

July/August 2007

Peace Matters

There Is No
Peace Without
Justice

OMAHA WILL HOST NFP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 6 is the date for the annual peace conference of Nebraskans for Peace statewide. This year Omaha is the location. Omaha members will be on call.

The Catholic Bishop Tom Gumbleton, a well-known national peace activist from Detroit, is the main speaker. Other speakers, workshops and details will be announced in the next Peace Matters and other mailings from NFP. If you would like to host one or more out-of-town guests, please let Omaha NFP Coordinator Mark Welsch know by writing to NFPomaha@NebraskansForPeace.org, or by calling 402-453-0776.



MARCH FOR PEACE! By Elaine Wells, NFP Member

"Marching for peace means advocating for a change in worldview: coming to view the world as connected and ourselves as responsible citizens of the earth--not self-centered citizens of a particular country," proclaims the March for Peace web site: www.MarchforPeace.info/Ideals.html.

On Saturday, July 14 you can join Ashley Casale and Michael Israel on their trek from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., to raise awareness of global issues and generate peaceful solutions. Michael even missed his high

school graduation in order to begin marching. If walking is not your bag, come to Levi Carter Park at 4405 Carter Lake Shore Dr. (across the street from the exit of the Eppley Airport, enter on Carter Blvd, stay along the shore line for 1.1 mile to the pavilion) on Saturday afternoon for the bands, poetry slam, speakers, a "Cindyrella Princess of Peace" shoe-fitting contest, and more. McFoster's Café will bring the "natural kind" of food. You bring your Frisbees, games, family and friends.

Cindy Sheehan said at the Omaha Peace and Justice Expo, "Sacrifice. Everyone here can do more. Suck it up and pull out more. I'm not asking you to do anything I have not done." Now that she has moved on to help elect candidates who will really end the war in Iraq, it's time for someone to fill her shoes. Ashley Casale, who turned 19 on the march, may be the heroine of this modern "Cindyrella" story.

Ashley became an activist in high school, when the war began, and she decided to walk across the United States to motivate other students to work for the March for Peace saying, "We call for real service--not military service." The goals of March for Peace are: 1) withdraw American troops and end the military occupation of Iraq; 2) end nuclear weapons; 3) end the genocide in Darfur and increase financial and humanitarian aid to countries in need; 4) end social and economic inequality; and 5) sign the Kyoto Protocol, limit carbon emissions, and transition to renewable and sustainable energy sources such as wind, solar and geothermal energy.

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Nebraskans for Peace is co-sponsoring the March for Peace, along with CodePink, Not in Our Name, and World Can't Wait. We need your help to get everything ready. Please call me at 573-1702 or e-mail me at mmwells1@cox.net to say what you will do to welcome Ashley and Michael.

Iraq's Internally Displaced People and Refugees

By Anne Else, NFP Member

In February 2007, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees estimated Iraq has 1.8 million internally displaced persons, civilians forced from their homes but unwilling to leave Iraq as a result of conflict, violence, and threats of abductions or assassinations. UNHCR estimates the total of IDPs may be 2.3 to 2.7 million by the end of 2007, a number beyond the capacity of anyone to respond to adequately.

In November 2006 UNHCR estimated up to 2 million Iraqis had fled to other countries, with the largest number going to Jordan and Syria. This is about 16 percent of the Iraqi population and includes about 40 percent of its professional class. As displacement becomes more permanent, coping strategies in host countries are being depleted.

Palestinian refugees who were living in Baghdad when the war began have now fled to the Iraqi border because they are not protected by either the Sunni or Shiite militias, but are often targets of violence. But the Palestinians can't get out of Iraq because they don't have citizenship papers. So they are both refugees and IDPs!

Counting both IDPs and refugees, nearly one-third of the population of Iraq has fled the country or is living in makeshift conditions—because of a war the

Answer:

President Thomas Jefferson

United States started for illegitimate reasons. These figures don't even include Iraqi civilian deaths caused by the invasion and its repercussions—that number may be as high as 655,000, according to a John Hopkins Study.

We must find ways to end this tragedy as quickly as possible.

Refugees Overwhelm Town In Sweden

By Victoria Peterson, Assistant Editor

Last year Sweden took in twice as many Iraqi refugees as the entire United States, according to the mayor of Sodertalje as reported in The New York Times on June 13, 2007.

Most of the refugees who went to the scenic town of Sodertalje with about 60,000 persons were Christians fleeing from Iraq. This year Sweden anticipates receiving 20,000 refugees compared to 7,000 promised for the United States.

Why are so many leaving Iraq? Persecution of non-Muslims is one reason. "They come here to survive," said the former resident of Iraq who now is chairman of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Sodertalje, where so many have fled.

Many of the refugees are from affluent Iraqi society. In Sodertalje they discovered that work was scarce, housing was difficult to find and schooling had problems. Some moved in with friends. Although

Arabic is spoken almost everywhere in Sweden, finding classes in Swedish was not easy.

But the town of Sodertalje is almost at a breaking point, according to Mayor Lago. It is hard to provide even the basic services. The Swedish system for taking in refugees is broken, he said. The burden is overwhelming.

If a smaller country can take in and welcome 20,000 refugees, why is the bigger wealthy supposedly generous United States receiving only about 7,000 persons? Congress needs to be reminded of this numerical difference, especially since our country is responsible for the sufferings and hardships of these people in this incomprehensible war. Call, write, fax and e-mail.



Rice and Beans Dinner

By Mark Welsch, NFP Omaha Coordinator



Thank you to everyone who attended and helped with the NFP Omaha Rice and Beans Potluck Dinner on Sunday May 6 at Hanscom Park United Methodist Church. It was a huge success! A big crowd turned out, and I got to meet and talk with more NFP members. We listened to music by Michael Murphy and by Servalia and Orville Johnson, shared good food, and became more informed through the presentation by Frank Cordaro about StratCom. Successful fundraising efforts made it a great evening, the cash and pledges totaling over \$13,000.

July Third TV Festival On Public Access Television

By Frances Mendenhall,
NFP Member and Independent
Television Omaha Spokesperson

On Tuesday, July 3, 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., on Cox Channel 23 there will be show after show that you may want to watch. Independent Television Omaha has been given the day to show the programs listed below. Our mission is to promote progressive, noncommercial television in Omaha. Thanks to NFP members' support, the recent city council action has recognized ITO's status as a consortium and we now have more time to broadcast our programs on public access. This is the first "film festival", and it won't be the last.

My favorite of the day is *Indymedia Argentina*, which shows at 8:30 p.m. It is a beautiful work, and the subject, the connection of all who struggle for justice, is a real source of hope. *Indymedia Argentina* is a feature-length documentary

about grassroots media coverage of the December 2001 economic collapse and political uprising in Argentina. It follows the first year of a news collective in Buenos Aires as it struggles to make sense of assassinations, a collapsing economy and a whirlwind social movement. Along the way it tells the story of the global Indymedia network, the world's largest collaboration of volunteer, freelance and unaffiliated media makers. This is the film's first showing in Omaha.

We are also trying to develop our audience. ITO is looking for people to host house parties July 3. Some current supporters are planning to invite friends and neighbors in to check out our programs. Anyone interested in having a house party or in attending one should call ITO, 305-3505.

ITO Programs on July 3:

- 9:00 a.m. Weapons of Mass Deception
- 10:00 a.m. Michael Franti
- 10:30 a.m. Dr. Sami al-Arian
- 11:00 a.m. A Force More Powerful
- 12:30 p.m. Legacy of Torture: Black Liberation
- 1:05 p.m. Closure Myth
- 1:35 p.m. Another Media is Possible
- 2:00 p.m. Former Interrogator Goes AWOL
- 2:35 p.m. 9/11 Questions
- 3:00 p.m. Space Command, Missile Defense
- 4:00 p.m. Store Wars: Wal-Mart Comes to Town
- 5:30 p.m. In Debt We Trust
- 8:00 p.m. One Wedding and a Revolution
- 8:30 p.m. Indy Media, Argentina
- 10:00 p.m. Big Bucks, Big Pharma
- 10:50 p.m. Manufacturing Consent

Peace Matters Committee:

Editor: Mark Welsch
Assistant Editor: Victoria Peterson
Layout: Carol Windrum and Tim Fickenscher

Calendar of Events

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

Every Saturday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Impeach Bush and Cheney Demonstration on the footbridge over Dodge near UNO at 60th and Dodge Streets. Contact Elaine at 415-9500 for more information.



July 2, 5:30-6:30 p.m. (first Monday of every month) Peacemakers Task Force at First United Methodist Church, Conference Room, 7020 Cass Street. Enter the church office door on the south side and turn left down first hallway. For more information contact Elaine Wells at 415-9500.

July 5, 6:00 p.m. (first Thursday of every month) Peace Seekers and Pizza, 7:00 p.m. time for discussion, reflection and leadership support at 4924 Chicago Street. Contact person is Jo Peterson at 350-3019.

July 11, 6:30 p.m. (second Wednesday of every month) NFP Omaha Leadership meeting at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Avenue. All are welcome. Contact person is Mark Welsch at 453-0776.

July 14, 1:00 – 7:00 p.m.– March for Peace Festival at Levi Carter Park at 4405 Carter Lake Shore Drive – Contact Elaine Wells at 415-9500 if you want to help with the festival, a potluck, host a walker in your home, or walk with them for a little while. (See front-page story for more detail!)

July 31, 7:00 p.m. - Palestinian Task Force meeting. Contact Anne Else at 556-5184 for location.

August 2, 6:00 p.m. (first Thursday of every month) Peace Seekers and Pizza, 7:00 p.m. time for discussion, reflection and leadership support at 4924 Chicago Street. Contact person is Jo Peterson at 350-3019.

August 4, (first Saturday of every month) 6:00 p.m. Potluck meal, 7:00 p.m. meeting of the Progressive Omaha group at 4924 Chicago Street. All progressive people are welcome. Contact person is Jack Dunn at 551-2552.

August 6, 5:30-6:30 p.m. (first Monday of every month) Peacemakers Task Force at First United Methodist Church, Conference Room, 7020 Cass Street. Enter the church office door on the south side and turn left down first hallway. For more information contact Elaine Wells at 415-9500.

August 8, 6:30 p.m. (second Wednesday of every month) NFP Omaha Leadership meeting at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Avenue. All are welcome. Contact person is Mark Welsch at 453-0776.

August's Palestinian Task Force meeting. Contact Anne Else at 556-5184 for location, date and time of meeting.

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Which U.S. president said:
"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom?"
(See inside.)



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