

RICE AND BEANS DINNER FRIDAY, MAY 5

by Virginia Walsh, Omaha Board

The Omaha chapter of Nebraskans for Peace will celebrate its annual Rice and Beans Dinner on **Friday, May 5 (5/5/06)** at **5:55 PM** at Northside Christian Church,

5555 Larimore.

Community

Here are five reasons you

need to come to it.

- 1. It is NFP's primary fundraising event, and NFP is at least among your favorite charities.** We know you suffer over the Iraq war, with its dreadful carnage and loss of life, its appalling impact on our nation's relationships globally and its horrifying financial cost. Particularly during this war you want to give wholehearted support to the primary anti-war organization in Nebraska – action will ease your grief.
- 2. This year's program will be uniquely worthwhile.** Jeffrey Weiss, Peace Education Director of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Des Moines, Iowa, will speak on the topic **"The Myth of Military Opportunity: How to Counter Military Recruitment of Our Youth"**. Jeffrey will describe the campaign the AFSC has pursued in challenging military recruiters in public schools -- taking the message of peace to those who are being recruited to do the killing in war. Additionally, two NFP members from Lincoln, will speak about "Alternatives to the Military", a project in Lincoln in which peace activists offer counter-military information to secondary students in their schools.
- 3. You will be with likeminded people,** some already your friends and some really interesting others whom you will want to know better.
- 4. The food will be delicious!** This event is a potluck, so every person or family brings beans, salad or dessert, while we provide the rice and drinks. Judging by the past, people tend to bring food made from their favorite

recipes, so, although in theory we are standing in solidarity with the poor of the earth, in actuality we have a simple but ravishing feast.

- 5. And lastly, you have to eat anyhow,** so don't eat alone -- come to this free meal (but bring your checkbook), let your children play in our childcare, and have a stimulating evening with enjoyable people.

If you have not already RSVP'd, please call me at 553-5686 or Amanda at 453-0776 to let us know you are coming, what food you want to bring and whether you will need childcare.

NEBRASKANS FOR PEACE CELEBRATED EARTH DAY

by Amanda E. Flott, Omaha Coordinator

After being rained out three straight years, we finally had a perfect Nebraska spring day for Earth Day. On Saturday, April 22, 2006, Sierra Club hosted their annual Earth Day celebration at Elmwood Park. It

Environmental Justice

featured musical performances by the Jazzholes and an improvisation routine from Improv 88. The Omaha chapter had a large presence this year. Through gracious board donations we created yet another banner with the slogan **"End War for Earth's Sake"**. If you didn't



happen to make it to Earth Day this year, rest assured that this banner will be making another appearance. How can we go wrong with a message like that?

(Continued on page 3)

ANTI-WAR TASKFORCE AT WORK

by Virginia Walsh, Omaha Board

This month the NFP/O Anti-War Taskforce worked both in Omaha and in Norfolk!

In Norfolk on March 29 the Young

Anti-War

Democrats Club at Norfolk Senior High held two anti-war demonstrations. Yes, they did. From 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM twenty-two students stood in the cold in front of their school with handmade anti-war signs, and from 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM forty-five of them stood on the corner of 13th & Norfolk Avenue. They had sent an invitation to Nebraskans for



Peace to attend, so I took our **U.S.OUT - U.N. IN** banners up to Norfolk and the students held them with me. The majority of passing motorists who gave any response at all gave smiles, thumbs-ups and peace signs.

In Omaha we are still distributing yard signs, doing bannering, and writing Public Pulse letters. Remarkably enough, we have only about 50 yard signs left of our original 600. We are bannering for about an hour at least twice a week and would do more if we had more volunteers. This month we are bannering at 30th & Ames, 24th & N St., 119th & West Center, and 11th & Jackson - so north, south, west and Old Market. We also held a banner in front of the main post office on Tax Day that said "**TAXES FOR PEACE, NOT WAR**".

In Omaha too our taskforce organized a visit with Congressman Lee Terry on April 24 and another with his challenger Jim Esch on April 26, on the topic of the Iraq war. The conversations will be the subject of future Public Pulse letters.

If you are grieving over this war do try to attend our next taskforce meeting on **Tuesday, May 9, at 6:00 PM, at Augustana Lutheran.** Call 553-5686 to volunteer for any activities.

ANTI-BULLYING TASKFORCE FORMS

by Michael Gordon, NFP/O Board

LB 627, our anti-bullying legislative bill, achieved one notable success this session before time ran out, killing it: it was advanced by the Education Committee, after having been stalled there for 14 months. Its advance-

Civil Rights

ment was the direct result of effective lobbying by 35 high school students from Lincoln, Fremont, Norfolk and Omaha, who gathered in the Capitol for an Anti-Bullying Lobby Day training on March 28. A part of the training consisted of the students telling the eight members of the Education Committee about bullying in their schools. They brought charts, petitions and personal stories, and their persuasiveness was dramatically evident in the Committee's prompt decision to advance the bill.

Before the bill could be heard on General File, however, the Unicameral was caught up in its cataclysmic consideration of LB 1045, the redistricting of school districts, and the clock ran out.

Nevertheless, duly empowered by our young people, we are starting all over again immediately on our campaign to pass an anti-bullying bill in the next legislative session.

There are 17 Omaha members of NFP who to date have indicated their keen interest in this issue, and therefore we would like to invite them and all other interested persons to discuss forming an anti-bullying taskforce to help get this legislation passed. **The first meeting of this group will be on Wednesday, May 17, at 6:30 PM at Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th & Lafayette.** At this meeting we will review our anti-bullying adventures to date, plan for Bullying Awareness Week (tentatively scheduled for the last week of September), and begin strategizing for the upcoming legislative session.

Come join us in our efforts to make Nebraska students safer in their schools. If you have questions, call me at 714-3810.

(Continued from page 1)

Complementing our lovely banner was our featured tabling information on the devastation to our earth brought by nuclear weapons, specifically depleted uranium. There was also a tribute created to the 22 lost Nebraskan soldiers in Iraq, four of whom were from the Omaha metro area. In addition to this, we distributed the rest of our "Bush Lied, Soldiers Died" postcards, as well as our "US OUT, UN IN" yard signs. Among all the crowds of people, I believe we reached out to quite a few future Omaha members and I look forward to getting in touch with them to spread our peace and social justice message.

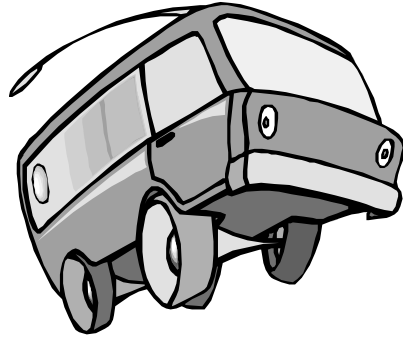
Mark your calendars now for a potluck dinner on Sunday, June 25th, when the Omaha Chapter of NFP will host the annual Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan. This caravan will stop in several Canadian provinces as well as 47 states in the U.S. en route to Cuba, whose economy struggles under a boycott by the U.S. government. Nebraskans should be proud of the efforts by our state to trade agricultural products with Cuba.

PM 3

FRANCES MENDENHALL RECEIVES GANDHI AWARD

On April 7 the prestigious Gandhi Award was conferred on Dr. Frances Mendenhall by the UNO School of Social Work during their annual symposium. Frances Mendenhall has devoted many years to sustained social leadership against nuclear weapons, on top of giving free dental care to the poor in China (seven trips) and Chiapas (three times a year). We are honored to count her among our members.

Community



This year's Caravan will gather funds and material aid for children with special needs in Cuba. Supplies being sought include:

- Artificial limbs and supports for joints and limbs
- Mobility aids
- Hearing and amplification aids
- Braille paper, equipment and writing supplies
- Magnifying lenses for partially sighted
- Toys and educational materials for children with learning difficulties
- New underwear for children living in special homes

In spite of the hardships it has faced over the years, Cuba has provided medical support for liberation efforts around the world, including that of the Palestinians.

PALESTINE RIGHTS TASK FORCE: MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINE AND CUBA

by Anne Else, Omaha Board

On April 3 fifty folks gathered at First Unitarian Church to learn from three Palestinian healthcare workers how healthcare is often blocked to those seeking it in their land. Checkpoints prevent or cause deadly delays for persons trying to reach health care on the other side of the checkpoint. Indiscriminate use of deadly force by Israeli law enforcement agents kills and wounds many who are innocent. The healthcare workers are in the U.S. to garner support to expand clinical care. The event, sponsored by NFP and Lutheran Metro Ministries, raised \$720 in cash and approximately \$2,000 worth of equipment to send to Palestine for the clinic. Such support is critical now when so much aid to the Palestinians is being terminated.

Human Rights

Answer:

Afro-American author Alice Walker, commenting in 1983 on China's broad boulevards of trees in Beijing. Cited in Alice Walker, by Evelyn C. White (Norton, 2004), page 368.

Peace Matters Committee:

Editors: Amanda Flott and Virginia Walsh
Layout: Carol Windrum and Tim Fickenscher

Calendar of Events

Thursday, May 4th: Peace Seekers Discussion Group. Support group for peace activists. 7pm, Jo Peterson's house. Contact Jo at 556-9057

Friday, May 5th: RICE AND BEANS DINNER, NFP's annual **potluck fundraiser.** Program: "The Myth of Military Opportunity: How to Counter Military Recruitment of Our Youth". 5:55pm, North Side Christian Church, 5555 Larimore St. RSVP Amanda 453-0776 or Virginia 553-5686



Saturday, May 6th GLBT Summit at Mahoney State Park. 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, plus evening picnic. A great GLBT networking opportunity. Contact Michael Gordon for more details, 398-3027.

Tuesday, May 9: Anti-War Task Force, 6:00 PM, Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th & Lafayette Ave, Lounge. Contact Virginia Walsh, 553-5686

Thursday, May 11th NFP/O Board Meeting, 6:00 PM, Augustana Lutheran Church 38th & Lafayette Ave.

Sunday, May 14th Mother's Day "Auntie War" gathering. 3:00 PM, Memorial Park overpass, 60th & Dodge. 3pm. Please wear your Sunday best! Contact Jo Peterson, 556-9057

Wednesday, May 17: Anti-Bullying Task Force, 6:30 PM, Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th & Lafayette Ave, Lounge. Contact Michael Gordon, 714-3810.

Saturday, May 20th NFP State Board Meeting, Lincoln, NE.

Save the dates:

Saturday, June 10: Annual Whiteclay March, Whiteclay, NE.

Sunday, June 25: Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan. Potluck dinner.

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

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Question:

Who said, "The planting of trees demonstrates a clear intention to have a future and a definite disinterest in war"? (See inside.)

