

March 2007

Peace Matters



There Is No
Peace Without
Justice

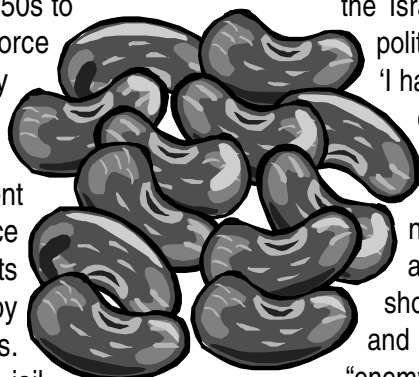
Annual Rice and Beans Potluck Dinner
Sunday May 6, 2007, 5:30 P.M.
Hanscom Park United Methodist Church
4444 Francis Street
(just south of 44th and Center Street)
by Marian Todd and Mark Welsch

The annual rice and beans dinner is a chance to share a meal in solidarity with people in the world who survive each day with so much less than we enjoy. This is also the major fund-raising event for the Omaha chapter of Nebraskans for Peace. Please bring your checkbook and an open heart.

A special presentation by Frank Cordaro of the Phil Berrigan Catholic Worker House in Des Moines, is titled, "The Changing Face of StratCom: From Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) to Global Strike Force -- a call to continued resistance at Offutt Air Force Base."

Cordaro's informative and dynamic presentation will add a new dimension to our understanding of Nebraska's role in today's world. He is a life-long peace activist and nonviolent resister to war. His presentation will cover the history of the changing military missions at Offutt Air Force Base from the days of MAD in the 1950s to the present-day Global Strike Force under the StratCom and Military Space Commands stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. He will tell the story of the years of nonviolent resistance at Offutt. This resistance has resulted in hundreds of arrests and years of jail time served by peacemakers over the last 30 years. Cordaro served over 3 ½ years of jail and prison time for his direct actions at Offutt.

Please bring a bean dish, salad, bread or dessert. Rice, beverages and tableware will be provided. Please R.S.V.P. by sending a note to nfpOmaha@NebraskansForPeace.org or by calling 453-0776. Replies are not necessary but help in planning.



MAKE PEACE, NOT WAR, WITH IRAN

You're invited to a Potluck Dinner with JOE VOLK Executive Director, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Topic: MAKE PEACE, NOT WAR, WITH IRAN

Friday, March 30, 6:00 p.m.
Augustana Lutheran Church
3647 Lafayette Ave., Omaha
Anne Elise -Omaha chapter

In late February Joe Volk was a member of a delegation of national religious leaders from the United States who spent a week in Iran meeting with Muslim and Christian leaders and government officials, including former President Khatami and current President Ahmadinejad. The two and a half-hour meeting with President Ahmadinejad covered topics including the role of religion in transforming conflict, Iraq, nuclear proliferation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

About the visit with President Ahmadinejad, Volk wrote, "What the delegation found most encouraging was a clear declaration from him that Iran has no intention to acquire or use nuclear weapons, as well as a statement that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be solved through political, not military means. President Ahmadinejad said, 'I have no reservation about conducting talks with American officials if we see some good will.'"

Leaders from the United Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Catholic, Evangelical, Quaker and Mennonite traditions were warmly welcomed by the Iranians and came home convinced that the United States should immediately engage in direct, face-to-face talks and cease using language defining the other as our "enemy."

Invite your friends to the potluck on Friday, March 30, sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace to learn more about how we as individuals and organizations can help our country pursue peace in Iran and the Middle East instead of rushing into another armed conflict doomed to disaster.

Questions about the potluck may be directed to

Peace Matters

Great Gift Ideas: Fair Trade Olive Oil and Olive Oil Soap Bars

By Anne Else, Omaha Chapter

The NFP Palestinian Rights Task Force is selling bottles of olive oil (\$20 a bottle) and soap bars (\$5 a bar). The money goes to provide the Palestinian workers a fair wage, to plant new olive trees, and to support cultural education programs for Palestinian youth. The label on the products reads, "The land and sky of Palestine bring you this gift of peace."

Palestinian writer Mohammed Ali Taha says the olive tree "is the symbol of being steadfast on the land." Palestinian farmers grow and harvest olives at real personal danger and cost. For most, olives and olive oil are their major or only source of livelihood.

The olive harvest in Palestine has become a riveting drama as settlers and the Israeli army attempt to destroy the trees and disrupt the harvesting of olives and the marketing of the products. International and Jewish peace activists are trying to help market the products and plant new trees to replace those wantonly destroyed. Palestine produces approximately 35,784 tons of olive oil per year and consumes only about one third of it. Farmers face very serious problems in marketing the remaining 23,000 tons because of travel restrictions imposed by Israel. Already over 10,000 tons are unsold every year. This past year, after Hamas was democratically elected, Israel withheld money that would have provided salaries for many teachers, police and other civil servants. Please help these people who are besieged and oppressed by the apartheid policies of the Israeli government. Consider selling these products at your church or social groups. If you wish to buy either the olive oil or soap, call Anne Else at 556-5184.



Carol Schmid at 453-9239 or to the NFP office at 453-0776.

NFP, the Nation and the World Need YOU

By Elaine Wells, Omaha Chapter

Last fall I felt honored to be asked to lead the "Anti-War Task Force" of the Omaha Chapter of Nebraskans for Peace. Right away I suggested a name change to something more positive, that didn't include four negative words. Who wants to be "anti," doing "tasks," and "forcing" something? So we agreed on "Peacemakers Group." Since then a very small number of dedicated individuals has planned and put on several

amazing events. We brought more than 30 local peace and justice leaders together to brainstorm how caring groups could cooperate to articulate a clear vision for a humane society and develop effective strategies to move America in that direction. On November 30 excitement grew throughout the evening as every person contributed ideas, and we enjoyed the camaraderie of people who are already working in so many ways to make America a nation we can be proud of again.

This winter, after a press conference, 60 people gathered on the Dodge Street foot-bridge near UNO on the coldest day of the new year to protest "the surge." A delegation lobbied both Senator Chuck Hagel and Congressman Lee Terry on United States policy in the Middle East. The Omaha World Herald Public Pulse has published letters, and we've supported the Catholic Worker demonstrations at UNO/StratCom every Wednesday during Lent.

Whatever your interests, skills and limits are, WE NEED YOU!

THE BIG PICTURE:

1. Build a real community of peacemakers in Omaha, beginning March 15.
2. Generate the vision.
3. Influence public opinion and create a ground-swell of support.
4. Educate our elected representatives regularly and win them over.

THE STRATEGIES:

1. Invite Project South to lead a retreat next fall for

Answer:

Winston Churchill

(Continued from page 2)

visioning and strategizing.

2. Gather individuals and groups quarterly at a "potluck and planning" so that we support each other and work toward common goals.

3. Go door to door for grassroots organizing.

4. Distribute The Nebraska Report widely (to coffee shops, hospital waiting rooms, grocery stores, wherever we can).

5. Speak to middle-of-the-road organizations about peaceful alternatives to war and all the human needs that could be addressed with the resources we currently squander on death and destruction.

6. Promote Department of Peace legislation, which has been introduced in Congress.

7. Lobby Senator Hagel to introduce the Peace Tax Fund Act (H.R. 22631) in the Senate

8. Host house parties to educate people and discuss real problems and solutions.

9. Support the Omaha Peace and Justice Expo on tax day, April 15.

10. Organize an ongoing blitz of letters to the editor.

There are many more ideas where these came from, along with hundreds of "Effective Responses to Violence and Terrorism" in the Code Pink handbook "Stop the Next War Now."

What is needed is your time, talents and help to put these great ideas into action. It can be done. Hundreds of persons are on the mailing list, but only a handful at the meetings where the decisions are made, so we don't know whom we can count on to get things done. A couple of hundred attend the demonstrations, but Lincoln consistently brings out 500 or more activists. Omaha metro area people can do that too.

All who read Peace Matters are certainly disgusted with the atrocities committed by our government in our name. Citizen rights are disappearing, as well as the checks and balances that used to provide ballast for the ship of state. Stopping the war and starting to meet human needs is a dream we all have.

This is a plea to GET INVOLVED. Please contact Elaine by email or phone, 573-1702 mmwells1@cox.net, or contact the NPF Omaha Coordinator at 453-0776 to ask questions and offer your help.

Peace Matters Committee:

Editor: Mark Welsch

Assistant Editor: Victoria Peterson

Layout: Carol Windrum and Tim Fickenscher

Congratulations to NFP member **Servalia Levels-Johnson!** On April 18 she will receive a Women of Wisdom Award from the Program for Women and Successful Aging of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Watch Democracy Now on Cox

By Frances Mendenhall, Omaha Chapter

Every Friday there are four different rebroadcasts of Democracy Now on Cox Channel 23: 2:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. This is a good start for Omaha. We would prefer and we are working to get Cox to broadcast all of the Democracy Now shows live or at least on the day they are shown. They are shown five days per week in over 500 other cities, including on hundreds of public access channels. Nevertheless this is a good first step for Omaha. Democracy Now is a TV news magazine like the Jim Lehrer Hour on PBS.

In an attempt to get all of the Democracy Now shows aired five days per week, please do the following:

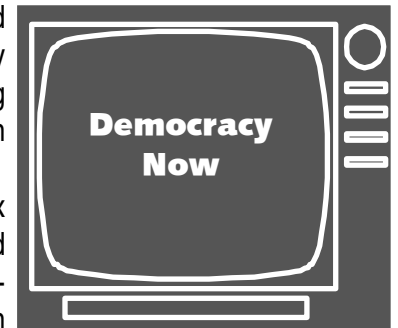
1. Tell your friends about this--both liberal and conservatives will enjoy these thought-provoking shows. They educate on many issues.

2. Contact Cox and tell them you would like Cox to air all of Democracy Now's shows on their original day. You may

call: 933-2323 press 1 for Chris Craddock. If you get an answering machine, you can leave a message.

3. Contact your Omaha City Council member to tell him you would like him to tell Cox management to show Democracy Now on the day it is originally broadcast. The city council number is 444-5520. You can leave your message for all of the city council members.

4. For more information go to www.StandUpForOmaha.org or contact Frances Mendenhall at 402-305-3505.

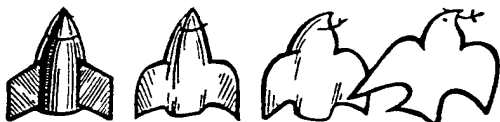


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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Question: Who said? "It is better to jaw, jaw, than to war, war.."? (See inside.)



Calendar of Events

March 14, 21, 28, April 4 (the remaining Wednesdays in Lent) from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. **Vigil at StratCom/UNO**, 6825 Pine St. (three blocks east of 72nd and Pine St., which is 16 blocks south of Dodge St., east of UNO Scott Technology Center).

March 14, 6:30-7:30 p.m. **NFP Omaha Leaders Group** at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Ave.

March 15, **Coalition Building for Progressives**, social gathering at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m. at McFoster's Natural Kind Kafe at 38th and Farnam and Harney Sts.

March 19, 4:00-6:00 p.m. **Peace Vigil** on the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq at Memorial Park footbridge over Dodge St., just east of UNO. Signs and banners available or bring your own.

March 19, 6:30-9:30 p.m. **Peace Vigil with Michael Murphy's** music at McFoster's Natural Kind Kafe at 38th and Farnam and Harney Sts.

March 25, 11:15 a.m., **Education Program**, "A Call to Dialogue and Community Building in Iraq and the Middle East" at Holy Family Church at 1715 Izard St. Sandwiches and dessert will be served.

March 26, 7:00 p.m. **Palestinian Task Force** at Hanscom Park United Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St.

March 30, 6:00 p.m. **Joe Volk speaking at a potluck dinner** at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Ave. See front-page story.

April 3, 5:30-6:30 p.m. **Peacemakers Task Force**. Contact Elaine Wells at 415-9500 for location.

April 6, noon, **UNO School of Social Work** will honor NFP member Carol Windrum with the **Gandhi award**. Reservations (\$25 for luncheon) are required by contacting Ashlie Hurt at 554-3057 or ahurt@mail.unomaha.edu.

Sunday, April 15, 1:00-6:00 p.m. Plan to spend the afternoon at the third **Omaha Peace and Justice Expo** in UNO's Student Center. Keynote speaker: Cindy Sheehan, "the face of America's peace movement," says NPR. Network with over 50 local organizations. Select from 10 workshops on how the war affects us all. Direct Action Fun: Imagine humane ways to divide our "American Pie."

April 20, 7:00 p.m. **Palestinian Task Force**. Contact Anne Eise at 556-5184 for location.

May 6, 5:30 p.m. (note the new time) **NFP Omaha Rice and Beans Dinner** at Hanscom Park United Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St. See front-page story.