuinely investigated or prosecuted before domestic courts; . . .

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the United States Senate should ratify the Rome Statute;

(2) any visa restrictions put in place by the Department of State on International Criminal Court personnel should be lifted; and

(3) the United States should use its voice, vote, and influence in bilateral and multilateral relationships and institutions to encourage foreign countries that are not party to the International Criminal Court to join the International Criminal Court.

The important points in Representative Omar’s resolution are that we now espouse the principles of the ICC without joining the court or recognizing its authority, especially over our citizens; that we have not ratified the Rome Statute that created the court or become a member of the ICC; and that, to put matters less politely than Representative Omar does, we use the ICC when convenient and deny its authority when not.

Our oldest, closest allies—France, Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Greece, Netherlands,

continued on page 4

sauce for both goose and gander conclusion

Sweden, and United Kingdom—all belong to the court. Our more recent allies such as thirty-three African countries, Finland, and twenty-one Asian ones belong to the ICC and recognize its authority. One hundred twenty-three nations belong. Almost no one denies that, as Representative Omar declares in her resolution, the ICC is “an important institution in the global fight against impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.” However, Russia, China, and United States—the three largest military powers in the world—have refused to join. They do not want others looking over the shoulders of their militaries.

Russia has reason to fear the ICC because of its atrocities in Ukraine, Syria, and Georgia. China has reason for ICC fear—its tormenting of Uighurs and Tibetans. The United States clearly committed atrocities and crimes against humanity in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet, no U.S. military have been prosecuted. We are so afraid of being held accountable for what we do that we also prevent other countries from being held accountable. The ironic situation in which we are placed is that, when President Biden speaks about prosecuting war crimes in Ukraine, he seems to indicate that we will find somewhere—somewhere, we do not know where—or do the prosecution.

In the same vein, recently, Republican and Democratic leaders of the House Intelligence Committee wrote the following letter to the Director of National Intelligence:

[E]ven as we continue to support Ukraine and work to bring this conflict to a close, all elements of our government should collect and preserve evidence of Russia’s possible war crimes. We[sic] commend the Administration’s public commitments to support investigations by the ICC and other institutions into Russia’s conduct. ... Taken as a whole, the ICC possess[es] unparalleled resources and insights into the ground truth in Ukraine, which would be critically important in any potential war crimes proceeding.

This letter comes from members of the same committee that has traditionally rejected joining the ICC.

Our hypocritical position is the product of both political parties. The Rome Statute creating the ICC was signed on December 31, 2000 by President Clinton’s representative for the United States to the UN Rome Statute meeting. However, as soon as the statute was signed, Clinton said that the treaty had major flaws and that the Senate should address these flaws before it ratified anything.

Later, John Bolton, speaking for the Republicans as the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, said that the treaty would undermine our constitutionalism and urged President George W. Bush to withdraw the United States from the treaty. Bush did so. During the Bush Two and Trump eras, it became a crime for an American citizen to cooperate with the ICC. As one commentator wrote during the Trump days:

[D]espite the growing evidence suggesting that the best course of action would be a renewed effort to promote U.S. foreign policy efforts through a more formalized reengagement with the ICC, it appears that the current [i.e. Trump] Administration is pursuing a . . . confrontational approach to the ICC in light of the ICC Prosecutor’s decision to continue her pursuit of an investigation into alleged atrocities committed in Afghanistan (which might potentially involve ICC criminal action against American service-members). In fact, with the issuance of his 11 June 2020 “Executive Order on Blocking Property of Certain Persons Associated with the [ICC],” President Trump has now declared a “national emergency” related to threat of any such investigation and imposed sanctions against individuals associated with the ICC.

Biden has mostly withdrawn Trump-era rules punishing people for cooperating with the ICC. However, because of specious nationalist claims that the court violates our

sovereignty, few people in the Congress have pushed for United States court participation and funding. As the Omar resolutions says, the ICC cannot prosecute crimes unless they are egregious violations of international law and have been ignored by the national courts, as is the case now in Russia and in the U.S. with Iraq and Afghanistan. The claim that we always defend our sovereignty is specious. All our international military arrangements with other countries commit the United States to defending those countries if they are attacked, thereby surrendering the constitutional sovereignty that Congress has over declarations of war. The NATO alliance, the ANZUS alliance in the South Pacific, and our other regional military alliances all surrender, to an international treaty exactly like the Rome Statute, the Congress’s sovereign power to declare war. We should surrender sovereign power to create international peace rather to create a ring of “defensive” treaties that require war.

The International Criminal Court has one flaw the U.S. created. When we negotiated the Rome Statute, we included the idea that no one who did not belong to the court would have its citizens prosecuted for crimes of aggression, genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. Since, in all likelihood, neither we nor Russia seriously contemplated belonging to the court, we both knew that provision would keep their citizens from prison. However, that clause in the Rome Statute could be dropped as easily as a new court created by the world community [the new court solution is proposed by Oona Hathaway, in her brilliant recent article “A Crime in Search of a Court” (May 19, 2022, Foreign Affairs)]. Changing the Rome Statute would mean conceding that our warriors like those of other countries fall under international law. We would override laws passed at the behest of our military and their advocates in Congress prohibiting Americans from aiding or cooperating with the ICC. We would have to admit that what is sauce for the goose must flavor the gander’s meat. Law is not law that does not apply to all; justice is justice only when blind to differences between great and small.

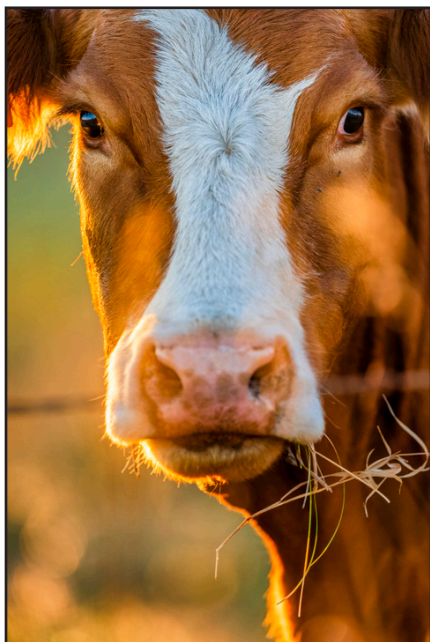
POISON IN NEBRASKA

The AltEn Disaster

THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUES

by *Former State Senator and Nebraska Sierra Club Lobbyist Al Davis*

Despite the many efforts of the Perivalon Group, Senator Carol Blood and others, it was impossible to pull LR 159 from the Executive Committee. LR 159 was introduced by Senator Blood in the 2021 Nebraska Legislative session and would have appointed a special legislative super-committee made up of members from multiple committees to examine the problems as they relate to the specific focus of each committee. The super-committee would have provided



an opportunity for the Legislature itself to gather information on the AltEn disaster without a coat of whitewash splashed upon it by members of the Executive Branch. The refusal of certain committee members to even meet with those lob-

bing for the passage of the resolution is infuriating but not surprising given the polarized nature of the Unicameral.

However, there were some victories in the Legislature for the residents of Saunders County. Through the efforts of Senator Blood an allocation of funds was set aside to continue the testing of wells and the assessment of the health of humans residing in Saunders County. Senator Blood's 11th hour effort to seek funds was supported by Senator Stinner who allowed Blood to attach an amendment to his priority bill. The question of whether this was germane was raised and the chair ruled against Senator Blood, but the vote to override the chair was successful and the amendment was adopted.

Unfortunately, there is little good news to report from Mead. The AltEn Facility Response Group (AFRG) is a coalition of seed companies who came together to manage and address the environmental crisis after AltEn's failure. AFRG entered a memorandum of understanding with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy to implement a plan for cleanup. The first step in implementing that plan was to compile the pesticide-saturated wetcake onto one site and then to cover that material with a product known as Posi-shield which supposedly will protect rain and snowfall from coming into contact with the contaminated ground and then become contaminated itself. In February trucks and helicopters applied the Posi-shield

continued on page 15

Political Contacts

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comment Line: 202-456-1111
202-456-1414; Fax 202-456-2993
www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Sen. Deb Fischer

454 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-1325 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
www.fischer.senate.gov

Sen. Ben Sasse

107 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
www.sasse.senate.gov

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, District 1

1517 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-4806
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)
<http://fortenberry.house.gov>

Rep. Don Bacon, District 2

1024 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4155
<https://bacon.house.gov/>

Rep. Adrian Smith, District 3

502 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6435
Fax: (202) 225-0207
<https://adriansmith.house.gov/>
Capitol Hill 202-224-3121
State Capitol 402-471-2311
State Senator, District #
State Capitol; PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Governor Pete Ricketts

P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244; Fax 402-471-6031
<https://governor.nebraska.gov/>



Engaged Buddhism: A process, not a dogma

by Anh Le, Ph.D.

Nonviolence is love—a process, not a dogma. We need to start with ourselves. If our actions are fueled by hatred, fear, ego, or fanaticism, they can become toxic for all involved and destroy the movement eventually.

Nonviolence is not blind. It must be born from a thorough understanding of ourselves, the situation, and the psychology of the people. Neutrality means having compassion for all, not leaving anyone out of our hearts, and not being blindly loyal to any warring party or ideology. Nonviolence requires us to know our values and stay true to our commitments. The means and the end are one, so we don't employ actions that betray our commitment to nonviolence.

A key principle of nonviolence is Ahimsa, translated as “harmlessness,” and includes mind, speech, action, and non-action. Another principle is Kazu Haga, sometimes translated as “fierce vulnerability.” Nonviolence is not about what not to do. It is about what we are going to do about the violence and injustice we see in our own hearts, our homes, our neighborhoods, and society at large, taking a proactive stand against violence and injustice. True nonviolence is action, not inaction.

I think Thầy (Thich Nhat Hanh) would agree that we must speak out and take action in the face of suffering, injustice, and oppression. Through the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings <https://plumvillage.org/mindfulness/the-14-mindfulness-trainings/> of the Order

of Interbeing, Thầy encouraged people to demonstrate nonviolence in these actions too.

Thầy constantly took action to help people who were suffering from all sides. He created the School of Youth for Social Services and the Order of Interbeing, called for peace internationally, and

Nobody has all the “facts” and the whole “truth” about any war. The peasants, 80 percent at least, just want to survive and have peace, but their voices are drowned out by the shooting, bombing, and shouting by the warring parties. These warring parties vow to serve the people, but the people generally suffer and die in the greatest numbers during conflicts. Once



helped the boat people, war veterans, people in Vietnam, and Vietnamese Americans. He wrote essays against war and human rights violations and, on occasion, fasted for days in protest. People who observed Thầy's work have been moved to protest, strike, resign, create, rebuild, care for the war victims, teach children, to help poor people in the slums and villages around the world.

a society gets caught in fanaticism, power struggles, and hatred, it's hard to stop the violence, even when it betrays your espoused values.

Nonviolence demands we always ask, Who is negatively impacted by our actions? Nonviolence means we must be ready to sacrifice, pay the price to stay true to our commitment, be ready to be unpopular, controversial, betrayed, and discredited. Thầy was considered a

Please Call Me by My True Name

by Thich Nhat Hanh

*Don't say that I will depart tomorrow —
even today I am still arriving.*

Look deeply: every second I am arriving

to be a bud on a Spring branch,

*to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile
wings,*

learning to sing in my new nest,

*to be a caterpillar in the heart of
a flower,*

*to be a jewel hiding itself in a
stone.*

*I still arrive, in order to laugh
and to cry,*

selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl,

refugee on a small boat,

who throws herself into the ocean

after being raped by a sea pirate.

And I am the pirate,

*my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.*

*I am a member of the politburo,
with plenty of power in my
hands.*

*And I am the man who has to
pay*



to fear and to hope.

*The rhythm of my heart is the
birth and death
of all that is alive.*

*I am the mayfly metamorphos-
ing*

on the surface of the river.

And I am the bird

*that swoops down to swallow the
mayfly.*

*I am the frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.*

*And I am the grass-snake
that silently feeds itself on the frog.*

*I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.*

And I am the arms merchant,

*his "debt of blood" to my people
dying slowly in a forced-labor
camp.*

*My joy is like Spring, so warm
it makes flowers bloom all over
the Earth.*

*My pain is like a river of tears,
so vast it fills the four oceans.*

*Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and my laughter
at once,*

so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

*Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up,*

*and so the door of my heart
can be left open,*

the door of compassion.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

War, Nationalism, and Climate Change

Shall we lay down a bet? What will kill our Earth as a viable home first? War, climate change, or nationalism? What if all three are intertwined, and to banish one, we have to get rid of all three? Why are you reading this column and running an acute risk of being slapped in the face with so much anguish? Here, and now, with temperatures and the carbon dioxide curve going in the wrong direction, and Vladimir Putin strutting his nukes so that

nukes, while much of the world tries to turn his homeland into an international pariah state. Russia has become a seamless tyranny, where anyone who calls what has been happening in Ukraine a “war” can go to prison for 15 years.

Big Brother never stooped so low in mangling language to produce Newspeak. In Putin’s shadow it’s not a war, but “spetz operatsiya,” “a special opera-

wants to re-acquire the Russian empire at its height, in a hurricane of nationalistic hubris. So how, all we peace makers out there, do we cool the fires of nationalism in the name of Earth’s survival? Silly question? Well, then our game is over before we begin.

Let’s try global warming. Perhaps everyone can agree that bringing down the carbon dioxide and methane levels in



We will not solve the global warming problem until we forsake nationalism as a tool of international diplomacy. They both must go as a matter of planetary survival and will require international cooperation on a level at which this planet has never before experienced.

he can invade a country that isn’t even his? Isn’t 10 time zones, (or is it 9 or 11?) enough for one oligarch?

At the time that this is being written, much of our world is at war in Ukraine, as Vladimir Putin, the brutal nuvozar of Russia, having bombed his way unprovoked into Ukraine (heretofore a civilized place) with plans to (as Col. LeMay was fond of saying about Vietnam), “Bomb ‘em back into the Stone Age.” Putin has been reminding the world that he’s got

tion.” If you say otherwise, see you in the Gulag after a show trial. Practice after me: two plus two equals five.

But hey, you say: Dr. “What’s Hot,” I know all of this. Let’s try some context. War is a very carbon dioxide and methane-intensive business. How many tons of greenhouse gases do Russia’s fighter jets pour into the atmosphere as Putin’s air war demolishes homes, schools, factories, and more? Putin is probably not in the mood to calculate such things. He

our atmosphere is a good idea. Yes, many people do, as long as someone else does the heavy lifting.

International climate conferences have become a games of nationalistic hubris as different countries debate how to deemphasize their roles in various treaties with the least pain for themselves. Everyone squabbles as the heat-holding gases accumulate, and the masters of war (thank you, Bob Dylan) still build the big bombs and rattle their sabers. This has been going on since the major tools of war were sticks and stones and the

International climate conferences have become a games of nationalistic hubris as different countries debate how to deemphasize their roles in various treaties with the least pain for themselves. Everyone squabbles as the heat-holding gases accumulate, and the masters of war (thank you, Bob Dylan) still build the big bombs and rattle their sabers.

Earth's population of human beings' major contribution to the atmosphere's load of greenhouse gases was burning wooden cooking fires. What has changed is the size of the stakes. Now, both danger via global climate travail and war seem to be racing each other to a finish line that no sane person should wish to cross. So, war propelled by nationalistic fury isn't going to save the Earth. So where does that leave us?

Carl Sagan, a scientist who was so eloquent and prescient that Harvard de-

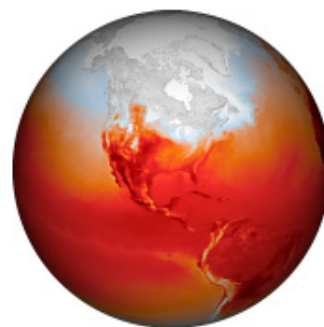
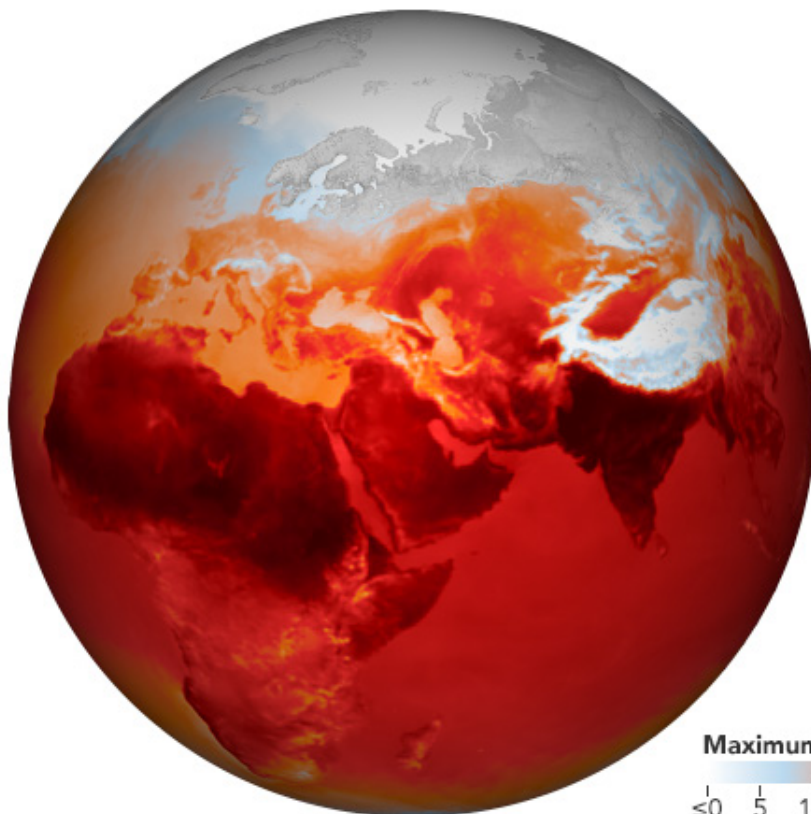
nied him tenure because he was envied by his peers, had a theory about interstellar life. Given the size of the universe, he said, it is likely that many planets exist that could have conditions amenable for intelligent life. Given distances, we probably never will meet them. Sagan took his allegory one step further: when intelligent life reaches a level of complexity it is prone to destroy itself.

So here we are, with our wonderful technology, our fossil fuels, and our history of bragging about our ability to

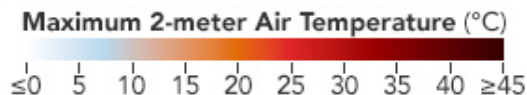
bomb each other back into the Stone Age with ever-more-powerful weapons. And so, how we are, sleepwalking every day toward Dr. Sagan's anticipation of planetary demise.

So how about dodging this massive bullet with massive changes in human behavior to favor cooperation in the name of human survival vis a vis climate changes is going to require basic changes in human behavior quickly. We will not solve the global warming problem until we forsake nationalism as a tool of international diplomacy. They both must go as a matter of planetary survival and will require international cooperation on a level at which this planet has never before experienced. Are we capable of such changes, or are we as a species, dead?

Dr. Johansen taught journalism, environmentalism, and Native American Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 1982 to 2019, when he retired as emeritus, with 55 books.



Population ≥ 1,000,000	°C
Prayagraj	45.03
Kanpur	44.95
Agra	44.72
Lucknow	44.60
Ahmedabad	44.45
Bhilai	44.43
Varanasi	44.24
Nagpur	44.00
Delhi	43.78
Amritsar	43.76



NASA illustration of how hot it got in the Eastern Hemisphere at the end of April. In New Delhi, the temperature reached 114 F.

THE CO2 PIPELINE BOONDOGGLE

by Ken Winston

Carbon capture and sequestration is very important for the health of the earth, for animal life and for addressing the impacts of climate change. Plants have been doing it for billions of years, while simultaneously returning oxygen to the atmosphere. That's why natural climate solutions like protecting forests and prairies, planting trees and native grasses and promoting regenerative agriculture are so important.

However, human attempts at carbon capture and sequestration are another story. Most of them are extremely expensive and very few of these projects have been successful. In fact, independent studies have shown that some of these projects emit more CO2 than they capture. So why has there been so much recent attention for carbon capture and sequestration? Three reasons: to keep fossil fuel projects operating; to take advantage of government subsidies; and to make the process of producing ethanol appear to be more environmentally friendly than it really is. Ethanol producers also want to take advantage of carbon credits from states like California as a means of generating profits for their investors. The federal government recently increased the subsidy for CO2 to \$50 for every ton that is sequestered.

The combination of subsidies, efforts to maintain fossil fuel use and greenwashing has resulted in several recent proposals for pipelines to transport CO2 from ethanol plants to places where it would supposedly be stored underground. Some of these proposed pipelines would run across the state of Nebraska. Although the promoters of these pipelines claim they are safe and would benefit the environment by capturing CO2 that would otherwise go into atmosphere, there are numerous problems with these pipelines.

CO2 pipelines are risky, unproven, unregulated, likely to be abandoned and trample on the property rights of Nebraskans. Our state needs to understand the risks of carbon pipelines and we must have some regulatory framework for siting and decommissioning. Nebraskans also need to be aware of their legal rights before granting permanent easements on their land to out of state corporations.

ence in dealing with CO2 pipelines. CO2 is transported at high pressure in a liquid form at very cold temperatures which can cause pipeline materials to become brittle. There needs to be testing of pipeline materials under the conditions that would exist for an operating pipeline and standards developed for such materials before any of these pipelines are allowed to operate.

CO2 pipelines are risky, unproven, unregulated, likely to be abandoned and trample on the property rights of Nebraskans. Our state needs to understand the risks of carbon pipelines and we must have some regulatory framework for siting and decommissioning. Nebraskans also need to be aware of their legal rights before granting permanent easements on their land to out of state corporations.

Risky: CO2 is both an asphyxiant (it can kill you) and an intoxicant (it can make you unable to function). It is colorless and odorless, which means that a person could be rendered unconscious or killed by a CO2 leak without warning. When a CO2 pipeline in Mississippi burst last year, cars wouldn't start, and people wandered around in a daze afterwards. Fortunately, no one died but health and safety matters like this need to be addressed proactively rather than leaving it in the hands of profit-motivated private industry.

Unproven: Unlike other kinds of pipelines, there is relatively little experi-

Unregulated: There are no standards for CO2 pipelines in Nebraska. Pipeline companies could run pipelines through residential neighborhoods or next to schools, churches or nursing homes without having to obtain any kind of siting/routing permit. There are also no standards for environmental review, which could lead to contamination of vital resources in the construction process. *The Public Service Commission only deals with oil and gas pipelines, leaving the state and landowners vulnerable. The Nebraska Oil and Gas Commission, which mostly promotes the oil and gas industry, also has no regulatory authority over CO2 pipelines.*

Likely to be abandoned. There are serious questions about the long-term viability of CO2 pipelines. As previously noted, despite years of research and billions of public and private dollars invested there are numerous questions about the effectiveness and economic viability of industrial carbon capture and sequestration. In addition, as many automakers begin to phase out internal combustion engines in favor of electric vehicles in the next 10 to 15 years, it appears unlikely that there will be sufficient demand to keep such pipelines operating and they are likely to be abandoned in a few years if they are built.

All risk and no reward for landowners: Pipeline developers have been sending letters threatening to use eminent domain against landowners who do not want a pipeline on their land despite serious issues about whether they have such authority. Landowners are being offered a one-time payment for a permanent easement on their property for a risky pipeline which would generate profits for out of state corporations but would be likely to be abandoned after the pipeline operators no longer find it profitable.

CO2 pipeline legislation in the 2022 Nebraska Legislature:

- **LB 801:** This bill would have granted state tax incentives to CO2 pipelines. This is contrary to the intent of the incentive act which is intended to attract businesses and create jobs in the state rather than pump up the profits of corporations that are already planning to locate their businesses here. In this case, the pipeline companies have already signed contractual agreements with ethanol plants and access to billions of dollars in federal incentives. Fortunately, due to opposition from Bold Nebraska and the Nebraska Sierra Club, this bill failed to advance from committee.
- **LB 1186:** This bill would have done the following: 1. Make the Oil Pipeline Reclamation Act applicable to other kinds of hazardous liquid pipelines including CO2 pipelines. 2. Provide for reclamation of land after the end of pipeline operations. 3. Provide landowners with options about what to do when the pipeline is abandoned. 4. Provide for a recla-

mation fund. All of these provisions are common sense ideas intended to protect Nebraska landowners and taxpayers so the people of this state wouldn't be left to clean up another corporation's environmental disaster. Unfortunately, this bill was referred to the Natural Resources Committee which turned a deaf ear to all of these issues.

- **LR 421:** This interim study would examine private property issues related to the use of eminent domain for pipelines, including whether pipelines being constructed by for profit companies meet the constitutional requirements of public use and whether one-time payments for permanent easements meet requirements for just compensation.

If you want more information about CO2 pipelines, here is a link to materials put together by Bold Nebraska on the subject.

<https://boldnebraska.org/no-carbon-pipelines/>

Engaged Buddhism, conclusion

dangerous traitor by both governments, was imprisoned and expelled by South Vietnam, barred by the North Vietnamese government, discredited and disowned by the Buddhist movement brothers. Thầy's students in the SYSS were murdered (one immolated herself to call for peace), and his writing was banned in Vietnam until recently. He is still deemed "controversial" among some Vietnamese American Buddhist communities.

To carry on Thầy's work, we continue to maintain engagement with and compassion for people with different perspectives, beliefs, and actions, those we have considered "enemies" or "complicit." Nonviolence doesn't mean condoning or doing nothing. Thầy wrote about Ahimsa in *Love in Action*, "When seeing social injustice, if we practice

non-action, we might cause harm." Still, he urges a course of wise, compassionate, nonviolent actions which embody our values and commitments.

Be fierce, loud, gentle, compassionate, assertive, caring, determined, persistent, consistent. Demand, challenge, fight, vote, call out, call in, educate, walk away! Peace and understanding must start within ourselves. We must first learn to deal peacefully with ourselves. Practice mindfulness to cultivate compassion, concentration, and courage. Reflect deeply and engage mindfully with people of diverse perspectives to generate wisdom and insights to inform our actions.

Accept and embrace groundlessness. In Thầy's teaching, "groundlessness"

means not hanging on to anything too tightly, similar to the idea of impermanence. It's the concept that the ground can be pulled out from under your feet any time and the practice is to be ready for it—no fanaticism, no certain answer, invest but do not become attached to results. Thầy wrote, "Techniques are always secondary."

Most important is to become Ahimsa, so that when a situation presents itself, we will not create more suffering...If we nourish mindfulness every day and water the seeds of peace in ourselves and those around us, we have a good chance to prevent the next war and to defuse the next crisis."

HARD TRUTH, continued

at UNL and full time mother of Leo, ten; Henry, three; and Grace, seven months. Through April and May this year, Anh has graciously given me her time to speak about our common interests—starting with our recognition of nonnegotiable existential interbeing.

Where I come from that translates We are all in the same boat, Sisters, Brothers and Others. Always have been. Always will be.

Within the greater subject of Interbeing, Anh and I feel called to use our resources and energy to amplify the point of view and stories of the anawim—Hebrew for the voiceless—what the Christ is said to have called the least of these.

On a national level the Poor People's Campaign has done and continues to do exactly this—to raise the visibility of the people who suffer the worst shortcomings of our society, turning up the volume so they can tell their own stories, express their own truths and school their fellow human beings as to what exactly needs to be done to end hunger, homelessness and other soul-stealing and planet-killing features of the poverty that is the ugly underbelly of our society today. The "HARD TRUTH" column just before the pandemic detailed the first efforts to establish a Nebraska chapter of the Poor People's Campaign in this state. For the last few years a modest PPC-Nebraska project has been subsumed by an older, well-established and homegrown not-for-profit, Stand In for Nebraska.

Stand In for Nebraska (SIFN) shares a host of common goals and values with the PPC, operating a legislative project for just, inclusive, earth-friendly governance,

a food pantry as part of a nurturance and wellness project, and a great deal more—including educational offerings open to all. I spoke with Sarah Sawin Thomas, a member of the Stand in for Nebraska leadership collective, who published a fine essay on human rights co-authored by Kevin Abourezk—likewise a member of the collective—on March 29, 2022 in the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

As it happens, Anh Le will have a role in a planned nurturance workshop by SIFN later this year, part of a project on somatic archaeology that recognizes the physical damage wrecked by trauma over time and across generations and cultures. For the future, Anh Le, Sarah Thomas of SIFN and I hope to join with local Asian leaders to the end of greater engagement with Lincoln's Asian immigrant community.

Community building is at the heart of all SIFN does. The bulk of SIFN funding is grants-based, and includes support from the University of Nebraska, the LPS Foundation and Humanities NE. "We work to build community by working alongside—not just for—multi marginalized Nebraska communities and through projects in which deep cross-institutional collaboration is required. Rarely these days are we engaged in work that is SIFN-exclusive. We are always partnering," Thomas said.

Remarkable among Nebraska progressive nonprofits, SIFN leadership is collective and overwhelmingly made up of people of color. Also remarkable is SIFN's pay structure. Typically in our state, such leadership (heavily white, often educated) is salaried and directs efforts actually carried out almost entirely by volunteers

(often underserved and/or marginalized people, many lacking resources). At SIFN, a member like Thomas who herself has resources is an unpaid volunteer, but SIFN members who work the food pantry (for example) who themselves lack resources are the people who get paid.



Anh Le, Ph.D.

This gives me pause. I have privately dismissed Occupy because I felt that movement, as Lin Manuel Miranda might put it, wasted its shot. But perhaps lessons WERE learned about process by a younger generation of progressives.

HARD TRUTH: Means ARE ends.

* * *

Sally Herrin: What is the story of engaged Buddhism and how did you personally find this path?

Anh Le: The term engaged Buddhism was coined by the Vietnamese

Thiền (Zen) master Thich Nhat Hanh, or Thầy as we call our teacher, who founded peace-oriented educational and religious institutions during the Vietnam War, led antiwar protests, rebuilt villages, resettled refugees, lobbied internationally for peace talks, and published articles and books on the crisis facing his country and the Buddhist tradition. During the Vietnam War, Thầy led a nonpartisan Buddhist movement that sought a peaceful end to the conflict. His activities were opposed by Saigon and Hanoi alike, and thousands of his companions were shot or imprisoned as they struggled amidst the fighting to rebuild villages and resettle refugees.

In 1966, Thầy accepted a series of speaking engagements in the United States and Europe, where he provided a rare firsthand account of the torments and aspirations of the Vietnamese. He met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Pope Paul VI, members of Congress, U.N. officials, and Thomas Merton.

In 1966, The Order of Interbeing (Tiep Hien) was formed by Thầy to combat the hatred, violence, and divisiveness enveloping his country. He ordained six members into the Order—three men and three women ranging in age from twenty-two to thirty-two. All were board members of the School of Youth (SYSS) for Social Service, which he had helped found the year before. The SYSS was a school to prepare and support young social workers who wanted to commit to nonviolent social actions to help the wounded war victims, improve lives in poor communities, and rebuild villages destroyed by bombs.

These young people were inspired to integrate traditional Buddhist teachings and virtues into their social work to improve current conditions.

This spirit of engaged Buddhism has been kept and developed in all Thầy's teaching and communities around the world. From 1968 to 2005, he was exiled from Vietnam because of his activism against many forms of human rights violations by different ruling parties. This turned out to be the great condition for Thầy to establish engaged Buddhism practice centers all around the world and to found his own lineage of Vietnamese Thiền (Zen) Buddhism, the Plum Village tradition.

How I personally found the path: Thầy's story and teaching was banned in Vietnam until 2005, so I didn't encounter his teachings until I moved

to the U.S. Growing up in Vietnam after the Vietnam war era and living in the U.S. as a Vietnamese American means that I have been taught and exposed to different narratives about the Vietnam war, but the common thread is that each side makes claims about how they are the heroes and victims and the opposite side the perpetrators of the war atrocities.

Intuitively, I knew that such a one-sided perspective was incomplete and inaccurate, but I could not find an alternative way to make sense of the war legacy and traumas. When I encountered Thầy's teachings and stories regarding the Vietnam war, I realized that this is the way to heal my personal, ancestral, and collective traumas. Thầy always stayed true to his commitment to interbeing,

continued on page 14

Your Foundation Speaks

Mark Vasina, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Donations to Nebraska Peace Foundation may be directed into two different accounts depending on the wishes of the donor. These are an unrestricted account and a restricted account. The unrestricted account goes to pay the day-to-day educational expenses of Nebraskans for Peace.

Donations into the restricted account add to the investments in the permanent endowment of Nebraska Peace Foundation. These investments bring in a yearly yield of 4 to 5% in dividends and interest. These dividends and interest then go into the unrestricted account to support Nebraskans for Peace as listed above.

Please indicate on your check whether you want your donation to go directly to the unrestricted account or to the restricted account where it will be invested in socially-responsible, fossil-free and mainly renewable energy stocks and bonds.



HARD TRUTH, continued

nondualism, and compassionate spirit by not taking sides and speaking out against war atrocities and human right violations, regardless of which party was responsible.

Thầy is on the side of the poor people who are, as a Vietnamese saying goes, “short neck and small throat,” who comprised the majority of the war victims, and whose voices were often ignored during and after the war. Thầy didn’t shy away from addressing these historical traumas but offered a compassionate, wholesome path to heal them.

I felt seen, validated, and empowered by his teachings. I am committed to continue his legacy to advocate for and heal traumatized, silenced, and marginalized communities, especially the war survivors in the Vietnamese American diaspora.

SH: Are engaged Buddhism and the Mindfulness Movement the same? One seems to be in part a fast growing capitalist industry, while one is emphatically not.

AL: Engaged Buddhism is different from the mainstream Mindfulness Movement in several aspects:

Engaged Buddhism puts a strong emphasis on keeping Buddhism accessible to all people, especially marginalized communities and poor people. This is in keeping with the tradition of Buddhism in Vietnamese culture as the religion of compassion and support for the poor. In Vietnamese culture, the world “temple” (chùa) has become a synonym for “free stuff.”

Thầy’s teachings and events are usually intentionally simple and low cost to make them affordable for most people. He also has a focus on living a simple life with few material possessions and a lot of time to heal and serve your communities, be it your loved ones, the sangha, or a social justice cause. Living mindfully like this, we could resist and reverse the capitalist mentality that “if something works, we need to commoditize it and make it exclusive.”

Another thing that I noticed is that Thầy always emphasized the importance of community building or sangha building. His work embodies the teaching to “go as a river,” instead of as a single drop of water. In terms of practice, he teaches a balance of sitting meditation and mindful daily activities, both individual practices and collective practices. In fact, he said that one of the most important things for a practitioner is to find and build a sangha to receive and offer support for each other because the inner work of healing is heavy and overwhelming at times.

When you experience a strong emotion or challenge, you are encouraged to lean into the collective healing energy of the sangha, instead of trying to solve it by yourself. In this sense, engaged Buddhism is different from the mainstream mindfulness movement’s focus on individualistic mentality.

One of Thầy’s main teachings is on the Four Kinds of Nutriment: edible food, mental consumption, life purposes, and collective conscious-

ness. He encouraged his students to look deeply into the way they are living, consuming, and contributing to their own individual and collective suffering and healing.

He taught that the volition of our lives should not be to make the most money, acquire the most power, or pursue the most sensual pleasure, but we should devote our lives to good causes that can help heal ourselves and our communities. He frequently said that we should work and consume less, so we can have more time and space to live and love deeply.

This teaching offers resistance against the grind culture and over-indulgence so prevalent in modern societies. The mainstream Mindful Movement seems to send the message that we should meditate so we can better handle the stress of overworking, but not to change the capitalist system.

SH: Can you speak to your personal mission of helping Vietnamese (and Vietnamese women especially) find their own voices to tell their own stories--not just as subjects of white writers, scholars, film makers and so on--on their own authority? What are the barriers to that happening? How can any barriers be overcome?

AL: As a qualitative researcher, I have been drawn to the concept that each researcher should be aware of and transparent about their positionality in relation to the research population and also to the idea that marginalized people should be empowered to be the experts regarding their lived experiences.

The AltEn Disaster, conclusion

to the product but a few weeks later it was obvious that wastewater within the wetcake itself had surfaced through the Posi-Shield creating large puddles on top of the material. Meanwhile under the Posi-shield the wetcake continues to decay and disintegrate which creates gas-filled voids.



Although NDEE had requested that AFRG install a liner under the wetcake, the AFRG declined to do so and NDEE did not push the issue. Not surprisingly, recent well field testing has indicated the presence of pesticides 50 feet below the surface which is within the Todd Valley Aquifer and will create a plume of contaminated water as the aquifer moves.

Further, a perplexing decline in water levels in one of the open lagoons full of pesticide-saturated wastewater indicates a potential troubling rip in the liner of that lagoon which may have allowed thousands of gallons of water to slip through the damaged liner into the soil.

The AFRG is currently addressing the hundreds of gallons of contaminated wastewater as a first step in remediation on the site. To do this the coalition has contracted with landowners to knife water into their fields. The agreements with landowners stipulate how much water can be applied but only a few neighboring landowners have agreed to take water from the plant which limits the ability of the AFRG to make a significant dent in

the amount of water onsite. In short it will take years just to eliminate the poisoned wastewater.

Last week NDEE held an informational meeting at the Mead School before conducting a hearing granting a permit to AltEn to dispose of wastewater onsite since their existing permit was expiring. Several individuals testified in opposition to the issuance of that hearing, based on the fact that AltEn is behind on back taxes, being sued by both the State of Nebraska and the seed companies, and is essentially only a zombie being held up by the AFRG to shield the seed companies from direct involvement. The permit has not been issued to date.

Finally, the question of management of the thousands of tons of wetcake remains unanswered. It seems certain that AltEn and its legacy will linger for another decade but answers must be provided and questions answered to restore the public's faith in government and its ability to manage a toxic problem like this one.

HARD TRUTH, conclusion

The voices and experiences of Vietnamese war victims have been ignored or deemphasized for decades, even though many books and documentaries have been produced on the subject of the Vietnam war. PTSD was developed as a diagnosis because of the traumas of American Vietnam war veterans, but no special resources were devoted to the Vietnamese refugees who were war victims. People have made political careers, academic accomplishments, and activism reputations out of the Vietnam war, but again, very little of

these benefits were invested back in healing and empowering survivors of the war legacy.

Mental health issues, intergenerational traumas, and poverty are ongoing problems among the Vietnamese immigrant communities. And yet, there seems to be a historical amnesia regarding this population. We are not respected as experts on the war experience, strong survivors who overcame one of the worst wars in world's history, and wise teachers who could offer practical lessons on

wars and peace.

I'd argue that our lived experiences are as important as any scholarly knowledge of the war and our voices should be amplified and respected. That's why I am committed to learning more about and speaking up for the historical wisdom and lived experiences of Vietnamese people to heal our ancestral wounds, to transform intergenerational traumas, and to start a virtuous cycle for future generations.

Nebraskans for Peace
P.O. Box 83466
Lincoln, NE 68501-3466

Phone:402-475-4620/Fax:475-4624
nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org
www.nebraskansforpeace.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 310
Lincoln, NE

HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

Building Beloved Communities: A conversation with Anh Le

This conversation (written questions and answers following) began in the Lincoln Sangha on ZOOM in April. A member of our Beloved Community made a comment referencing the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) and its current effort nationally to build community and prepare for action this summer.

The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings specifically note that a sangha cannot become a political instrument, so there was really no question of the sangha 'joining' the PPC, though we may fundamentally share a great deal. Anh Le volunteered to look into the matter, based on the PPC's shared foundational values with engaged

Buddhism. I offered my own platform, this "HARD TRUTH" column in the *Nebraska Report* of Nebraskans for Peace.

Anh Le is a scholar of engaged Buddhism and of the multigenerational history of nearly 100 years of continuous warfare in her tiny native country, Vietnam. She is full time advisor to international students