



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

FEBRUARY 2002

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 2

War and Oil

by Bud Narveson

It has become increasingly obvious to observers that the U.S. is pursuing bigger game than bin Laden in its campaign in Afghanistan. The U.S. could have called the Taliban's bluff before beginning its bombing campaign. It could have tested the Taliban's offer to turn bin Laden over to a third country for trial on terrorism charges.

Instead, the U.S. chose an alternative doomed to almost certain failure. As Ted Rall, in his column "I Can See Clearly Now the Pain Is Gone" opines: "The American military strategy in Afghanistan—dropping bombs without inserting a significant number of ground troops—all but guaranteed that Osama would live to kill another day." (Columnist Rall's work has appeared in *Time* magazine and prominent newspapers.)

Since it chose a flawed policy that has not achieved its proclaimed goal, to "get bin Laden," what then is the U.S. really after and what has it achieved? The answer can be inferred from a number of developments discussed in what follows.

The Great Game

On *National Public Radio's* "Morning Edition" (1/17/02) and in the press, we are told that the U.S. is establishing permanent bases in the former Soviet states north of Afghanistan. The move expands what *NPR*

called the "quasi-empire" of the U.S. The recently announced movement of U.S. forces into the southern Philippines is another step in the same direction.

NPR noted that such expansion contrasts with George W. Bush's criticism, during his campaign for the presidency, of the Clinton administration for excessively wide deployment of U.S. forces.

What explains Bush's reversal? According to David Ignatius in the *Washington Post* (12/23/01), "[I]t's increasingly clear that the big winner in terms of post-Sept. 11 energy politics is Russia, which now rivals Saudi Arabia as the world's dominant energy producer."

Ignatius continues: "Since oil and politics tend to flow in the same direction, the rise of Russia's oil industry will have major strategic impact. It will transform global business, too, as Russian oil companies such as Lukoil and Yukos join the likes of Exxon-Mobil and BP."

In the nineteenth century, observers of and participants in the rivalry between Russia and England for control in the Afghan region called this "The Great Game." In the post-September 11 climate, the Great Game continues, but with the U.S. replacing England as a player. The stakes, for both Russian and U.S. oil corporations, are enormous.

"What do the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea and the Balkans have in common?" asked Marjorie Cohn, Professor at Thomas Jefferson

School of Law in San Diego, in a column (August 10, 2000) in the *Chicago Tribune* headed "Cheney's Black Gold: Oil Interests May Drive U.S. Foreign Policy."

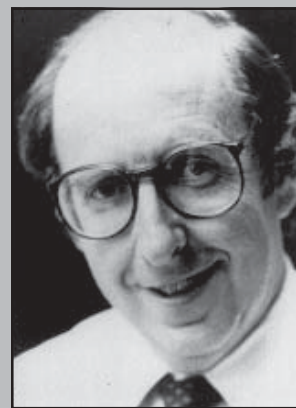
Cohn's answer: "U.S. domination in these areas serves the interests of corporate [oil] multimillionaires such as Dick Cheney."

A momentous rivalry starts to come into focus: Will Russian or U.S. oil companies control production and shipment of the vast energy resources in the Caspian region north of Afghanistan? Much points to this question being front and center in U.S. conduct of the "War on Terrorism."

In Cohn's view, the Afghan campaign takes up where Desert Storm failed to conclude: "As George Bush's secretary of defense, Cheney was chief prosecutor of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Humanitarian rhetoric notwithstanding, the bombing of Iraq—which continues to this day—was primarily aimed at keeping the Persian Gulf safe for U.S. oil interests. Shortly after Desert Storm, the Associated Press reported Cheney's desire to broaden the United States' military role in the region to hedge future threats to gulf oil resources."

(continued on page 3)

2002 Annual Peace Conference



Colman McCarthy
speaking on

**"Peacemaking
in a Time of War"**

Saturday February 16 in Omaha

See the Bulletin Board on P. 12 for details

inside:

Latin America Briefs	p. 2	A Time to Re-evaluate	p. 7
Christian Pacifism in a Time of War	p. 5	Reducing the Fear Factor at School	p. 8
"How Christian Peacemakers Think, Behave and Work"	p. 5	Teaching Patriotism	p. 8
Dr. King and the Principles for Which He Stood	p. 6	Prison Overcrowding:	p. 9
		The Year in Review	p. 10
		From the Bottom	
		by Sally Herrin	p. 12

Nebraskans for Peace
941 'O' Street, Suite 1026
Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: 402-475-4620/Fax: 475-4624
E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com
www.nebraskansforpeace.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Nebraska Report

The *Nebraska Report* is published nine 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: Tim Rinne, Editor

Sarah Disbrow, Bud Narveson, Byron Peterson

Typesetting and Layout: Ben Knauss

Printing: Fremont Tribune

Circulation: 6,700

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, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com

Nebraskans for Peace

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

State Board of Directors

Sayre Andersen, Bill Arfmann, Henry D'Souza, Bob Epp (Executive Committee At-large), Marsha Fangmeyer (Vice President), Melissa Fluent, Debbie Galusha, Michael Gordon, Richard Hargesheimer, Gerald Henderson, John Krejci, Rich Maciejewski, Carol McShane (President), Frances Mendenhall, Neil Mesner, Patrick Murray, Paul Olson, Jo Peterson, Del Roper, Deirdre Routt, Jay Schmidt (Secretary), Jeanette Sulzman (Treasurer), Sue Ellen Wall, Virginia Walsh, Jim Wiest. Tim Rinne (State Coordinator), Ben Knauss (State Office Manager), Susan Alleman (Membership Coordinator), 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, Phone/Fax: 402-475 4620; Kevin Tuininga (Omaha Coordinator), P.O. Box 3682, Omaha, NE 68103, Phone: 402-453-0776.

Moving? Send us your new Address

Name (print) _____

Old Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Old Phone # _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

New Phone # _____

Nebraskans for Peace Membership...

I want to ___ BEGIN ___ RENEW MEMBERSHIP

\$35 Individual \$25 Introductory (new member only)

\$50 Household \$10 Student/Low income

Peacemaking Covenant pledge of \$_____ per:

month, quarter, year

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION ONLY: \$10/year

Payment method: check cash credit card

MasterCard/Visa # _____

Expires _____ Signature _____

Name (print) _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Latin America Briefs

compiled by Sarah Disbrow

Bush Bypasses Senate—Appoints Reich to Latin American Post

Bush appointed Otto Reich as chief U.S. diplomat in Latin America while Congress was in recess last month. Reich's appointment was still under heated discussion in the Senate when it recessed. Reich is a relic of the Iran-Contra scandal of the Reagan administration. He ran the Office of Public Diplomacy, which was shut down because of illegalities after the Iran-Contra scandal. Christopher Dodd, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called Reich's appointment unfortunate because of his lame-duck status (Reich will only be allowed to serve until Congress recesses again) and because he is likely to impose a narrow political agenda on a region that faces wide-ranging problems. As a Cuban-American, Reich has close ties to the anti-Castro Cuban elite in Florida. Although Bush used the recess appointment powers in a way not intended by the Constitution's founding fathers, the White House announced the president's decision without comment.

Anti-Terror Bandwagon Comes to Guatemala

In November, at the urging of the United States, Guatemala established a new anti-terror commission to be led by a retired military officer. Ironically, the greatest potential threat in Guatemala comes from the military and retired military officials. The commissioner will direct a new interagency security committee dominated by military men. These men have long been behind a policy of intimidation and even murder of activists for human rights and Mayan Indians. President Alfonso Portillo also recently switched Defense Minister Eduardo Arévalo Lacs, a retired general, to the post of interior minister. Mr. Arévalo Lacs has denounced human rights groups as bent on the country's destabilization. (*New York Times* Editorial, December 28, 2001)

Peace Process Kept Alive in Colombia

A last-minute agreement between the Colombian government and FARC rebels extends the life of the FARC safe haven until April. The government had declared a January deadline for retaking the area south of Bogotá. The agreement states that the rebels will try to stop roadside kidnappings and that the government will crack down on right-wing militias.

Argentina's Collapse Linked to Global Economic Policies

President Eduardo Duhalde, Argentina's fifth president in a month, warned that Argentina is close to anarchy and blamed the free-market economic model that the United States imposed on the country in the last decade. Duhalde called the U.S. model "absolutely asymmetrical." Many of the world's most notable economists agree. They argue that Argentina's collapse is the result of the United States imposing a one-size-fits-all economic model on developing countries around the world.

Robert Kuttner, editor of *The American Prospect*, describes how the economic model that the United States exports (and the International Monetary Fund enforces) works: "Developing nations are supposed to open their economies wide to foreign investment—to allow their banks, public utilities, and anything else to be sold to the highest foreign bidder. They are to balance their budgets, restrict the role of government, discipline wages, and limit social outlays. All of this is intended to subject the local economy to global competitive discipline and attract foreign private capital. It sounds plausible, but there are several problems. For one thing, foreign investments are notoriously subject to fads and whims. Several otherwise sound economies in East Asia got into severe difficulty in the late 1990s after following the American recipe. Too much foreign capital poured in, and when the bubble burst, it poured right out again. The IMF then came in to shoot the wounded."

Former chief economist of the World Bank, Joseph E. Stiglitz calls the model bad economics and bad politics: "The IMF has pushed these economics policies without a broader vision of society... and in ways that have undermined emerging democracies."

Argentina's troubles began in the early 1990s when President Bush (senior) and the IMF offered a loan. The money was contingent on Argentina pegging its peso to the dollar, privatizing state-run banks and utilities, removing all tariffs, and allowing the free flow of capital. The economy took off for the wealthy in the short run, but tying the peso to the dollar made Argentina's exports too expensive. Factories closed, unemployment spread, the debt rose, and privatization drove up prices. A French company, for example, bought the country's water system and hiked rates by 400 percent.

The current Bush administration has denied any responsibility in Argentina's crisis. But Walter Molano of BCP Securities is calling for accountability: "It was very clearly the Department of the Treasury that pushed Argentina over the edge and allowed it to collapse... so I think the issue of accountability has to come up."

War and Oil, continued

Oil Trumps Anti-Terrorism

Today, as in the Middle East a decade ago, whenever oil policy and anti-terrorism policy clash, oil trumps terrorism.

Cohn noted the lack of U.S. zeal in pursuit of terrorism before September 11: “Cheney... favors the repeal of section 907 of the 1992 Freedom Support Act, which severely restricts U.S. aid to Azerbaijan because of its ethnic cleansing of the Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh, a mountainous enclave in Azerbaijan. Why would Cheney choose to ignore Azerbaijan’s human rights violations? Because Azerbaijan, key to the richest Caspian oil deposits, is, according to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, ‘in fact, the focal point of the next round in the Great Game of Nations, a dangerous, hot-headed place with a Klondike of wealth beneath it. It is Bosnia with oil.’”

This opportunistic attitude is shown again in U.S. ambiguous claims about the operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. engagement

in Afghanistan is “war” when officials want to rally public support for the U.S. military campaign, but “not war” when dealing with prisoners taken during that campaign. U.S. officials feel no obligation to regard those it holds as “prisoners of war” under the Geneva Conventions.

The oil exec-laden Bush Administration clearly had in mind the advantage of exploiting public outrage over the World Trade Center and Pentagon suicide attacks, whether or not that was the optimal way to capture bin Laden, and went for its bombing campaign against a country already ravaged by war.

Though George W. Bush enlisted support of other nations in his war against terrorism, in most respects he continues his unilateralism. Under Bush, the U.S. has granted itself license to send its military forces any place in the world where, in its view, terrorists are operating.

It also, obviously, has a self-granted license to turn its back on terrorists in any place where it

wishes to support an existing regime, no matter how egregious its behavior may be. (Vying for Exhibit No. 1 are Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan was the main nurturer of the Taliban; many of the September 11 terrorists were Saudis.)

Cohn draws the connection between the U.S. oil industry’s interest in Afghanistan, which has few oil resources, and the countries in the Caspian region to the north: “Because of the instability in the Persian Gulf, Cheney and his fellow oil men have zeroed in on the world’s other major source of oil—the Caspian Sea. Its rich oil and gas resources are estimated at \$4 trillion by *U.S. News and World Report*.”

In the same vein, Rall notes: “Between confirmed and estimated oil reserves, Kazakhstan is destined to become the world’s largest oil-producing nation, and will one day dwarf even Saudi Arabia.”

Cohn continues: “The Washington-based American Petroleum Institute, voice of the major U.S. oil companies, called the Caspian region, ‘the area of greatest

resource potential outside of the Middle East.’”

She quotes Cheney as remarking to oil industry executives in 1998: “I can’t think of a time when we’ve had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian.”

Bush’s ‘Special Envoy’

The importance of the oil connection, critics note, is underlined by Bush’s recent appointment as “special envoy” to Afghanistan, one Zalmay Khalilzad, a former lobbyist for the Taliban. Khalilzad had worked for an American oil company, when it earlier sought concessions for pipelines there.

A British publication, *The Independent* (January 10, 2002), said of Khalilzad, reasonably, that, “as the representative of the country that put the new government in power, he has a highly influential position.”

George Monbiot in the same journal (October 25, 2001) had noted: “In 1997, as a paid adviser to the oil multinational Unocal, [Khalilzad] took part in talks with Taliban officials regarding the possibility of building highly lucrative gas and oil pipelines. At the same time, he urged the Clinton administration to take a softer line on the Taliban. By 1997 some of the regime’s worst excesses had become public and Mr. bin Laden was ensconced in Afghanistan.”

“That year,” Monbiot continues, “the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, described the Taliban’s abuses of human rights as ‘despicable’. But Mr. Khalilzad defended them in the *Washington Post*. ‘The Taliban do not practice the anti-U.S. style of fundamentalism practiced by Iran,’ he wrote. ‘We should... be willing to offer recognition and humanitarian assistance and to promote international economic reconstruction. It is time for the United States to re-engage.’ Without such ‘re-engagement’, it would not have been possible for Unocal to pursue its goal to build a gas pipeline from the landlocked former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan, with a possible extension to India.”

(Rall explains the point further: “The shortest and cheapest of all

possible pipelines would run from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf via Iran, but lingering American resentment from the 1980 hostage crisis has prevented U.S.-aligned Kazakhstan from getting its crude out to sea. Plan B is a 1996 Unocal scheme for a trans-Afghanistan pipeline that would debouche at the Arabian Sea port of Karachi. As Zalmay Khalilzad co-wrote in the *Washington Quarterly* in its Winter 2000 issue, Afghanistan could prove a valuable corridor for this [Caspian Sea] energy as well as for access to markets in Central Asia.”)

Montbiot notes other government-Unocal connections: “As well as Mr. Khalilzad, who had been an undersecretary of defense under George Bush, Sr. and has worked as a defense analyst for the Rand Corporation, Unocal hired a string of high-profile names with connections to the region to fight its cause, including Robert Oakley, the former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan and later the U.S. special envoy to Somalia.”

Bush later appointed Khalilzad to the National Security Council, where, *The Independent* article noted, “even now, his oil contacts are bound to raise suspicions about both his priorities and those of the Bush Administration. At the NSC, Mr. Khalilzad worked for the National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, who had served on the board of the Chevron Corporation as an expert on another Central Asian state with major oil reserves, Kazakhstan.”

Montbiot concludes: “President Bush and Vice-president Dick Cheney have extensive backgrounds in the oil business, too, and it will not be lost on any of them that Central Asia has almost 40 percent of the world’s gas reserves and 6 percent of its oil reserves.”

Reflecting on these matters, Rall opines: “So the Third Afghan War obviously isn’t about fighting terrorism—leading cynics to conclude that it must be about (yawwwwwn!) oil. The invasion of Afghanistan is certainly a campaign against terrorism, but it may also be a late colonial adventure. British ministers have warned British members of Parliament (MPs) that opposing the



War and Oil, conclusion

war is the moral equivalent of appeasing Hitler, but in some respects our moral choices are closer to those of 1956 than those of 1938. Afghanistan is as indispensable to the regional control and transport of oil in Central Asia as Egypt was in the Middle East.”

The Other Big Winners in the “War on Terrorism.”

Ignatius, Cohn, Rall, and Monbiot are a few of those who point to the centrality of oil politics in the “War on Terrorism.” Meanwhile, William D. Hartung, senior research fellow at the World Policy Institute of New School University (where former Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey is currently president), scrutinizes another phenomenon: the “big ticket” spending items that the administration is using the “war” to justify and to push through Congress.

Writing in *The Nation* (1/28/02), Hartung points out that George W. Bush has quietly abandoned his campaign pledge to “skip a generation” of unneeded weapons systems and focus instead on a “leaner, more mobile” military force.

As a result, tens of billions will be squandered on, for example:

* the F-22 fighter plane, designed to combat a next generation-Soviet fighter that was never built;

* the 90-ton Crusader artillery system, too cumbersome for use on any foreseeable battlefield;

* next-generation destroyers and attack submarines for use against the Soviet navy ships “now rusting in Russian ports.”

Add the boondoggles being mandated by Congress, such as \$20 billion to Boeing to lease unneeded aircraft, and the total of squandered funds rises to mind-boggling heights.

To pay for all this, President Bush has just proposed a \$48 billion increase in Defense spending, boosting the Pentagon’s proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1 to \$379 billion. The \$48 billion increase alone is greater than the total military budget of every other country in the world. In 2001, Britain had the world’s second-largest military budget at \$34.8 billion.

The big winner, therefore, in the “War on Terrorism” turns out to be what Dwight D. Eisenhower warned of in the middle of the last century: the “Military-Industrial Complex.” Polls show the public in support of any measures promoted as justified by the war on terrorism. “That view,” Hartung says, “would surely change if more people knew how much of the Pentagon’s new largesse is serving the needs of special interests rather than the national interest.”

What About Energy Policy?

In addition, the Administration pursues its dubious energy plans, including drilling for

oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve—which would produce no oil for many years to come, and only a drop in the bucket then—while ignoring measures that would have a far greater effect.

Organizations such as the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and countless other environmental organizations point out that one simple action by Congress would result in savings of oil far greater than drilling in the Arctic would produce.

This simple action is outlined in a Union of Concerned Scientists “Energy Fact Sheet” (1/16/02) on the nature of the “energy problem” and ways to deal with it:

Problem: Dependence on Oil

U.S. dependence on oil, particularly foreign oil, carries significant economic and political risks. We import 10 million barrels of oil and petroleum products each day—more than half our daily needs. To do so, we send roughly \$200,000 each minute overseas to buy oil, contributing significantly to the U.S. trade deficit.

Furthermore, the nations dominating the world oil market are located in historically unstable regions of the world, creating complex and delicate relationships for U.S. foreign policy.

Solution: Conservation.

Two-thirds of the oil used in the United States goes for transportation. Passenger vehicles alone account for 40 percent of oil use, partly because the fuel economy of new cars and trucks is at a two-decade low.

By 2012, the average new vehicle could (with existing technology) be getting 40 miles per gallon. In just 10 years, fuel economy could save more oil than all of the oil we’d ever be able to pump from the Arctic Refuge.

Other steps suggested by UCS:

Strengthen energy efficiency standards for appliances, buildings, and industry; increase funding for state and utility efficiency programs; and adopt a renewable portfolio standard requiring 20 percent renewables nationwide by 2020.

While the U.S. continues its profligate energy waste, other countries are taking action. *National Public Radio* reported, for example, on 1/15/02, that Germany plans to build 5,000 wind turbines along its Baltic Sea coast, including some as much as 40 kilometers off shore, where the wind is strongest. This is part of its move to replace nuclear energy with renewable energy.

Meanwhile, the U.S., in its single-minded pursuit of oil profits, is the only industrialized nation to reject the Kyoto Protocol to curb greenhouse gas production. Whatever the potential consequence for global warming, the global attitude reflected in such unilateralism does not go unnoticed either here at home or in the rest of the world.

Our Children's Inheritance Global Environmental Issues of the 21st Century

2002 Winter Lecture Series • Unitarian Church • 6300 A St. in Lincoln

February 10 - “Human Population Growth”

Werner Fornos is President of the Population Institute. He is a past member of the U.S. Congress, and a past professor at George Washington University.

February 17 - “Climate and Ecological Impacts on Arctic Peoples”

Peter Collings is a cultural anthropologist who has worked extensively with the Inuit. He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

February 24 - “Indigenous Peoples, Species Preservation and Biodiversity”

Naida M. Loskutoff is a Reproductive Physiologist at the Center for Conservation and Research of the Henry Doorly Zoo, Research Coordinator in the South African Center for Conservation and Research in the Republic of South Africa, and an Adjunct Professor in eight universities in the United States and South Africa.

March 3 - “A World-wide Perspective on Water”

Don Wilhite is Director of the National Drought Mitigation Center and International Drought Information Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Professor Wilhite has been designated as the Leslie Hewes Scholar for the Winter Lecture Series.

March 10 - “Food for the World”

Kenneth G. Cassman is Professor and Head, Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

March 17 - “Africa’s Disappearing Water”

Robert Hitchcock is a Professor of Anthropology, a member of the faculty of International Studies, and Coordinator of African Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

March 24 - “Afghan Dinner and Panel Discussion”

The 7th session will be a dinner provided by the UNL Afghan Student Association with the proceeds from the dinner going to Afghan Refugee Relief Efforts. Information on the panel discussion will be announced at a later time.

Each lecture runs from 7:00-9:00 p.m., except for the March 24 program which begins at 6:00 p.m. All events are open to the public and free of charge. Call 402-483-2213, or email unitarian@inebraska.com for more information. The Winter Lecture Series is sponsored by The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln.

Christian Pacifism in a Time of War

by Lisa Knopp

Sunday, January 20, 2002, about 40 people gathered at Antelope Park Church of the Brethren for the forum on “Christian Pacifism in a Time of War,” an event organized by the Outreach Committee of that church. Each of the six panelists were members of one of the three historic peace churches—Mennonite, Friends (Quaker), and Church of the Brethren—denominations which hold central Jesus’s call to transform situations through love, forgiveness and reconciliation rather than to “settle the score” through force or retaliation. The following is a list of the panelists and their topics:

Joyce Petry, pastor of Antelope Park Church of the Brethren, spoke of the Biblical foundations of the peace position, stressing Jesus’ command for us to love our enemies (Matt. 5:38-48) and his broad definition of those whom we should see as our neighbors (Luke 10:25-37).

Noel Ditmars of the Holmesville, Nebraska, Church of the Brethren surveyed the position of the three historic peace churches in the U.S., from the Revolutionary to the Vietnam War, and the struggle for the members of these churches to have their refusal to take up arms honored by the U.S. government.

William Unrau of Antelope Park Church of

the Brethren set forth seven principles of Christian pacifism in “How Peacemakers Think, Behave, and Work.” (See below)

Dan Schlitt of the Friends Meeting suggested alternatives to military action in Afghanistan as informed by the Sermon on the Mount.

George Eisele of Antelope Park Church of the Brethren spoke of his volunteer work with Alternatives to the Military, a committee of Nebraskans for Peace, in which he informs area high school students of non-military ways to serve their country and to accomplish their career goals.

Steve Ratzlaff, pastor of First Mennonite

and member of the board of directors of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, spoke of the refusal to pay for war as the logical next step for war resisters, following conscientious objection. The establishment of a Peace Tax would allow war resisters to put their tax dollars into a fund reserved for non-military uses.

Following the presentations, members of the audience discussed whether Christian pacifists should remain separate from or participate in political processes; that there is not just one Christian pacifist position; how pacifism is treated by the media; how Christian pacifist policies could lessen the threat of terrorism; and the need for levity as we pacifists witness for peace.

“How Christian Peacemakers Think, Behave, and Work”

by William Unrau

1. Peacemakers seek to preserve all of God’s creation.

Despite all the good our culture promotes, to a large extent we have become a violent society. We contend with domestic violence, with media violence, with environmental violence, with penal violence, and with violent play activities for our children. Creation-threatening violence is the social climate in which we live.

It is of interest to me to note that way back in Old Testament times when God’s people were about to enter the Promised Land, their leader laid out this challenge: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live... (Deut. 30:19)

This choice between life and death, between preserving the world and destroying it is set before us very starkly at this point in time.

2. Peacemakers understand how things are related, how things connect.

They understand that the global community is an interdependent society. The choices we make, and the policies we shape, too often serve our own interests, but are detrimental to the needs of others.

Rather than spending enormous sums to become the world’s leading military power, peacemakers work at sharing the world’s resource so all can live. They enlist cooperation, work for what is just, they discern options. Power generates fear, hatred, and control. Peacemakers seek to reconcile differences, to negotiate, and to seek common ground.

Peacemakers do not seek to avoid conflict, but try to deal with it in constructive ways so that both parties in a conflict learn, and find a reason to change.

3. Peacemakers share the necessities of life with friends and enemies alike. (Rom. 12:20; Matt. 25:31-46)

From the New Testament perspective we are called to feed the hungry whether they are enemies or not. The necessities of life are seen as a moral right to all people.

Peacemakers do not classify people as good or bad, friends or enemies, allies or enemy nations, Christian or Muslim, White or Black. Peacemakers regard others as God does, as created in the image of the God-Self who bestows grace upon all people.

Peacemakers seek to meet human need as a shared endeavor regardless of religion, race, or political ideologies.

4. Peacemakers pray for peace. (1 Tim. 2:1-2)

It is often said that prayer is a passive response to war and conflict, an easy way to avoid responsibility. But peacemaking is not just a technique: it is deeply rooted in our spirituality. The nonviolent Mohandas Gandhi said: “Prayer is not an old woman’s amusement. Properly understood and applied it is the most potent instrument for action.”

Reflective prayer is a way of relating to others and taking their concerns seriously. It is not a substitute for action; it is the springboard that moves us into action.

5. Peacemakers understand that life is worth sacrificing for... that death is not the end, or a lost cause. (John 15:13; 2 Tim. 4:6,7)

They know that what they do does not always bring immediate results. Nevertheless, people who are brought face to face with the utter senselessness of violence often become the most ardent pacifists.

Many of us, I’m sure, would like to have seen Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolent racial efforts continue. But whether that would have been more significant than being gunned down for a righteous cause is hard to say. As the decades roll by the “Dream” has not been forgotten.

In the New Testament, it is the nonviolent Christ’s death and resurrection that validates the Gospel, and that models life for his followers.

Back in the 1930s when the fascist dictator Mussolini in Italy forced all young men into the army, a school teacher in Sicily posted on a public bulletin board that he could not join the army for conscience reasons, and then signed his name. Soon the guards were ordered to take him out to be shot to death. On the way he was asked why he placed his notice on the town board when he knew that it would do no good, when he knew the consequences? He simply replied, that he did not want it to be unanimous. This teacher’s death was not in vain.

Peacemakers look to God’s future rather than their own, just as Jesus did. According to these witnesses, “self preservation” just won’t cut it.

6. Peacemakers respect their enemies. They love them. That is, they believe that a hostile relationship can be transformed. (Matt. 5:43-45)

All of us must learn to have the capacity to forgive. If we cannot forgive, we cannot love. The evil that person does never quite expresses all that this person is. Love tries to see the totality of a person... the way God sees a person. The goal in loving enemies is not to outwit or to defeat the enemy, but to earn his/her respect and understanding that can provide options for a change of heart.

Returning hate for hate (revenge... retaliation) simply multiplies it. Hatred destroys the soul and the personality of the hated and the hater. Hatred deforms; love transforms. We are called to

continued on page 11



Dr. King and the Principles for Which He Stood

by *Lela Knox Shanks*

Lifelong civil rights activist and Nebraskans for Peace founding member Lela Knox Shanks was one of the speakers at the Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration held on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus January 21, 2002. At the request of the Nebraska Report, Lela has graciously permitted us to reprint the full text of her always insightful, and always frank, observations.

Good Afternoon! And thank you, so much, to the committee, for permitting me to share some thoughts on Dr. King and the principles for which he stood.

In a capsule, Dr. King, to his core, at his very essence was first and foremost a human being who was a minister of God, a man motivated by a deep abiding faith in God. He believed in the redemptive power of love; and the redemptive power of unearned suffering. He based his young, short life and actions and his leadership of the nonviolent civil rights movement on the teachings of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus that said, first, to love your enemies; secondly, to forgive your enemies; and finally, to reach a point where you could even become reconciled with your enemies. The question has to be asked of us as we sit here in this moment of history, how many of us would follow Dr. King today in view of September 11? Dr. King said that if we follow the code of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, then we would all end up, blind and toothless.

And after studying the work of Mohandas Gandhi and other followers of nonviolence who worked to bring about positive change, he was convinced that, "It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it is nonviolence or nonexistence."

When Dr. King spoke, his message was to all of us, blacks and whites, browns and reds, etc., to everybody. But it was especially a message to black people who were participating in the nonviolent demonstrations. They were required to go through nonviolent training, and had to agree not to strike back. When American terrorists killed black people at will and with impunity, Dr. King did not suggest that black people go out and profile



Lela Knox Shanks

all white people. When the four little black girls were killed by American terrorists as their church was bombed on Sunday morning, Dr. King did not say, we must get revenge and strike back.

Instead, he said, "We must not drink from the cup of bitterness and hatred." He said we must not let this "lead us to distrust all white people," nor should we "wallow in the valley of despair."

It has taken our government all of these 40 years to finally identify and arrest the third American terrorist accused of killing those four black girls.

But Dr. King said, "The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

Once again, in view of September 11, Dr. King's words resonate and ring out to us today even as we bomb Afghanistan, one of the poorest nations in the world.

Dr. King spoke out on the critical issues of his day, and challenged the government on all levels to engage in positive change. He took a stand against 1) poverty; against 2) racism; against 3) all injustices everywhere; and last but not least, he took a stand against 4) militarism—a stand which some believe sealed his fate. He was assassinated one year to the day that he delivered his sermon opposing the Vietnam War.

In 1975 in Senate testimony, the FBI admitted that it had harassed and tried to discredit Dr. King for six years even though it had no legal authority to do so. It also admitted that it sent him an anonymous threatening letter trying to induce him to commit suicide. It also admitted trying to prevent him from receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and from seeing the Pope.

When Dr. King spoke out against poverty, his words were prophetic for us today, when he said: "...if something isn't done, and in a hurry, to bring the colored peoples of the world out of their long years of poverty, (out of) their long years of neglect, the whole world is doomed..." And unlike much of the discourse since September 11, Dr. King believed that we have to look "beyond the effects "and "grapple with the underlying causes," looking at the hard, cold, brutal facts.

Dr. King also wrote of his disappointment with the white church and its leadership. He spoke of "The appalling silence of the good

Martin Luther King, Jr.

by *Erin Young*

Fifth-grader Erin Young of Brownell School in Lincoln was one of four students chosen city-wide to read her essay about Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Nebraska State Capitol January 18 at the annual commemoration honoring Dr. King's birth. Both Governor Mike Johanns and Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely were in attendance and were privileged to hear Erin's thoughtful words. Our thanks to Erin and her parents for permitting us to reprint her essay in the Nebraska Report.



Martin Luther King, Jr. He is a person who will be known throughout history as a person who tried to rid the world of prejudice and discover peace in the cruel world that he lived in. We should try to remember him the way he wanted to be remembered, as a bringer of peace.

I think Martin's view of what has happened since the September 11th attacks would not be a very happy one on the way America and Afghanistan are handling the problem. I think he would

speaking out strongly about how we should try working on building a better alliance with Afghanistan instead of dropping bombs all over their country. He would speak of better ties, where nations might fight against wars instead creating them. He might speak about the children in both countries trying to deal with fact that there is a war going on between our countries and the fact that some of them are hoping or mourning for a beloved person who away fighting in the war.

Think, he would say, think about what you are about to do before you take the action and do it. Remember that the people that are being killed be they American or Afghani are all people and they are both fighting for something that they know. Their countries, their law, and their order.

He would talk about a new dream, a dream of a peaceful nation. A nation where children can learn about wars past, not watch a war being fought around them where their lives are torn apart and people that they know seem to vanish inside a thick, heavy curtain of death. He would talk about how his dream could be accomplished and how we could work to keep that dream alive and the ties growing stronger with each passing day.

Remember Martin Luther King, Jr. Remember how he worked to bring peace to a nation full of prejudice and remember that anything can be accomplished if we work together to make that dream come true. Remember what he said when all seemed hopeless. He said, "I have a dream."

people,” and their support of segregation and the resulting cruelties it inflicted on a whole people. As the son and grandson of Christian ministers, he spoke often of his love for the church. But he wrote: “If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring... and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the 20th century...” He continued: “Maybe I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church...as the true ecclesia and the hope of the world.”

I think it is important to also look at Dr. King within the context of being a husband and a father. He had a growing family to support—a wife and children. But earning money and acquiring wealth was not Dr. King’s priority. I doubt that he started his day by checking out what his stock was worth. Neither did he let “job security” or the lure of “tenure” stop him from standing up and speaking out for what he knew deep within was right.

It is my observation that around this time every year near Dr. King’s birthday, or in February, we in Lincoln come together at the breakfast or at other gatherings, perhaps sitting next to someone, not from our neighborhood or not from our ethnic group, and we join hands and sing nostalgically, “We Shall Overcome.” And we leave feeling good. But then, for the most part, we go back to our de facto segregated neighborhoods, to our de facto segregated churches, to our de facto segregated work places, to our de facto segregated clubs, living our de facto segregated lives, until this time next year. But separating ourselves out away from people who look different from us was not what Dr. King was about. He said “...segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority, and the segregated a false sense of inferiority...” And today, despite the DNA evidence that there is only eight-tenths (.8) of one percent (1%) difference in any two human beings anywhere on earth, the myth of white skin superiority persists.

In his day, Dr. King was labeled a radical, an extremist, a Communist, an outside agitator, a troublemaker. One can only speculate about who among us would have been a follower of Dr. King in his day. When our family worked in the Civil Rights movement in Kansas City, we were shunned. It was thought that you had to be crazy to defy the

continued on page 11

A Time To Re-evaluate

by Charlie Joiner

In November 2000, as he was traveling home from the School of the Americas protest at Fort Benning, Georgia, Nebraskans for Peace State Board Secretary John Krejci stopped for a few days at “Nature’s Spirit,” an alternative community located “in the South Carolina uplands in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.” The following article by community member Charlie Joiner appeared in the community’s Fall 2001 newsletter shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attack, and, in John words, “gives us a chance to reflect on our ‘American’ lifestyle while giving us a reason for some of the hostility and hatred that have been directed against us.” To provide a context for Charlie’s comments, we are including a short description of Nature’s Spirit’s philosophy and outlook written by fellow community member Andy Morikawa.

“Nature’s Spirit is leading the new century search for sustainable alternatives for living simply, in harmony with nature and spirit. A principle purpose of Nature’s Spirit is to provide, in its model village setting, a peaceful, vital environment in which searchers and seekers may come to experience renewal and inspiration. Sound ecological principles are shared; responsible purposes inform the village’s design and community structure.

Nature’s spirit provides both an active learning community and a safe haven for retreat. The village and retreat center, surrounded by forest lands and extensive organic gardens, are situated on 200 acres surrounding a spring-fed lake. Nature’s Spirit provides an inspiring environment for retreats and programs of spiritual development. Year-round, the resident staff and visiting faculty conduct programs on simple living practices, intercultural dialogue and exchange, and leadership cultivation. Guest and retreatants are invited to participate in many aspects of community life, including common meals and morning meditation. In addition to the retreat center, Nature’s Spirit operates a core group of community businesses in crafts, sustainable agriculture and sustainable wood products to support its activities.

In four short years, the 12 members who serve full time in residence have built the Nature’s Spirit village, applying advanced solar power technology and adaptive construction methods that employ natural, indigenous building materials. Nature’s Spirit has completed construction of three, single-family dwellings, eight retreat cabins, an intern house, and a meeting facility for groups up to 30 participants. The Peace Harmony Center (retreat house) ...is nearing completion. Community facilities also include wood shop, lumber mill, wood-drying kiln, solar greenhouses, tennis court, and transition housing for new residents and guests...”

For more information, readers can visit their website:
www.NaturesSpirit.org.

Like you, all of us at Nature’s Spirit were shocked by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. We feel great empathy for the victims, their friends and family. While this is clearly an evil deed, as bin Laden offers no hope for others except destruction, it is also a wake-up call for us to examine our life.

Our government will take the necessary measures to rout out this evil force of terrorism, but we still are called to do our own work. The truth is, our American lifestyle is slowly destroying the thin film of life that exists on our earth. Scientists have no doubt about Global Warming and agree on its effects (www.ipcc.org). The fossil fuels that cause most of this are also in limited supply. If the rest of

the globe were to adopt our lifestyle, it would take three earths to support it. Put simply, there is no way the disadvantaged can enjoy our way of life. The Earth’s resources will not allow us to rebuild Afghanistan and other countries to emulate our lifestyle.

Our system of continual growth and consumerism only leads to greater waste and oppression of those in underdeveloped nations. We benefit through the poverty of others. We have played a role in the frustration that we see emerging from many Muslims who live in deprived conditions. It may be time to examine our compassion for our brothers and sisters throughout the world along with our own way of living. Just as we have the technology that allows us to take the lead in the elimination of the evil network of terrorists, we have excellent technology to help us in developing a more sustainable lifestyle for all members of the global community as well as ourselves. We also have a history of human rights and individual freedoms to build on. We have great strengths as a nation.

Simple living does not mean going back to a primitive way of life. Take for example our energy usage. We do not have to drive gas guzzling SUV’s or pickups. I recently purchased a VW Jetta that gets over 50 miles per gallon in the city and more on the highway. There are options today. Solar energy is a technology that is well developed. It works and can be used by anyone. We use it exclusively in our new homes in the Village at Nature’s Spirit. You can install panels on your roof and use the grid for supplemental or backup electricity. This is an ideal situation. During the day when power companies have their greatest demand, the solar panels generate excess energy. In the evening when power companies have a surplus of energy and there is none from the solar system, you rely on the grid. Couple this with some simple energy saving ideas: compact fluorescent lights, energy efficient refrigerators, front-loading washers, gas dryers, gas stoves, gas heat, on-demand water heaters, plenty of insulation and minimal living space, and you can make a significant difference in energy consumption from sources that damage the environment.

We need to think about more than physical things, however. It is a time to reexamine our relationship with all those we interact with... Faced with the senseless death of so many people, we cannot fail to realize the temporality of our own life on Earth. It makes us search inwardly for answers to questions, such as what is the purpose of life, who am I, what am I supposed to be doing, and what happens after death? The answers to these questions can come from our spiritual practices and the wisdom of our religious traditions. At Nature’s Spirit, spiritual intent is foremost in our lifestyle. This is not to imply that we have the answers, but that we give priority to seeking to know God and to understand and apply the wisdom taught by the traditions of our individual faiths.

It is also time to look at our relationship to the natural environment, to all living beings and inanimate things. According to the Bible, God created the world in goodness to set humans to “till” and “keep.” It seems that our role is to be stewards of creation. It is in our interest as well as duty to expand our consciousness by examining how we are impacting all of God’s creation. What are we doing to the forests, the birds, the fish, the soil, the water and the air? All these plus many more play a part in our life system. We live in an interdependent world and we have been given extraordinary capabilities to understand and protect them. It is important for us to know how we are affecting other beings through our lifestyle choices.

We invite you to join us at Nature’s Spirit to continue this timely discussion, as many of you have ideas and have made lifestyle choices that are to be admired...

Reducing the Fear Factor at School

by Sarah Disbrow

School kids have more to fear these days than flunking a test. Threats of violence in and around schools have sadly become commonplace. So commonplace that the latest shooting tragedy received only brief notice on a back page of the *Lincoln Journal Star*: An argument outside a residence hall at a North Carolina college this month sparked a gun battle that killed Darris Morris, an all-conference linebacker in the South Atlantic Conference, and wounded four other students.

The latest shooting is an exception in one way. Most school-related violence takes place among much younger kids. The United States has the highest incidence of adolescent homicides in the developed world. When nearly one out of three boys in Nebraska admits to having carried a weapon in 1999 for reasons other than hunting, and almost half of all boys have been in one or more physical fights a year (not to mention 20 percent of all girls), it's clear that the culture of violence has arrived in the state. A middle school administrator in Lincoln recently took early retirement out of frustration because he found himself constantly taking guns off kids in and out of school.

What steps can the legislature take to help restore civility in Nebraska's schools? This month Sen. David Landis introduced LB 1083, the "Community Violence Prevention Act," which takes a comprehensive approach to the prevention of violence.

Recognizing that violent behavior has complex causes, Sen. Landis created a three-part bill that addresses causes that arise in and outside the school community. They include easy access to guns, bullying, and the knee-jerk use of violence to settle arguments. This mix of factors creates a climate of apprehension and fear that, in the language of the bill, keeps schools "from being effective communities of learning."

The bill argues that teachers "should not have to worry about assaults or verbal abuse from students," and students "should not be distracted from learning or have to stay away from school out of fear for their personal safety." Dan Olweus, a leading authority on youth violence, reports that 7 percent of eighth-graders in the United States stay home at least once a month because of chronic fear. In Nebraska, the number of kids too scared to go to school is about 4 percent.

The first step in the Landis bill is to keep guns away from kids by requiring safety locks on guns or keeping guns locked up in the home. According to a 1996 study, home is where the guns are. More than half of all households in the United States keep firearms. The majority of the guns that kids carry are not stolen or bought on the black market, according to Lincoln Police Chief Casady, they come from home. Parents may not think their kids know where the guns

are, but they do, says Casady. All Lincoln Police Department officers have gunlocks as standard equipment. Why not homeowners? Casady, along with the Nebraska Fraternal Order of Police, is a strong supporter of the gunlock provision. Even the National Rifle Association promotes the use of gunlocks, and 18 states already have these laws in place.

The second step in the Landis bill is a state-wide school policy on bullying. The facts about bullies are chilling: 60 percent of kids characterized as bullies in sixth through ninth



Sen. Dave Landis

grades had at least one criminal conviction by age 24. Just as chilling are the facts about the bullied: most of the kids involved in school shootings were early victims of bullying. Ten to 15 percent of children are bullied regularly, and most bullying takes place in school, often right in the classroom.

When schools adopt anti-bullying programs, the effect ripples through the community. Norway's intervention program not only cut bullying by half and improved the social climate in the schools, it also lowered the incidence of bullying off school grounds among unsupervised kids. Anti-bullying programs in the United States also reported successes, including huge cost benefits. The Washington Institute for Public Policy found that for every dollar spent on a bullying prevention program the state saves \$5.29. The costly side effects of bullying have been well documented. They range from anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and drug use to suicide and homicide.

The third step in the Landis bill is to teach kids how to settle conflicts peaceably. Kids can recognize a good thing when they see it. But they have to see it first. A school in Oakland transformed itself by putting conflict resolution at the top of its list of priorities. Students at the Emiliano Zapata Street Academy check in twice a day with a "consulting teacher." If there are any conflicts between the students, they have to work them out before going back to class. The effect is that the students themselves stop each other from fighting because, as one kid put it, "We don't want anyone to mess up the good thing we have here."

LB 1083 would require that schools teach conflict resolution strategies as part of the curriculum. At the same time, the community would step in by teaching these skills in before- and after-school programs. Nebraska is set to receive \$1.5 million in federal grants for new "community learning centers." Let's make sure when we get this money we use some of it to teach kids the skills that can help them live, and let live.

Teaching Patriotism in Nebraska's Public Schools

by David Moshman

Among the most paradoxical results of the events of last September 11 are the simultaneous increase in (a) rhetorical support for American freedom and (b) extraordinary restrictions on the freedoms of Americans. Intent on doing their part, schools across the country have redoubled their efforts to indoctrinate students in American values, oblivious to the fact that freedom from indoctrination is itself a core American value.

In Nebraska, the State Board of Education has rediscovered Nebraska's 1949 Americanism law and has rewritten accreditation standards to force compliance with some of its most unAmerican provisions. With this in mind, let me recall a bit of history. In January 1942, seeking to foster "the ideals, principles and spirit of Americanism," West Virginia mandated that teachers and pupils in public schools regularly salute the flag and pledge their allegiance. All over the country, young Jehovah's Witnesses refused to participate in such rituals. To their families, the salute and pledge violated God's commandment in Exodus: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them." The national crisis over compulsory Americanism soon reached the U.S. Supreme Court. In *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), the Court rejected indoctrination as inconsistent with the constitutional basis for democratic self-government:

"There is no mysticism in the American concept of the State or of the nature or origin of its authority. We set up government by consent of the governed, and the Bill of Rights denies those in power any legal opportunity to coerce that consent. Authority here is to be controlled by public opinion, not public opinion by authority."

Without questioning that "national unity is the basis of national security," Justice Robert Jackson observed that the promotion of national unity could proceed via "persuasion and example" rather than "compulsion." Efforts to "coerce uniformity of sentiment" were unnecessary and dangerous:

"As governmental pressure toward unity becomes greater, so strife becomes more bitter as to whose unity it shall be. Probably no deeper division of our people could proceed from any provocation than from finding it necessary to choose what doctrine and whose program public educational officials shall compel youth to unite in embracing."

Coercive efforts to achieve unity, the Court warned, would undermine the legitimacy of schools. Instead, public schools must respect democratic principles of intellectual freedom: "Free public education, if faithful to the ideal of secular instruction and political neutrality, will not be partisan or enemy of any class, creed, party, or faction."

But what about the community interest in social cohesion and patriotic commitment? Diversity and liberty, insisted the Court, are not threats:

"We apply the limitations of the Constitution with no fear that freedom to be intellectually and spiritually diverse or even contrary will disintegrate the social organization. To believe that patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds."

Six decades later we have forgotten that democracy requires intellectual freedom, and is thus inconsistent with forms of schooling that, as Justice Jackson put it, "strangle the free mind at its source." At least in a time of national crisis, we think, core patriotic commitments must be inculcated directly and must remain unquestioned. Differences of opinion are still permitted, but only within a range of politically acceptable views.

We should know better. Intellectual freedom is not a luxury to enjoy when times are good. On the contrary, we need it most when times are tough. Writing in the middle of World War II, Justice Jackson courageously acknowledged the breathtaking scope and depth of the First Amendment:

"Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order."

"If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein. If there are any circumstances which permit an exception, they do not now occur to us."

NFP member David Moshman is a professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and policy coordinator of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska. A version of this article originally appeared in the January 14, 2002 Lincoln Journal Star.

PRISON OVERCROWDING

Can We Build Our Way Out?

by John Krejci, Emeritus Professor
Sociology and Social Work
Nebraska Wesleyan University

If you want to see what kind of housing 75 million dollars can buy, take a drive South on Highway 50 and visit Tecumseh, the site of Nebraska's new maximum security prison. You might have seen the billboards advertising for the 400 new employees needed to staff it. (See picture.) It will cost an additional 15 million dollars annually to operate it. Building and operating prisons absorbs a lot of tax dollars. Some Nebraskans are asking if there is another way to solve the problem.

No doubt there is severe overcrowding in Nebraska prisons. Our prison population runs about 160 percent of design capacity. With the 960 beds in Tecumseh, the overcrowding rate will drop to about 105 percent. If this level could be maintained, we could breathe a sigh of relief. Unfortunately, Nebraska Department of Corrections research paints a less rosy picture. (The data cited in this article is from "Core trends in Nebraska (1990-Present) and Other Data," October, 2001.)

Whereas prison populations in most of the country is beginning to level off, Nebraska's population continues to grow at an alarming rate. Since 1990 the prison population has grown by 62 percent (from 2413 to 3900 inmates). During this same period, Nebraska population grew by only 8 percent. Prison population is projected to be more than 5000 by 2006.

The causes of this overcrowding are multiple. We have more police (a 19 percent increase). More individuals are being arrested (a 31 percent increase). We are sending more to prison for longer periods (27.3 months in 2001 compared to 24.9 in 1990). We are paroling only 10 percent more in 2001 than we were in 1990, despite a 59 percent increase in parolees in the first half of the decade. (This data coincides with the passage of legislation deferring parole eligibility in 1996.) A full 62 percent "jam" out, i.e., complete their full minimum sentence minus good time. (Data shows that inmates without parole supervision are slightly more likely to



return to prison within 3 years.) In short we are "reaping the fruits" of the get tough on crime policies of the past decade.

It is not difficult to find inadequacies in the corrections system and even easier to criticize. There is always plenty of blame to go around. But it might be more beneficial to look at the various agencies, governmental bodies, and individuals who can do something to change the system for the better. In researching this article, I spoke with state legislators, administrators of the department of corrections, members of the parole board and others involved in parole, friends and family of inmates, and interested members of the community. I was impressed with the knowledge, commitment and cooperation of all involved.

So what needs to be done? First, the legislature should take a hard look at the Governor's Crime Bill of 1995, particularly Statute 83-1,110 (3) which states "A committed offender who has been found guilty of a violation of the rules and regulations of the department for drug or alcohol use...shall not be eligible for parole for 12 months following the imposition of the disciplinary action."

According to the 2000-2001 report of the Nebraska Board of Parole, 363 inmates were deferred from coming before the Parole Board

in the past year. The Parole Board, which has been criticized for not granting parole to more inmates, is prohibited from using their discretion in individual cases, because, under this legislation, parole is automatically delayed for at least one year. Under the same law, another 75 inmates' parole dates were set back because "the offender refused to comply with the department-approved personalized program plan." Inmates and family state that sometimes the programs to fulfill these plans are simply not available or prison regulations deny them access to them. Insensitive guards also come in for criticism because arbitrary write-ups, and other prison policy often delays parole in many complex ways. One part of the solution seems to be changing rules that delay parole for offenders who would be better off in the community than in prison. Parole costs about \$3100 a year, incarceration costs over \$22,000.

Sen. Kermit Brashear has answered the question, "Can we build our way out?" in the negative. California tried that and now spends more on corrections than it does on education! Sen. Brashear recently expressed his concerns about the cost of incarceration and the need for major policy changes at the most recent special session of the Unicameral. The specific occasion was a confirmation hearing for the reappointment of a member of the Parole Board.

"I would like the body to know...that parole costs less than incarceration, and so does probation...I think you would want to know that a point in time when your Department of Corrections is recommending some changes

for parole, your Parole Board is holding back, and therein there may be an opportunity for different points of view, but you ought to know why they're holding back. They are holding back because there is no money to establish programs and there are no programs which they believe to be essential for these people in order to complete their course of rehabilitation and return to society. So, once again, we have 25 percent of our offenders incarcerated for substance abuse and don't have enough treatment programs for them. We have people who have completed their course for corrections, in the opinion of your Department of Corrections, who have been recommended for parole, which is a way to step people back into society. It's an established, approved of procedure and no programs to fully (implement them are available). You're going to hear more and more about that...because it affects how we spend money and how much money we spend. It affects lives and it affects people that we're responsible for seeing are appropriately treated in the therapeutic sense of the word..."

The Department of Corrections budget has increased from about \$50 million in 1990 to \$114 million for 2002. At present parole is budgeted for about \$1.5 million.

Sen. Brashear sees the dangers in the direction that Corrections is headed, as do many within the system. Everyone agrees that changes are necessary. There is some hope on the horizon. The Vera Institute of Justice, a private foundation based in New York, works with states to solve problems like prison overcrowding and promote community corrections alternatives. Vera has selected Nebraska as a site that can profit from its expertise. Governor Johann has appointed a Community Corrections Work Group, headed by Sen. Brashear, to work with the Vera Institute and seek community-based alternatives to incarceration. The group is in its beginning stages; it has met but twice. But it promises a serious look at Nebraska's problems and search for solutions. Since the Vera Institute has carried out successful programs in other states, we look forward to hearing more about their Nebraska project. Perhaps it will give us a less costly and more humane alternative to building our way out of the problem. In the meantime, the Department of Correctional Services is seeking men and women who want to "Start a Career and Make a Difference."

*Gifts to the Nebraska Peace Foundation
are tax-deductible and don't pay for war.*



The Year in Review



by *Tim Rinne*
NFP State Coordinator

When we set our agenda for 2001, we obviously never counted on a war. The events of 9/11 took us by surprise the same as everyone else. Organizationally, we never made provision for a domestic terrorist attack of this magnitude, for the fear and nationalistic fervor that swept through the public... or for the political and military reaction that followed. We didn't have a line in our budget for opposing a "War on Terrorism," a bombing campaign against Afghanistan or the ensuing attack on our civil liberties. Whatever other positive steps may have occurred this past year, on the basis of September 11 alone, 2001 was a horrible setback for the cause of Peace and Justice.

The war, of course, made Nebraskans for Peace a "household word." With well over 90 percent of the American public solidly behind President Bush's war in Afghanistan, NFP's naked opposition to the U.S.' unilateral military response was hot news. Our anti-war statements and rallies generated front-page and primetime coverage here in the state and earned us, accordingly, the active disapproval of a raft of Nebraska citizens. We even came in for some harsh words on a nationally syndicated TV talk show.

Unpleasant as this all admittedly was, NFP has never in its 32-year history comported itself more courageously or articulated its support for rule of law and the international resolution of conflict with more competence. The facts—and common sense—were on our side. And history has already gone a long ways toward vindicating our views. Bombing Afghanistan to rubble has not extinguished the threat of international terrorism. As this is being written, the al-Qaida network is still active in 60 nations around the world and Osama bin Laden is still at large. 60,000 U.S. troops are still stationed in the Mideast and Central Asia. The Bush Administration is pondering who to attack next, Somalia or Iraq. And an end to this "War on Terrorism" is nowhere in sight.

That the year should have ended on such a dismal note, though, is a bit ironic, since in terms of the organization Nebraskans for Peace has never had a more productive and prolific year. Thanks in part to the insistence of state board member Paul Olson, the NFP State

Board went through the process of identifying issue priorities for the 2001 year. Five issue areas were selected: Reducing Violence (particularly among youth); Civil Rights (including Gay and Lesbian issues, Whiteclay and the condition of Hispanic meatpacking workers in the state); Corporate Globalization (IMF/World Bank, Free Trade Area of the Americas); Economic Justice (specifically as regards state tax policy and Living Wages); and Opposing National Missile Defense (NMD). While establishing these priorities did not preclude NFP from being involved in other Peace and Justice issues (our protracted anti-war activities are a case in point), it did provide us with better direction and permit us to more effectively focus our resources.

At the state level, for example, we had the most pronounced presence in the Nebraska Unicameral that we've had in our entire history. For the first time, our Gun Control advocacy involved more than merely

countering the NRA's repeal of the state's concealed weapons ban. Working with the "Turn Off the Violence" campaign and Sen. Chris Beutler, we introduced some Gun Control legislation of our own, requiring gun owners to safely store firearms in order to prevent unintended access by children. The TOTV campaign also supported Sen. Dave Landis' "School Violence Prevention Act" to encourage instruction in nonviolence skills in our schools. All of these initiatives will be continued in the 2002 legislative session.

Nebraskans for Peace was also instrumental in highlighting the bankrupting role that the state's corporate tax giveaway programs are playing with the state budget. Street theater during both the 2001 session and the Special Legislative Session this past October dramatized the rip-off that Big Business is

perpetrating on Nebraska taxpayers. With the \$220 million shortfall in state tax revenue and the recent budget cuts in social services and higher education, some senators now seem ready to reexamine the financial wisdom of these tax incentive programs. Sen. Dave Landis, who is already sponsoring a new and improved "Community Violence Prevention Act" for the TOTV campaign, has also introduced a bill that would repeal LB 775 outright. Even if it doesn't pass, just being able to finally put this issue back in the public eye is a big step forward.

This past year, we also publicly lent our support to a variety of legislation touching on social and economic justice issues. Sen. Chris Beutler's bills to provide a Living Wage to state employees and to raise the state minimum wage by a dollar to \$6.15 an hour attempted to redress the inattention state government has traditionally shown to Nebraska's working poor. These bills, in various forms, survived

to be reconsidered this session. Likewise, Sen. Ernie Chambers' bill, LB 19, which would prohibit job discrimination against Gays and Lesbians, also carried over from last year. It was disappointing beyond words, however, that his amendment to the state housing bill prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, passed the legislature only to be vetoed by Governor Johanns. Eradicating homophobia from our society at large is just that much harder when the chief executive of our own state unabashedly promotes it.

With the death penalty study slated to come out later in the year, abolition advocates were successful in thwarting legislative efforts to change the method of execution from electrocution to lethal injection. Those bills, as well as Sen. Chambers' abolition bill (LB 18), were held in committee pending the study's release. Now that the study has been completed however—and the Attorney General and the Governor have selectively interpreted the findings to support a resumption of executions—we will need to redouble our efforts if we are to stop lethal injection from being adopted as the "more humane" alternative. Death penalty proponents should not be allowed to get away with these kinds of word games. Execution is execution, and it is beyond us how one method of killing can be construed to be more socially acceptable than another.

Equally hard for us to understand are the State of Nebraska's arguments for why it continues to license four alcohol dealers in an unincorporated village of 14 people just 200 feet from the dry Pine Ridge Reservation. Throughout this past year, and particularly during the "Whiteclay Encampment" from June 5-10, NFP has endeavored to help refocus public attention on the lawlessness and the profiteering from of Indian misery regularly taking place in this border town with the full sanction of our state officials. Having exhausted virtually every other available avenue—the Governor's Office, the Liquor Control Commission and the State Patrol—it will require a change in state law and the establishment of "buffer zone" by the Nebraska Legislature if this "living hate crime" and ongoing human rights violation is ever to end.

The struggle for Peace and Justice, of course, knows no boundaries. In addition to the projects described above, we hosted Ana Avendano of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union as our Annual Peace Conference speaker to spotlight the labor abuses of Hispanic workers in the "slaughterhouse sweatshops" throughout our state. We chronicled Sen. Chuck Hagel's ties to the fossil fuel industry and his efforts to derail U.S. participation in the Kyoto Protocol, which would limit the greenhouse gases contributing to Global Warming. We sent our Omaha NFP Coordinator and Canadian national, Kevin Tuininga, to Quebec City, Quebec to participate in the protests at the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas Summit.

And almost as a foretaste of the rancor to come after 9/11, our annual Hiroshima commemoration in Lincoln, which we've held for the past 14 straight years, this year for some reason sparked an incredible backlash—and corresponding defense—in the local media. News footage, articles, letters to the editor, even editorials were traded back and forth for weeks. All of which, we hope, only made people think a little bit more, and a little bit harder, about the quest for peace.

As the oldest, continuously operating statewide Peace and Justice organization in the entire country, we shall of course continue this work. Our task, as a cursory look at the world can tell you, has grown rather than diminished in the last few months. But to carry on, we shall need the continued help of each and every one of our thousand members, and then some. The American anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world." Given the enormity of the task before us, though, a thousand members is about as small as we ever dare get.

NFP Annual Financial Report

INCOME	2001 Actual	2002 Budget
Basic Members	16,374.00	15,000.00
Covenant Members	4,864.00	5,000.00
Major Donations		
Direct Mail	11,932.00	10,700.00
Individuals (Unsolicited)	7,287.99	6,000.00
Nebraska Peace Foundation	49,719.79	40,000.00
Annual Peace Conf Donation	1,276.00	4,500.00
Churches/Organizations	1,318.77	1,300.00
Sales - CLAB Merchandise	23,007.28	26,000.00
Interest Income	50.13	24.00
Memorial Donations	1,350.00	0.00
Nebraska Report	157.50	360.00
Special Projects		
Annual Peace Conference	1,765.00	2,500.00
Lincoln Chapter	1,237.21	1,750.00
Merchandise Sales	51.54	0.00
Omaha Chapter	250.00	1,250.00
Other	3,232.14	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	123,873.35	114,384.00
Carryover from previous year	17,960.68	21,460.06
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS	141,834.03	135,844.06
EXPENSES		
Personnel		
Salary	48,735.00	54,496.00
FICA, Medicare, Social Security	3,728.23	5,800.00
Federal Unemployment	306.28	300.00
NE Unemployment	14.65	20.00
Other Personnel Expenses	1,138.49	0.00
Total Personnel	53,922.65	60,616.00
Office		
Business Insurance	660.00	700.00
Rent	5,116.43	5,320.00
Telephone Service	3,986.57	2,640.00
Copiers	0.00	5,210.00
Equipment Repair & Maintenance	75.00	0.00
New Equipment	2,543.22	0.00
MasterCard Membership	209.83	360.00
Online Information Service	333.15	346.80
Printing & Copying	403.68	1,000.00
Postage	1,579.60	1,598.20
Subscriptions/Materials	427.45	500.00
Supplies	3,271.75	1,200.00
Staff Travel	1,804.76	1,500.00
Miscellaneous	1,081.45	1,500.00
Website	383.16	198.00
Total Office Expense	21,876.05	22,073.00
Misc Program Expense		
Nebraska Report	17,304.56	15,525.00
CLAB Expense	12,831.30	14,000.00
Direct Mail	2,386.30	2,000.00
Annual Peace Conference	3,832.10	4,000.00
Lincoln Chapter	433.10	550.00
Other (Whiteclay, Anti-War, etc.)	5,893.59	1,500.00
Peace Matters	433.84	500.00
Peacemaking Covenant	1,242.48	1,500.00
State Board Retreat	218.00	0.00
Total Program Expenses	44,575.27	39,575.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	120,373.97	122,264.00

Christian Peacemakers...

direct our love toward enemies because that is what God does no matter how hostile the circumstances may be.

Does this work? Is it practical? Not if our goal in hostile situations is to get even by striking back. This punitive reaction has and still is failing us in many encounters. Punishment, no matter how vicious, does not deter. The notion of an "eye for and eye" creates eye strain!

Martin Luther King, Jr. perhaps, the most significant apostle of nonviolence in the 20th century, tells it as it is:

"We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical forces with soul force. Do what you will and we will continue to love you. We cannot in good conscience obey your unjust laws, because cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with the good. Throw us in jail, and we will still love you. Bomb our homes, and threaten our children, and we will still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators, and beat us and leave us half-dead, and we will still love you. But be assured we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer..."

King united his people, applied a moral demand to the racial crisis, and made it work.

7. Peacemaking is the Christian's vocation. (Matt. 5:11; Mark 9:34b-36)

Peacemaking is not simply a project when wars occur. It is more than protesting what is wrong. It is about seeking nonviolent ways to promote worthy ends. Peacemaking begins in our family relationships, branches out of our participation in community, and thrives on dealing with the injustices wherever they occur in the world. Peacemaking is hard work, especially in trying to envision usable options in a world at war.

The church should be God's agent for peacemaking in the world, but when the chips are down so many Christians join the powers that be and the notion of a promising future escapes us.

Notes:

Ken Butigan, *From Violence To Wholeness*, Peace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolent Center, Las Vegas, 1999, pp. 41, 42 is credited for some insights on "loving enemies" (6) and quote by Martin L. King, Jr.

Susan C. Seiner, *Joining the Army That Sheds No Blood*, Herald Press, 1982 (Chap. 5) is credited for some directives in this essay, and the quote by Gandhi.

Dr. King, conclusion

system. But Dr. King said, "...whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can't ride your back unless it is bent..." His speeches and sermons were not intended to make us feel good and comfortable with the status quo. His purpose was to inform and to inspire us to become the individual agents of positive change.

And that is the question facing us today. Who among us will give up, what Dr. King called "western arrogance" and feelings of superiority and become individual agents of change for equality and equity? Who among us will give up our resentments of past and present wrongs and be willing to forgive? That IS our challenge if we would honor the life of Dr. King.

In conclusion, 314 of the peoples in the world are people of color, and the world continues to come to Nebraska. In a spirit of good will, I would like to respectfully make the suggestion to the University of Nebraska, that a step towards positive change and reconciliation as well as preparing Nebraska students for the larger world would be to establish an endowment to fund a permanent chair named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Only one such chair exists today at Rutgers University occupied by an African American. I want to thank Dr. Keith Parker for doing the research and providing me with this information.

This chair could become a center in Nebraska for drawing people from all over the world to study ways for implementing Dr. King's principles for the betterment of humanity. Thank you.

Nebraska Report Advertising Rates

Full page: \$200 1/2 page: \$100

1/4 page: \$ 50 1/8 page: \$ 35

Bus. Card: \$25

10% discount to NFP Members. Copy must be camera-ready.
We reserve the right to refuse advertising not in keeping with the goals and purposes of NFP.

NFP LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- LB 18** (Chambers) Repeal of the Death Penalty — Held in the Judiciary Committee
- LB 19** (Chambers) Prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation — On General File
- LB 626** (Beutler) Requiring businesses contracting with state government to pay a Living Wage — Held in the Business and Labor Committee
- LB 633** (Beutler) Raising the State Minimum Wage — On General File
- LB 1037** (Landis) Repeal of the LB 775 Corporate Tax Breaks — Public hearing in the Revenue Committee February 7
- LB 1082** (Landis) Requiring schools to establish Anti-Bullying policies — Public hearing in the Education Committee February 12
- LB 1083** (Landis) “The Community Violence Prevention Act” requiring safe storage of firearms, the establishment of school Anti-Bullying policies and the teaching of Conflict Resolution skills — Held in the Judiciary Committee
- LB 1306** (Preister) Banning the sale of alcohol within five miles of a dry Indian Reservation (the “Whiteclay” bill) — Public hearing in the General Affairs Committee February 25

* NFP Opposes **LB 62**, **LB 356** and **LB 865** Changing the method of execution to lethal injection — all three bills are in the Judiciary Committee

Updates: www.unicam.state.ne.us/documents/bills.htm

BULLETIN BOARD

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 ‘O’ Street, Suite 1026, are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

February 14 Valentine’s Day

February 16 2002 Annual Peace Conference in Omaha, featuring former *Washington Post* newspaper columnist and nationally known Peace educator Colman McCarthy. Co-sponsored by the UNO School of Social Work and Nebraskans for Peace, the all-day Saturday event will be held at First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass Street in Omaha, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Early registration is \$20 per person (students and low-income \$10) or \$25 at the door, lunch included. 4.5 CEUs are available to Social Workers and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners who attend. Call 402-475-4620 for information on how to register. Child care provided.

March 1 Nebraska Statehood Day

March 8 International Women’s Day

To list an event in the CALENDAR, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event. Mail to Nebraskans for Peace — Calendar, 941 “O” Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com. Announcements published on a space available basis.

“Humane Execution” is a Contradiction

Last year in the Nebraska Legislature, Sen. Jon Bruning made LB62 his priority bill. Sen. Kermit Brashear sponsored LB356. Either bill, if passed, would eliminate electrocution and designate lethal injection as Nebraska’s method of administering the death penalty. Both bills were still in committee when the Legislature adjourned last year.

Testimony on behalf of lethal injection before the Judiciary Committee shows all too clearly the twisted logic of what David Crary of the Associated Press calls “the paradoxical quest for humane executions.” Bruning cited the fact that 38 states now use lethal injection and said “society’s evolving standard of decency” would soon mean the electric chair could be outlawed by the Supreme Court. Avoid Constitutional problems now, Bruning argues. Heck, he’d even allow the men already on Nebraska’s death row to grandfather in—they could actually choose between the chair and the needles.

What could be more humane? Department of Corrections staff has testified that lethal injection is more humane from a “staff perspective.” Committee Chair Brashear has described himself as “comfortable” with the death penalty. He claims humane concerns for both

the sentenced person and for those who administered and witnessed executions are his motive for supporting lethal injection.

For Americans to debate the relative humanity of methods, as the ONLY industrialized society in the world STILL imposing the death penalty, is ludicrous. We sound like old drunks in a bar, talking about what great parents (or workers or lovers or thinkers) we are.

They call it denial.

To Sens. Bruning and Brashear, and others less convinced but still confused about where exactly society’s standard of decency might be found, I would like to pass on a piece of pertinent folk wisdom: half measures avail us nothing.

With apologies to friends of Bill W., and naming no names, this truth—that half measures avail us nothing—is central to Alcoholics Anonymous and its decades of giving life back to hopeless drunks through the embrace of community and rigorous honesty. And the truth is our society is drunk with killing. “It’s an epidemic,” said former Governor Frank Morrison last March.

No longer ghettoized, violent death finds Americans in suburban schools and high-rise office buildings, and no credible study finds that the death penalty offers real deterrent

value, or makes us safer in any way. Death penalty proponents who continue to “believe” it has deterrent value are really just wishing it did. And as is the case with birth control, hope is not a method.

Ironically, execution by electrocution was instituted in the 19th century as a more “humane” alternative to hanging. Though early electric chair deaths were reported as “gruesome” (Crary), the chair was the method of choice in 26 states, and used to execute more than 4,300 people, since 1890.

Killing by lethal injection is not humane. It is maybe a little less ugly, a little less grisly, and certainly quieter. But, lethal injection is “a euphemism,” Crary quotes Sen. Ernie Chambers as saying. “If I did something like that, they’d call it poisoning. It’s designed to prettify the death penalty, portray it as something other than the barbaric throwback it is.”

Not all Nebraskans are in denial. Sen. Chambers (who will receive an award for his long service to the downtrodden, not to mention all the rest of us, at the Nebraskans for Peace Annual Peace Conference in Omaha February 16) has made death penalty abolition one of the priorities of his long and distinguished career. Several mainstream denominations testify regularly in support of abolishing the death penalty altogether. A representative of the Omaha Archdiocese said

last spring, “The bishops are growing louder and bolder.”

Sen. Mike Foley, a Republican and a Catholic, supports Sen. Chambers’ efforts to abolish the death penalty. He said, “If we are to teach our children the value and dignity and sacredness of human life, this is an excellent place to start.”

Where human decency is concerned, half measures indeed avail us nothing. If Senators Bruning and Brashear are in fact sincere in their resolve to make Nebraska’s judicial system more humane and more just, they need to walk the walk. Sen. Chambers has invited Sen. Bruning, in light of his concern for humane justice, to support LB18, which would end Nebraska’s death penalty and substitute life without parole, in the event lethal injection fails to pass. Sen. Bruning has so far declined. Perhaps he’s been too busy campaigning to succeed Don Stenberg as Nebraska’s Attorney General to reply.

I would hate to think that Sens. Bruning and Brashear are just hacks and hypocrites wrapping themselves in the mantle of humanity. I would hate to think that their talk of concern for the suffering of condemned people was really just spin control to counter the bad press surrounding the death penalty after recent years’ grisly executions in Nebraska’s electric chair.



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin
The real political spectrum isn’t right to left...it’s top to bottom.