



Nebraskans for Peace

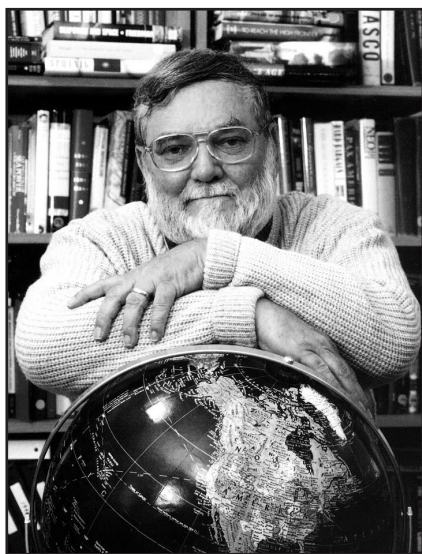
Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2010

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 5

2010 Annual Peace Conference Celebrating 40 Years of NFP



Mike Moore

The oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization in the U.S. will celebrate its 40th anniversary Saturday, October 16 at the 2010 Annual Peace Conference in Omaha. To commemorate this milestone in Nebraskans for Peace's history, this year's event is featuring keynote addresses from not just one, but two nationally known speakers.

Mike Moore, author of the award-winning *Twilight War: The Folly of U.S. Space Dominance*, will deliver a speech entitled, "The New StratCom's De Facto Motto: 'Warfighting Is Our Vocation.'" (Moore's talk will be accompanied by additional commentary from *Nebraska Report* writer Loring Wirbel of "Citizens for Peace in Space" in Colorado Springs.)

Heidi Beirich, director of research for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama will complete this 'double feature' presentation with a keynote address on the topic of "The Role of 'Hate Groups' in the Immigration

Policy Debate." And, as has become traditional, a selection of 'Peace & Justice Workshops' treating a dozen different timely issues will also be presented throughout the day-long event.

This year's Annual Peace Conference is again being co-sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace and the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work, and will run from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, N. 69th & Cass Streets in Omaha.

The early registration cost of \$25 covers the entire program, including morning coffee and rolls and a lunch buffet catered by Valentino's. Child care will also be available.

Registration brochures will be in the mail by mid-September—or you can register online at www.nebraskansforpeace.org.

For more information, contact the NFP State Office at 402-475-4620 or at: nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org



Heidi Beirich

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Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

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

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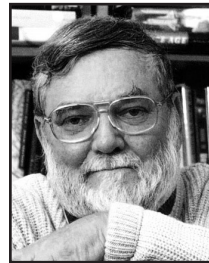
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Annual Peace Conference Speaker Double Feature



Mike Moore

**Military Space
Analyst &
Award-Winning
Author**

Mike Moore is the former editor of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the magazine (of "Doomsday Clock" fame) founded in 1945 by "Manhattan Project" scientists committed to ensuring that nuclear weapons would never again be used. He is the author of many articles on national security, conflict resolution, nuclear weapons and proliferation, space weaponry and related topics. A journalist by trade, he has also served as an editor or reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Daily News* and the *Kansas City Star*.

Moore has spoken at professional conferences and meetings sponsored by organizations such as the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, the National Atomic Museum, the Nuclear-Free Future Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, the International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts, and the Nuclear Policy Research Institute. In February 2008, he testified before the U.N. Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Affairs regarding space security issues.

His book, *Twilight War: The Folly of U.S. Space Dominance*, was published in 2008. In May 2009, *Twilight War* won the "Benjamin Franklin Award" given by the Independent Book Publishers Association in the "Political/Current Events" category. It also won a Silver "Ippy" in the "Science" category of a competition sponsored by Independent Publisher.

He lives with his wife, Sandy, in northeast Missouri where he is at work writing a book on defensive interventions to the threat of asteroid collisions.



Heidi Beirich

**Director of
Research,
Southern Poverty
Law Center**

Heidi Beirich is an expert on white nationalism, nativism and the racist neo-Confederate movement. In her position as director of research at the legendary Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Beirich oversees major investigative projects undertaken by staff at the Montgomery, Alabama center, whose successful 1987 lawsuit against the Ku Klux Klan forced the racist organization into bankruptcy.

Beirich is a contributing editor to the SPLC's award-winning investigative journal, *Intelligence Report*, and its blog, "Hatewatch." As a key SPLC spokesperson on domestic extremism, she has appeared on numerous television news programs and is regularly quoted by journalists and scholars in both the United States and abroad.

She joined the SPLC staff in 1999 after earning a doctorate in political science from Purdue University, where she specialized in the study of white nationalism and neofascism in Europe and North America. She spent a year in Spain researching her dissertation on how the Spanish Constitutional Court helped rid that country of its fascist legacy. She also holds MA degrees in economics and political science. She earned her BA from the University of California, Berkeley.

In 2008, Beirich co-edited as well as wrote several chapters of *Neo-Confederacy: A Critical Introduction*, published by the University of Texas Press. In addition to her academic training, she has taught at several universities and has worked with other non-profits dedicated to combating human rights violations and poverty.

in Voluntary Simplicity

(in)voluntary simplicity

INVOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

by Linda Ruchala
UNL Associate Professor of Accountancy

Living simply, with purpose and harmony, has been an ethos for modern life in the peace community for some time. Social scientist and author Duane Elgin notes that the movement grew largely out of Gandhi's teachings. Elgin quotes Richard Gregg, a Gandhi student, in defining voluntary simplicity as a "singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life... It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose."

Elgin distinguishes between voluntary simplicity and poverty. Simplicity is sought by choice; large numbers of very poor people globally have no choice but to live simply because they are poor. He notes that "poverty is involuntary and debilitating, whereas simplicity is voluntary and enabling. Poverty is mean and degrading to the human spirit, whereas a life of conscious simplicity can have a beauty and a functional integrity that elevates the human spirit."

Climate change is blurring the distinction between a voluntary simplicity that is sustainable and the involuntary simplicity (poverty) that accompanies population relocation, resource depletion and economic depression. The *Nebraska Report* has

published a number of articles over the past year focusing on human-created climate change and the environmental problems caused by our dependence on coal and oil energy sources. The linkages between these issues and peace and justice are both direct and indirect.

With each day that passes without effective energy policy to reduce carbon emissions, our ability to choose—to be voluntary—about the types of simplicity we undertake becomes more limited.

Directly, the depletion of oil and non-renewable energy resources is a major source of conflict and war. In April of this year, the Department of Defense issued a report explaining that while it may not know how much oil it uses, it has a good idea of when it will start running short of supplies. By as soon as 2012, the report postulates, "surplus oil production capacity could entirely disappear, and as early as 2015, the shortfall in output could reach nearly 10 million barrels per day."

The Pentagon report itself draws the connection between global political stability and oil shortages: "While it is difficult to predict precisely what economic, political, and strategic effects such a shortfall might produce, it surely would reduce the prospects for growth in both the developing and developed worlds. Such an economic slowdown would exacerbate other unresolved tensions, push fragile and failing states further down the path toward collapse, and perhaps have serious economic impact on both China and India." That's the direct link.

The 'indirect' link between a continued dependence on carbon-based energy sources and peace/justice is obvious to anyone who follows the news. As environmental activist and 350.org founder Bill McKibben describes in his recent book, global warming, with its attendant scourges of famine, population displacement and species extinction threatens to figuratively and literally cook the planet on which we live. We are daily undermining the climatological conditions under which human civilization arose.

The scientific implications of climate change, however, are compounded by our seeming inability to order our political and economic transactions so that they account for the costs of the ecological

damage done. Our reliance on large corporate and managerial organizational structures means that responsibility for environmental devastation is rarely borne by the activities creating the effects. Big Oil and Big Coal are largely exempted by our corporate-influenced elected officials of any economic liability for their leading role in climate destruction. Further, the emphasis placed on economic growth as the primary criterion used in policymaking places us firmly on a collision course with resource and sustainability limits.

Moreover, we cannot rely on new technological inventions or solutions to get us out of this bind. The more complex the level of technology we use, the greater the unknown and unintended risks of damage to our earth. The risks associated with such have been called "black swan" events. Black Swan events, according to Nassim Nicholas Taleb, have three characteristics: they are unpredictable, they carry a significant impact, and, after such impacts occur, we retrospectively (and erroneously) attach explanations for the event rather than attribute the cause to the underlying random error in the process. That is, we try to make the event seem more predictable (and rational) than it was. Taleb uses his theory to explain why the complex

conclusion on page 5

GLOBAL WARMING. GLOBAL *WARFARE.*

“What makes wars start?” former British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett asked during the first-ever debate on climate change and armed conflict at the UN Security Council. “Fights over water. Changing patterns of rainfall. Fights over food production, land use. There are few greater potential threats to our economies too... but also to peace and security.”

She's not alone in that assessment. Four major studies in the last two years from centrist organizations in the United States and Europe have concluded that “a warmer planet could find itself more often at war.” Each report “predicted starkly similar problems: gunfire over land and natural resources as once bountiful soil turns to desert and coastlines slip below the sea.” The experts also expected violent storms to topple weak governments—which makes a certain amount of sense to those of us who watched George W. Bush begin his descent in the polls after he bumbled the response to Katrina. “Billions of people would have to move” if temperatures rise four or five degrees, the British economist Nicholas Stern predicted recently. The directors of climate research for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington predicted recently that as “climate-induced migration” increased the number of “weak and failing states,” terrorism would likely grow. By midcentury, according to some recent models, as many as 700 million of the world's 9 billion people will be climate change refugees...

The most lurid account of all came from a Pentagon-sponsored report forecasting possible scenarios a decade or two away, when the pressures of climate change have become “irresistible—history shows that whenever humans have faced a choice between starving or raiding, they raid. Imagine Eastern European countries, struggling to feed their populations, invading Russia—which is weakened by a population that is already in decline—for access to its minerals and energy supplies. Or picture Japan eyeing nearby Russian oil and gas reserves to power desalination plants and energy-intensive farming. Envision nuclear-armed Pakistan, India, and China skirmishing at their borders over refugees, access to shared rivers, and arable land.” Here's the bottom line from that Pentagon report, a picture of a new planet that, at least as far as conflict goes, resembles nothing so much as the old one: “Wars over resources were the norm until about three centuries ago. When such conflicts broke out, 25 percent of a population's adult males usually died. As abrupt climate change hits home, warfare may again come to define human life.”

— from *Bill McKibben's new book, EAARTH: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet (2010)*

The Cost of War

by *Dan Schlitt*
Retired UNL Professor of Physics

The cost of war is an ambiguous quantity. Generally, we tend to think of the human toll as the most important part—though, like the destruction wreaked on the environment, it's difficult to accurately measure. We carefully count the deaths of our soldiers and the number of wounded, for instance. But the deaths and injuries to others are not tallied with any care. In the view of some it is better that we not know. And there is really no way to assess the long-term psychological injuries to soldiers and the others touched by war.

One thing that can be measured with relative ease, however, is the financial cost of our military operations. The Congressional Research Service recently published a report titled “Costs of Major U.S. Wars.” Congressional Research Service Reports are just provided to members of Congress—not to the public. Copies of many of the reports invariably find their way into the hands of the public, though, which is the case with this report. And it makes eye-opening reading.

The report lists 12 major wars from the Revolutionary War in 1775-1783 to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It presents figures both in ‘current year dollars’ (that is, in prices in effect at the time of each war) and in inflation-adjusted ‘constant dollars’ updated to the most recently available estimates of FY2011 prices. Determining these costs is not as simple as it might seem, because accounting methods changed over time and general inflation rates may not be the same as those for military expenditures. The totals in the report cover just the costs of the military operations and do not include veterans' benefits or the interest costs of the money borrowed to pay for the war, etc. The report also includes estimates of the cost of each war as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the peak year of each conflict and of overall defense spending as a share of GDP at the peak.

A few examples are informative.

The first war that America fought as a nation was the War of 1812 (1812-1815). The cost in historic dollars was \$90,000,000 (\$90 million) and in constant dollars was \$1,553,000,000 (\$1.5 billion). It constituted 2.2 percent of the GDP.

The cost of the Civil War (1861-1865) comes in two parts. The Union cost was

\$3,183,000,000 (\$3.1 billion), which in constant dollars is \$59,631,000,000 (\$59.6 billion) or 11.3 percent of GDP. The Confederate cost was \$1,000,000,000 (\$1 billion) which converts to \$20,111,000,000 (\$20.1 billion) in constant dollars. The GDP of the Confederacy is not available. Once again, the human cost to both sides and the long-term consequences are not measured by these numbers.

World War II is the war with greatest impact on the GDP at 35.8 percent. The cost in historic dollars was \$296,000,000,000 (\$296

If we have any hope of economic recovery, we must radically scale back both our Pentagon spending and our foreign military interventions.

billion). In constant dollars this becomes \$4,104,000,000,000 (\$4.1 trillion) which makes it by far the most expensive of the wars.

Of most interest though is the cost of our government's current wars. These expense totals are not the final figures, of course, as we continue to spend on them. For Iraq (2003-2010) the cost is \$715 billion which inflation raises to \$784 billion. This is 1 percent of GDP. The cost for Afghanistan military operations (2001-2010) includes all of “Operation Enduring Freedom” (the Bush/Cheney Administration's initial campaign in its international “War on Terrorism,” which has small expenditures in other parts of the world). The cost is \$297 billion or, corrected for inflation, \$321 billion.

If you are interested in seeing the complete eight-page report with the assumptions used in computing the costs, it is most easily done by entering the author, Stephen Daggett, in your favorite search engine.

In any event, even without being able to account for the human and environmental costs, this report fully documents why our country is indeed “Goin' Broke Paying for War”... And that if we have any hope of economic recovery, we must radically scale back both our Pentagon spending and our foreign military interventions.

INVOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY, CONCLUSION

financial instruments and mathematical risk models used in financial institutions failed to incorporate the magnitude of risk that led to the financial collapse.

In essence, as we move past peak oil production and ramp up new technologies for drilling off-shore in deep seas and processing uranium into nuclear energy sources, we leverage the earth as we have leveraged the economy with the use of complicated mathematical models and financial instruments. We can't understand the risks of new technologies for which we have no experience, yet the potential impacts to the earth are severe.

Second, even where we can understand the some of the risks of the technology we use, we need to start factoring in the cumulative effect on society as a whole of the small risks taken by individual actors and organizations. The lack of sound regulation means that small risks taken by individual corporations can become magnified as additional companies take on those risks. Large-scale adoption of sub-prime mortgage policies, for instance, intensified the impacts of collapse to society beyond

the risks borne had such actions only been taken by one firm. We are learning as well that the use of antibiotics, in ever larger quantities, is causing them to lose effectiveness and in fact leading to the development of resistant bacteria and 'super' infections. Finally, the BP oil spill in the Gulf and the proposed Keystone/XL pipeline project in Nebraska provide two other examples in which technological and economic imperatives mask the magnitude of ecological harm that occurs at the point of failure.

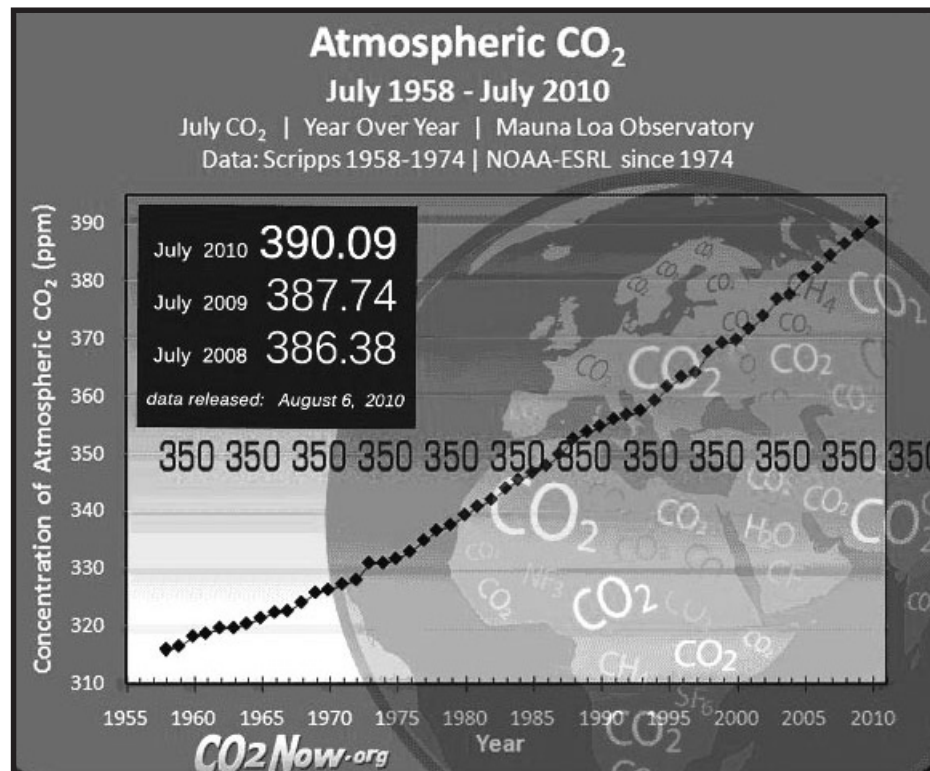
We need to expose the limitations of policymaking that prioritizes economic growth in the use of cost-benefit models versus the increased risk to our health—and the health of our planet. Instead of a debate myopically premised on using industrial methods to constantly ramp up energy production, we need, as Bill McKibben says, to start "backing off" on projects that center on expansion and growth. McKibben describes it thusly: "Big was dynamic; when the project was growth, we could stand the side effects. But now the side effects of that size—climate change, for instance—are sapping us. We need to scale back, to go

to ground. We need to take what wealth we have left and figure out how to use it, not to spin the wheel one more time but to slow the wheel down. We need to choose safety instead of risk, and we need to do it quickly, even at the sacrifice of growth."

In short, what was a voluntary form of simplicity is now becoming involuntary.

Dan Kahan, writing in *Nature*, suggested that the concept of "cultural cognition"—the influence of historically held group values and assumptions relating to equality, individualism and community—is driving the political conflict and polarization over climate change and other related issues. Thomas Horner-Dixon, professor of global systems at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Canada, notes that: "Powerful special interests like the coal and oil industries have learned how to halt movement on climate policy by exploiting the fear people feel when their identities are threatened." He believes that a disastrous climate shock, like the economic shocks experienced recently, will be what it takes to change the individualistic and materialistic cultural cognition that has developed and been shaped by powerful special interests.

We are in a race with time to adapt our cultural and economic beliefs and institutions. With each day that passes without effective energy policy to reduce carbon emissions, our ability to choose—to be voluntary—about the types of simplicity we undertake becomes more limited. Winona LaDuke says it is the time to "stop talking about talking about it." It's time for each person to take on the cultural transformation and model sustainable behaviors, even when it's not comfortable or convenient to do so. The last words are for Bill McKibben: "Global warming is a negotiation between human beings on the one hand and physics and chemistry on the other. Which is a tough negotiation because physics and chemistry don't compromise. They've already laid out their non-negotiable bottom line: above 350 [parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere] the planet doesn't work."



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PROFITS & HUMAN RIGHTS

The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement

by William Avilés
Associate Professor of Political Science
University of Nebraska-Kearney

In a July op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal*, Senator Mike Johanns called for the approval of the U.S.-Colombian Free Trade Agreement, citing the possible economic opportunities that such an agreement could have for Nebraska farmers. Senator Johanns asks in his column, “What are we waiting for?” suggesting that he had no idea why such an agreement could be delayed. In his various statements on the issue, Nebraska Representative Adrian Smith also seems at a loss as to why the agreement has been stalled. Incredibly, neither Johanns nor Smith comment on forced displacement, the killings of trade unionists or governmental spying on political oppo-

nents in Colombia. Either these politicians are unaware of these issues or they consider them to be marginal to the possibilities of profits and jobs.

Perhaps Senator Johanns and Representative Smith need to visit Colombia, not only on junkets sponsored by the Colombian government, but actually meet people and groups from a variety of perspectives and experiences. This type of experience describes a recent trip I took to Colombia with students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in May of this year. With the exceptional assistance of the U.S.-based human rights group Colombia Support Network, my students and I met with various governmental officials in Colombia’s Defense Ministry and Attorney General’s office, a human rights officer from the U.S. Embassy, actual victims of

human rights violations, academics, as well as political activists, to learn about the continuing conflict in the country and the consequences this conflict has on the Colombian people. What we learned is that human rights and democracy continue to be under threat. The U.S. is in an ideal position to pressure the Colombian government by delaying the passage of the agreement until the Colombian people can be sure that their government is seeking to protect their rights rather than violate them.

For example, since 2002 there has been an increase in the extrajudicial executions of civilians by Colombia’s armed forces, who dress these civilians up to look as if they were guerrilla combatants (Colombia has been fighting a war with armed insurgents for over four decades). These murders, or “false positives,” were often used by military personnel as a way to improve their combat statistics, which could lead to salary bonuses or vacation time. In June of 2009, the United Nations Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Philip Alston, examined this scandal as well as the overall situation of human rights in Colombia. He found that the “false positives” scandal implicated approximately 1,000 members of the armed forces in the killing of approximately 1,700 civilians since 1998. According to Alston’s press statement on the issue “The sheer number of cases, their geographic spread, and the diversity of military units implicated, indicate that these killings were carried out in a more or less systematic fashion by significant elements within the military.”

During our trip, the students and I visited the city of Villavicencio in the state of Meta where we met with approximately 20 different men and women who had lost a son (or sometimes daughter), husband or brother to “false positive” episodes. These individuals told us of the last moments that they saw their loved ones, the trauma they

suffered upon discovering their deaths, and their continuing struggle to find justice for their families. Often with tears streaming down their faces, they shared their stories with us in the hopes that as Americans we could convey their stories to Nebraskans and the U.S. government, which has given Colombia over \$7 billion in U.S. military and economic assistance in the last ten years. As of this writing few, in the Co-

Human rights issues only become a problem for the Colombian government when they are a problem for the United States.

lombian military have been convicted for these crimes, and the Minister of Defense when many of these “false positives” took place (Juan Manuel Santos) was elected to the presidency this past June.

In addition to losing loved ones to the “false-positive” murders by the military, some of these individuals in Villavicencio had been forcibly displaced from their homes, joining the over 4 million Colombians (out of a population of 44 million) that have been internally displaced in the last 20 years. In fact, Colombia is second only to Sudan in the number of internally displaced people in the world. The actions of the government, armed insurgents and private militias that often work with the military (called paramilitary groups) have all contributed to this displacement through their combat or violent actions directed against members of specific rural communities. The number of internally displaced



Colombians protesting in Bogota’s central public square. The shackled and muzzled demonstrators are expressing their hunger for both justice and greater international awareness of the political repression in their country.

Seeing the Big Picture...

The Impact of NAFTA on Illegal Immigration

by John Krejci, NFP State Board
(with assistance from Robert Epp)

On August 11, I attended one of Representative Jeff Fortenberry's 'town hall meetings'—a very Republican event, judging from the fact that I saw no one I knew there. After Rep. Fortenberry presented his power point on a balanced budget and the need for fiscal responsibility, a constituent asked him a question that involved NAFTA, the 'Free Trade' agreement between Canada, Mexico and the U.S., negotiated by President Clinton. I seized on that opening to ask a follow-up question of the Congressman about the negative impact of NAFTA on Mexican farmers, which in turn has encouraged migration north to the United States. Some discussion followed, which prompted the gentleman next to me to say, "You raised a good point." As Fortenberry prepared to take another question, he noted in closing that he had never heard the two issues connected before. I spoke up and said, "I'll send you the data."

Later that week, I googled "NAFTA and Immigration" and came up with 1.7 million results! Frankly, I was embarrassed to have been so unaware of how big this issue is. I immediately sent the information on to Fortenberry's Regional Representative, Angel Velitchkow—a very knowledgeable, Eastern European immigrant and law school graduate, who I was sure would check it out.

But it was Bob Epp, a retired 87-year-old Mennonite farmer and still active NFP State Board member, who brought up the issue at our last board meeting. In his plain-spoken way, he succinctly summarized NAFTA and its consequences. Later he sent me the following:

"One needs to understand what drives a person to leave their birthplace and familiar surroundings and go to a different country, a different language and quite probably a hostile environment. The broader question must include trade policies and trade agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA (U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central

American Free Trade Agreement). We have agreements to buy clothing from Mexico manufactured in the maquiladoras just across the Texas border, but in that agreement is a clause that says cotton from that clothing must come from the U.S. This puts Mexican cotton farmers at a disadvantage and even forces many out of work, so they look for a place to go where they can survive.

Much the same with corn production. We flood their corn markets with U.S. corn which is at least partially subsidized. This puts millions of Mexican farmers who de-

A just immigration policy must include a rethinking and revision of U.S. trade practices.

pend on the sale of corn out of business, and again: what should they do? The lure of jobs across the border is exacerbated by U.S. industries like packinghouses who even send buses to the border to transport them here, while at the same time taking advantage of these desperate people to lower the labor rates. The labor rates in packing plants today are actually lower than they were 20 years ago."

In my perusal of the Google information, I found that many reports that clearly stated that U.S. trade policies—particularly NAFTA—have a huge impact on immigration. Our federal representatives, like Fortenberry, Nelson, and Johanns, however, instead tend to focus on:

- 1) border security (building a fence, calling out the National Guard, and even deploying drones)
- 2) cracking down on employers (certainly laudable)
- 3) excluding the children of illegal immigrants from citizenship (politically popular but inhumane and contrary to the 14th Amendment!)

The voluminous internet citations spotlighted how great the impact of our foreign and economic policies on Mexico and Latin America are. I will quote one representative piece that outlines in a straightforward way some of the issues.

"While there has been some media coverage of NAFTA's ruinous impact on U.S. industrial communities, there has been even less media attention paid to its catastrophic effects in Mexico:

- NAFTA, by permitting heavily-subsidized U.S. corn and other agribusiness products to compete with small Mexican farmers, has driven the Mexican farmer off the land due to low-priced imports of U.S. corn and other agricultural products. Some 2 million Mexicans have been forced out of agriculture, and many of those that remain are living in desperate poverty. These people are among those that cross the border to feed their families. Meanwhile, corn-based tortilla prices climbed 50 percent. No wonder many Mexican peasants have called NAFTA their 'death warrant.'
 - NAFTA service-sector rules allowed big firms like Wal-Mart to enter the Mexican market and, selling low-priced goods made by ultra-cheap labor in China, to displace locally-based shoe, toy and candy firms. An estimated 28,000 small and medium-sized Mexican businesses have been eliminated.
 - Wages along the Mexican border have actually been driven down by about 25 percent since NAFTA [was implemented in 1994], reported a Carnegie Endowment study. An over-supply of workers, combined with the crushing of union organizing drives as government policy, has resulted in sweatshop pay along the border where wages typically run 60 cents to \$1 an hour.
- So rather than improving living standards, Mexican wages have actually

conclusion on page 11

Immigration Justice Banners Available for Purchase



"God's Love Has No Borders – Immigration Reform Must be Just" is the message First Mennonite Church of Lincoln is working to distribute to faith groups and individuals across the United States.

"For seven years our denomination has been committed to acting 'with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status,'" says pastor David Orr. "With anti-immigrant laws being enacted in Arizona and across the country, including here in Nebraska, and with a national conversation on the horizon, it is time for us to make our position clear."

Banners are available in English and Spanish. Cost for a four-foot-square vinyl banner is \$40 plus shipping. Other sizes are available. Visit www.fmclincoln.org/immigrationbanner for ordering information.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Summer 2010: The New Normal?

Earth by mid-2010 was experiencing its warmest decade, the warmest year, and the warmest April, May and June on the instrumental record. In 2010, Russia (at 111 degrees F.), Saudi Arabia and Iraq (both 126), Niger (118), Sudan (121), and Pakistan (at 129) set all-time temperature records. We always have had summer heat waves somewhere in the world. But 2010 was notable for their frequency, coverage, and endurance—a window, perhaps, on a new climatic world in which severe summer heat, drought and deluge will be ‘the new normal.’

July 2010 was close to the warmest month on the instrumental record in the United States; only a cool summer in the Pacific Northwest prevented it becoming the warmest, according to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). During all of this, the U.S. government decided to put global warming on the back burner, even as evidence of warming was not in short supply. July 6, 2010, Baltimore hit 104 F., Philadelphia 104, and New York City 103. By 7 a.m. the next morning, the temperature in New York City was 86. In Philadelphia it was 87 at 4 a.m. The same week, on the other side of the world, Beijing reached 109 F.

The 105 degrees F. reading in Norfolk, Virginia July 24, 2010, tied the all-time high temperature there, set August 7, 1918, with a heat index of 116. The next day, Norfolk broke the record, at 106. Washington, D.C., during June 2010, had the highest average temperature for that month on record (began in 1871), with 18 days at 90 F. or higher. In Kansas City, police

tucked cold packs into bulletproof vests. In Washington D.C., several dozen Boy Scouts collapsed from heat illness during a parade to celebrate the centennial of scouting, shortly before the temperature dropped 30 degrees F. in an hour from 100 F. during one of the area’s worst thunderstorms on record, which extinguished power to more than half-a-million homes and businesses.

2010 heat waves were a window, perhaps, on a new climatic world in which severe summer heat, drought and deluge will be ‘the new normal.’

The scenes from Moscow were apocalyptic—weeks on end of sizzling heat, the air rancid from peat and forest fires. In midsummer, Moscow temperatures hit an all-time record high of 101 degrees F. July 29, a reading matched August 2 (the average high is 75). St. Petersburg hit 96 July 29, and Helsinki, Finland rose to 93. Moscow’s health minister urged residents to stay indoors or leave the city, even if they missed work. By August 9, the damage of the smoky shroud to people’s lungs was being measured in packs of cigarettes per day. Estimates ranged from three to eight. The death rate in Moscow rose by 50 to 100 percent from early July to early August 28.

In the United States, many areas seared at 100-plus. The Tucson, Arizona

city morgue had to bring in refrigerator trucks when it ran out of space following the deaths of 150 undocumented workers crossing the border in the heat, many more than in previous years.

In Omaha, a seasonal high of 97 F. may not have seemed like much. After all, we have failed to reach three digits only 10 times in 120 years of recordkeeping. However, the same time it was 97, the humidity was 62 per cent, the heat index 118, and the dew point 80 degrees, giving us weather that would have been insufferable even in the Amazon Valley. And it did this with nauseating regularity.

Along with the heat came extremes of drought and deluge. Beside its searing temperatures, Russia suffered severe drought even as northern Pakistan mourned the deaths of more than 1,500 people in its worst monsoon deluge in 80 years. At the same time, the largest hailstone on record (eight inches in diameter) fell near Vivian, South Dakota July 23, easily out-sizing a seven-incher that fell near Aurora, Neb. June 22, 2003. Floods also inundated parts of China and Eastern Europe.

In the United States, on June 11, 2010, swollen rivers fed by a sudden deluge of six to eight inches of rain swamped a campground in southwestern Arkansas’ Ouachita National Forest within an hour or two, killing 19 people. “This was such a huge, fast-moving event. I talked to somebody who [had] lived here all their [sic] life. They [had] never heard of anything like this,” said U.S. Forest Service geologist John Nichols.

The force of the flood ripped apart foundations and splintered large trees into kindling. Raymond Slade, a retired

hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey said that the intensity of the rain was unusual even for an area called “flash flood alley,” “much greater than a 100-year rainfall” (an event expected every 100 years). Three days after the deadly flash floods in Arkansas, 1 to 3 inches of rain an hour fell in the Oklahoma City area June 14, as the National Weather Service said a few areas measured almost 10 inches in one day, driving many residents to trees and rooftops.

“Clean Air-Cool Planet” surveyed 60 years of National Weather Service rainfall reports and found that “extreme precipitation events” (more than an inch of rain or equivalent in one day) have become more common in nine Northeast states as temperatures have warmed. Record rains (11 inches in 36 hours) killed more than 200 people in Rio de Janeiro.

On May 1-2, 2010, Nashville, Tennessee had 14 inches of rain in two days, equal to twice the former daily record, or like having two record daily deluges back to back. Milwaukee, Wisconsin received eight inches of rain in two hours July 22, 2010, provoking widespread flash flooding, including the runways of the airport, which canceled all flights for several hours and stranded many travelers overnight.

The global warming skeptics probably will find exceptions: Seattle and San Francisco, for instance, had cool summers. So did Dublin, Ireland. For most of us, however, the drumbeat of daily weather reports forms trends, and the message is hot and violent.

Bruce E. Johansen is Jacob J. Isaacson Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and author of The Encyclopedia of Global Warming Science and Technology.

Clean Coal More Hype than Reality

The following "Midlands Voices" op-ed by Bruce Johansen appeared in the July 12, 2010 Omaha World-Herald and is reprinted with permission.

Internationally renowned global warming activist Bill McKibben was in Omaha June 17 for a protest at Union Pacific headquarters. McKibben—whose groundbreaking 1989 book, *The End of Nature*, sounded the alarm about the dangers of global warming—had hoped to meet with Warren Buffett during his whirlwind stop but could not arrange an appointment.

He wanted to talk with Buffett about coal—specifically, the rail transport of coal.

With Berkshire Hathaway's recent acquisition of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad, Omaha is now the nexus of coal trafficking in North America. BNSF and its Omaha-based competitor, Union Pacific, generate 20 percent of their revenues from hauling coal (mainly from the

strip mines of Wyoming's Powder River Basin).

And coal—as the whole world well knows—is the dirtiest of fossil fuels, emitting massive amounts of greenhouse gases when burned.

More even than oil, America is addicted to coal. Our country relies on coal for half of its electrical power generation, despite the dangers and destructiveness associated with coal mining, its use as fuel and its disposal (coal ash). Industry advocates stress that coal is domestic, plentiful and—most important—cheap.

If the coal industry were stripped of its government subsidies and held financially liable for its environmental degradation and harm to human health, the cost of this deadly energy source would shoot straight up the smokestack.

The coal industry has saturated the airwaves with advertising about 'clean coal,' pitching technology to make coal more

environmentally friendly. U.P. and BNSF, in fact, are members of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity.

This industry advocacy organization (comprised exclusively of mining companies, electricity producers and railroads) would have us believe the introduction of 'clean coal' is just around the corner, right on the cusp of coming online.

Unfortunately, we've got a better chance of sighting Bigfoot in downtown Omaha than of living to see 'clean coal' live up to its hype. 'Clean coal' is a con job.

After years of research (and billions in public investment), not one single plant is anywhere near operational. Moreover, in the few places where technology has been attempted, the cost involved (in energy as well as money) made it economically infeasible.

BNSF's rival, Union Pacific, has been resolutely undeterred by these facts. To protect the profits

it earns from coal transportation, the nation's largest carrier has spent millions of dollars over the past two years opposing climate legislation, including the current bills in Congress regarding cap-and-trade of carbon emissions (a policy incubated over a decade ago in free-market think tanks).

In this effort, U.P. has worked closely with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, whose president has sat on U.P.'s board of directors since 1998. U.P. is doing all it can to sustain our coal addiction, climate be damned.

Which is why the U.P. headquarters was the target of the June 17 protest that featured McKibben. The international group McKibben founded, 350.org, is committed to alerting the world to the need to bring carbon emissions down to a level of 350 parts per million (from the current 390 ppm)—a level safe enough for civilization to survive.

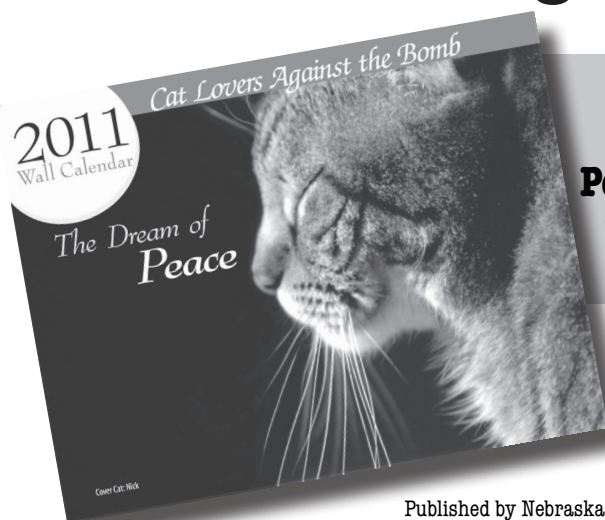
We can't do that, though,

if we practice business as usual and persist in burning coal as the dominant means of generating electric power.

Knowing of Buffett's integrity, McKibben had hoped to talk with him personally about the danger that coal constitutes to our planet. With Buffett's stature in the business community, he could help wean America off its addiction to coal and set us on a sounder economic path—one in which our railroads carry wind turbines, solar panels and, someday, even people. It's time that America once again invests in its railroads.

McKibben is now back on the road. (He sandwiched his Omaha stop between talks in China and Austria.) His new book, *EAARTH: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*, should be required reading by everyone concerned about the effects of global warming on our American way of life and, indeed, human life itself.

Cat Lovers Against the Bomb



"Peace is not the product of a victory or a command... Peace is a never-ending process, the work of many decisions."

—Oscar Arias

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010 NEBRASKA REPORT, P. 9

U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, conclusion

Colombians continues to increase with over 200,000 internally displaced in 2009 alone. These individuals face not only the loss of their homes, but discrimination in the large cities and severe economic hardships re-starting their lives in new urban environments. We witnessed the consequences of such displacements driving and walking the streets of downtown Bogotá and coming across displaced families begging in the streets. While the Colombian government has offered some assistance to these individuals, many critics view such support as woefully inadequate.

The Colombian government's role with "false positives" and internal displacement should at least give pause to Senator Johanns, Representative Smith and their allies in Congress who view no reason for a free trade agreement to be delayed. The plight of trade union activists, however, provides additional cause for these elected officials to reconsider their uncritical call for passage of an agreement. Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist. According to the National Labor School, Colombia's central organization monitoring labor rights, more than 2,700 trade unionists have been murdered since 1986. The International Trade Union Confederation concluded that 48 trade unionists were killed in Colombia during 2009 (half the world's total) and already more than 20 were killed between January and April of 2010. While there has been a decrease in the annual number of killings since 2002, there has been an increase in death threats, forced displacements and governmental detentions of trade unionists since 2007. In addition, the perpetrators of these crimes have enjoyed an almost 95 percent level of impunity, with actual convictions being relatively rare.

Different human rights organizations within and outside of Colombia have attributed a majority of trade unionist murders to paramilitary groups. These groups have been responsible for most political assassinations and massacres in Colombia throughout the 1990s and for much of the 2000s and continue to be active throughout



A Colombian mother posing with a photo of her daughter who was murdered by paramilitary groups in April 2004.

Photo by Erik Dodge.

the country. Colombia's National Police estimate that there are over 4,000 members of these groups still operating, while some Colombian human rights organizations place the number at over 10,000. The continued strength and influence of these groups is documented by the Colombian human rights and research group, the "Center for Investigation and Popular Education" (CINEP), which reports that over 550 Colombians were murdered in 2009 by members of Colombia's security forces (the armed forces or the police) and paramilitary groups. In February 2010, Human Rights Watch concluded that paramilitary groups "...are frequently targeting civilians, committing horrific crimes including massacres, killings, rapes and forced displacement" while the Colombian government has "...failed to invest adequate resources in the police units charged with combating the groups, or in the group of prosecutors charged with investigating them. It has done far too little to investigate regular reports of toleration of the successor groups

[paramilitary groups] by state agents or public security forces." In fact, in the last two years, Colombia has been engulfed in a major political scandal in which more than 80 members of Congress, including 35 percent of the Senate (mostly supporters of the past president Álvaro Uribe as well as the current President Santos) and members of Uribe's cabinet, are under investigation or have been convicted for maintaining close ties with paramilitary groups. These ties have included receiving funds from these organizations, obtaining their assistance in mobilizing votes and even providing paramilitary groups information on potential victims for assassinations.

For example, Jorge Norguera the former director of Colombia's "Administrative Department of Security" (DAS), Colombia's main domestic intelligence agency, has been charged with providing paramilitary commanders with information about the movements of union leaders who were subsequently killed. Norguera is not the only member of DAS implicated in violating democratic and human rights in Colombia. According to a January 2010 report of Colombia's attorney general's office, since 2004 special units within DAS have been involved in the wiretapping of judges on the Supreme and Constitutional courts, presidential candidates, journalists, publishers, human rights activists and

members of international human rights groups, as well as directly threatening individuals viewed as in opposition to the government's policies.

Do unconditional supporters of the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement believe we should ratify an agreement with a country that regularly spies on those citizens advocating for democracy and social justice? Should we ratify an agreement with a country where members of the military continue to tolerate murderous paramilitary groups and have been implicated in the killing of innocent civilians? Why shouldn't we use the immense leverage of this free trade agreement as a way to promote peace and human rights in Colombia? As the Colombian academic Gonzalo Sánchez told me and my class, "human rights issues only become a problem for the Colombian government when they are a problem for the United States."

To respond to Senator Johanns' question, what opponents of the U.S.-Colombian free trade agreement are waiting for is evidence that the Colombian government is serious about ending the activities of murderous paramilitary groups, that it is no longer spying on its political opposition, and that it is committed to prosecuting those members of its security services and national government implicated in the continuing violations of human rights.

"Chronicles a painful odyssey that should give pause to the caring, the oblivious, and those who don't give a damn." Frank LaMere
Winnepago Tribe of Nebraska
Chair, Native Caucus, Democratic National Committee

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WHITECLAY

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Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Now that Nebraskans for Peace is in its 41st year, it should be noted that Nebraska Peace Foundation was started in 1985, so that puts the Foundation in its 26th year! While no exact figures exist for the total dollars the Foundation has provided to NFP for its educational work over these 25 years, that has to be a phenomenal figure.

We were fortunate in the 1990s when the stock market peaked and some of our core supporters gave the Foundation their stock profits and gained the tax advantages thereof. Today's turbulent markets do not produce such profits and your Foundation is suffering—we are not able to provide NFP the support it needs. PLEASE consider making a donation to the Foundation NOW!



Immigration, conclusion

fallen since NAFTA. The initial growth in the number of jobs has leveled off, with China's even more repressive labor system luring U.S. firms to locate there instead...

With U.S. firms unwilling to pay even minimal taxes (in Mexico), NAFTA has hardly produced the promised uplift in the lives of Mexicans... Falling industrial wages, peasants forced off the land, small businesses liquidated, growing poverty: these are the direct consequences of NAFTA. This harsh suffering explains why so many desperate Mexicans... are willing to risk their lives to cross the border to provide for their families.

NAFTA failed to curb illegal immigration precisely because it was never designed as a genuine development program crafted to promote rising living standards, health care, environmental cleanup and worker rights in Mexico...

Programs providing stable, decent employment, modern transportation, clean water, and environmental cleanup are needed to take the place of the immense NAFTA failure and allow Mexicans to live decent, hopeful lives in their native land."

("Immigration Flood Unleashed by NAFTA's Disastrous Impact on Mexican Economy," Roger Bybee and Carolyn Winter, CommonDreams.org, April 25, 2006)

To be fair, I should note that some economists, who have striven to quantify both the positive and negative effects of

NAFTA, have suggested in publications for the World Bank that poverty rates have fallen and real income has risen. However, others argue that NAFTA has been beneficial to business owners in all three countries—but has had negative impacts on farmers in Mexico... and negative impacts on U.S. workers in manufacturing and assembly industries who lost jobs. Critics also argue that NAFTA has contributed to the rising levels of inequality in both the U.S. and Mexico.

UNL economist (and NFP State Board member) Hank van den Berg is working on a new book that will address these issues in depth. Look for his analysis in future issues of the *Nebraska Report*.

Meanwhile, as our government endeavors to fashion a new national immigration policy, the bottom line simply must involve more than fences, border enforcement, crackdown on employers, avenues to citizenship and the oppression of children of undocumented residents born in the U.S. It must include a rethinking and revision of U.S. trade policies, as well as economic development opportunities for Mexico's rank-and-file citizens. Then, as Bob Epp has stated, they won't be pressured to "leave their birthplace and familiar surroundings and go to a different country with a different language with a quite probably hostile environment."

Speaking Our Peace, conclusion

organization to develop issues and support local groups. Because, without local talk and action, we are clanging cymbals.

We have 1800 members and 11 chapters, but we do not have groups in many important parts of the state. No group in Fremont meant that we were impotent before Kris Kobach and his anti-immigrant forces. We have no discussion and action groups in Beatrice, Columbus, Norfolk, South Sioux, North Platte, Broken Bow or Chadron. If we are to be more than an organization of sourpusses, clenched fists

raised to the sky, we must be statewide in our chapters, our members and our action. We must create new communities of discourse and action that represent change in nucleus. The NFP staff and State Board stand ready to help you by phone, by email, by website and in person if you are willing to form such groups and are ready to discuss, act and risk ostracism in the cause of Peace & Justice in your area. We might become a messy organization, but we will be altogether alive. And, as we know from history, we will change things.

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Check out www.350.org for scheduled events in Omaha and Lincoln.

<http://www.350.org/map#/map/41.01969722660128/-96.39404296875/6>

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- Nov. 17** **State Sen. Bill Avery & Don Tilley** discuss new possible roles for government and faith groups to remake society in the 21st Century. 6:30 p.m. First Plymouth Church, 2000 D Street, Lincoln. Free and open to the public.

*NFP State Office Hours in Lincoln, 10:00 – 2:00 weekdays
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Speaking Our Peace

This column does not often speak of NFP organizational matters. I have felt that, if we sought first the kingdom of Peace & Justice, the rest would be added. But this column is different.

Here I could tell you how you ought to call Senator Johanns (202-224-4224) and urge him to vote for the “New START Treaty” reducing the number of nuclear weapons as Senator Nelson has already pledged to do. I could say you ought to write to your senators to say that—if they want budget cuts—they ought to push Defense Secretary Robert Gates to slash U.S. military spending to the level of the next largest nation, China. I could ask that you write your Nebraska state senators to oppose the systematic racism being practiced in Nebraska in Whiteclay, in North Omaha, in Fremont—and soon, if Senator Janssen’s and Governor Heineman’s anti-immigrant legislation succeeds, across our entire state. I could say that you should talk with your neighbors about whether their kids are being bullied in school (or are bullying there) and then go ask the school for its bullying policy and enforcement plans. I could ask you to do all of these things, and I do so ask, but I have more in mind.

Nebraskans for Peace is 40 years old. It has 1800 members now and 11 chapters.

But to be effective we need more of both, members and chapters. After 40 years of our work, Nebraska is still, in my view, one of the five most militaristic, violence- and injustice-supporting states in the entire union. In the last hundred years, it has moved from being led by pacifists and supporters of a regime of international law and order to being led by men (yes, almost all men) who never saw a piece of military spending or coercive policy that they didn’t like—all in the name of ‘freedom.’

If NFP is to be effective, we few, we happy few, must reverse this change. And we must do it by forming small groups all over the state dedicated to peace and justice from the local to the international scene. We all know Margaret Mead’s quote, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” This is not just a cliché. Small communities that show the larger community that we can live by different values and relate to one another in a different way are the only route to serious change.

Consider the early Christian Church’s home meetings. Consider the little groups of monastics and followers of the Buddha that formed in Central and Southeastern

Of Chapters & Change

by Paul Olson, NFP President

Asia and India in Buddhism’s early history. Consider the ashram movement’s challenge of simple living and nonviolent non-cooperation—the foundation of Gandhi’s movement. To turn to the more explicitly political: the Populist movement emerged in part out of meetings in one-room schoolhouses in Custer County, Nebraska. In the 1890s, the Populist Party espoused the direct election of senators, government ownership or control of large corporations, equal rights for women and for African-Americans, and a host of other principles and ideas that propelled the next century of change in America. Consider Saul Alinsky’s neighborhood organizing movement or the small group discussions among peasants that were the basis of “Liberation Theology’s” transformation of the political landscape of much of Central and South America, despite many admonitions from the church leadership on high.

I can testify to the importance of local members, chapters and small groups within our own Nebraskans for Peace ranks. NFP activists Frank LaMere and Byron Peterson witnessed the horrors of Whiteclay and asked NFP to do something about it. When NFP State Board member Bill Laird organized a small group of students at Creighton Prep to study Whiteclay and

confront state officials with their findings, things began to change. Then, there’s the tireless work of Lincoln’s small “Alternatives to the Military” group that, season after season, has challenged high school kids to believe that the military is not the only route out of poverty and into service to country.

When we could generate no media outside NFP for FAIR’s ‘hate group’ politics in Nebraska, the Grand Island Chapter was able to get published, in its local community paper, analyses that the major papers in the state wouldn’t touch. The “Turn Off the Violence” group of 10-15 people met in my house for eight years discussing and studying before the state policy on bullying was (with the help of others) finally changed. The Omaha Chapter gave us a detailed sense of the Palestinian/Israeli crisis when it organized a statewide tour by American Jew Anna Baltzer to chapters and church groups on behalf of the Palestinian cause. A small group at Mead, Nebraska (not NFP) should be thanked for putting the issue of military pollution of our water supply on the state’s political docket. No state office bureaucracy in Lincoln could do this alone. We need a strong statewide

conclusion on page 11