



Listen to Women for A CHANGE

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
Minnesota Metro Branch
P. O. Box 14752, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 651-458-7090
<http://www.wilpfmn.org>, wilpf@earthlink.net

November - December 2007

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2008 COFFEE WITH PROGRAMS

10 am - noon, Van Cleve Community Center, 901 15th Ave. SE, Minneapolis
Free, all welcome!

Saturday, January 12, 2008

THE ROLE OF WATER IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

Speaker: Dr. D. J. Mulla, Department of Soil, Water,
and Climate, University of Minnesota

Overview of water resources in Middle Eastern countries, water usage patterns by Israelis and Palestinians, and history of conflicts in the region from the perspective of water scarcity

Saturday, February 9

TO BE ANNOUNCED

Saturday, March 15 (tentative date; March 8 is International Women's Day event)

RECOVERING THE COMMONS

Speaker: Julie Ristau, Managing Fellow and Publisher, Tomales Bay Institute

- * the work of the Tomales Bay Institute
 - * the state of six important commons
 - * basic principles for managing our common assets
 - * ways to protect what we've got and leave it in better condition for future generations
- (See article on page 3)

Saturday, April 12

KATRINA RECOVERY EFFORTS IN MISSISSIPPI (tentative)

Saturday, May 10

THE 2007 JANE ADDAMS CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD BOOKS

Speaker: Jo Montie, Learning Consultant and Jane Addams Children's Book Award Committee Member

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A MOMENT BEFORE THE LIGHTS GO OUT

By Amira Hass, from website of Ha'aretz, Israeli newspaper, sent by WILPF Program Coordinator Kate Zaidan
(www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/921140.html)

Alan Johnston, the BBC correspondent kidnapped in Gaza, related in an interview that at a relatively early stage, he started suffering from all kinds of aches because of the water he drank. This was the same water that the kidnappers drank, but Johnston's unaccustomed body sent warning signals: This is not water that is fit for drinking. And this is the water that reaches most of the taps in the Gaza Strip. Sally, in a few places brackish to contaminated, with an oily consistency that is clearly felt when bathing.

The reason is an ancient one: overpumping because Gaza must make do with the waters from its aquifer alone. It is as if we were to say to the residents of Be'er Sheva: make do with the water that flows near-by.

The water sources in the rest of the country are not for you.

Over the last few years, some private and public solutions have been improvised. Private water purification plants in homes and commercial companies that sell purified water. The municipalities, for their part, set up large brackish water desalination facilities and several central taps. Thousands of people go there daily to fill up jerry-cans with water that will not taste like it came from a puddle and will not cause diarrhea, infections, kidney problems and who knows what else.

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NATIONAL SECTION NEWS

To subscribe to international WILPF's e-news, go to www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/up_index.htm. To find archived past monthly mailings, go to www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/up_index.htm.

A PDF version of WILPF's latest International Directory is available at www.wilpf.int.ch/PDF/InternationalDirectory.pdf

From e-News, October 2007

Listen to the Women for a Change

The International Secretariat has started working on WILPF history in preparation for annual anniversary events. We suggest that all sections visit the history page of our website regularly for inspiration.

To mark International Women's Year 1975, the International President of WILPF, Kay Camp, created a book called *Listen to Women for a Change*. It featured 50 women working for peace and social justice. To remember our recently passed sister Kay, and the remarkable women she honoured in this publication, we reproduced it for the web. WILPF intends to add new faces and names to this in the coming months to continue honouring women's work for peace and freedom. The entire project can be found here: www.wilpf.int.ch/history/kaycamp/listen.html

National WILPF's Middle East Letter to the U.S. State Department

Both WILPF National and WILPF International have sent letters either to the negotiating parties and the U.S. government (international) or to Condoleezza Rice, U.S. State Department, only (U.S. national) pertaining to the U.S.-sponsored meeting between Israel, some Palestinian leaders, and many other participating countries, held at Annapolis, Maryland, from November Minnesota Metro signed on to the U.S. Section letter, which was faxed to Ms. Rice the day before the meeting opened. The text follows:

November 19, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

Dear Secretary Rice,

On behalf of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), U.S. Section, we would like to thank you for your initiative in calling for a renewed peace effort in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We will be watching as the proposed conference in Maryland takes shape and attempts to move the process forward.

Several years ago, our organization held our triennial international congress in Baltimore, MD. Since WILPF has sections in Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon, we took the opportunity to make an appointment and send a delegation over to the U.S. State Department for a frank discussion. We brought repre-

sentatives from each of our Middle East sections--Jews, Christians, and Muslims--and the under-secretary with whom we met found our evaluation of the situation to be relevant and useful. Several of our suggestions later became part of the U.S. stance in the negotiations which were then taking place.

We feel that our extensive knowledge of the region, which comes from an involvement predating the creation of the State of Israel, as well as the experience of our members who live in the area, could serve as a useful guide to the State Department as this round of talks unfolds. To that end, we would like to put forward some suggestions.

1. In the past, the peace talks have been just that: talks. The projected result needs to be a durable peace, based on justice, which will benefit all of the peoples of the region. Real progress is measured in concrete actions. Without action, the parties become frustrated. Please set concrete and achievable goals at each phase.

2. No assumption can or should be made that the parties to these negotiations are equal. The State of Israel is one of the most powerful nations on earth, while the Palestinian Authority, which declared itself to be a state several years ago--both in Gaza on October 1, 1948, and in Algiers on November 15, 1988--has not been given the same international status. In every true respect, this is not a negotiation between equals. Neither the U.S., nor any other great power, should operate as a rubber-stamp for the Israeli state, as that would further imbalance the talks and surely lead to their failure. Please be

certain that the U.S. acts as an honest broker, working for the good of all parties.

3. The principle of land for peace and the items generally referred to as "final status issues" must be on the table and not simply ignored until the end. Most of these issues have been covered in relevant UN resolutions. The basis for negotiations has been, and should remain UNSCR 242 and 338, plus all of the resolutions relevant to each round of the talks.

4. Although the U.S. currently recognizes the Fatah-led government as the legitimate voice of the Palestinian people, it must be recalled that the free and fair democratic elections held by the Palestinian people led to the selection of many members of Hamas. Regardless of U.S. feelings about that organization, many Palestinians believe it to be their legitimate representative. That is especially true of many of the 1.5 million residents of the Gaza Strip. Excluding Hamas from the peace talks would be tantamount to denying 1.5 million Palestinians a voice in their own future. Such exclusion would also doom the talks to failure. Attempts must be made to see that no such exclusion take place. It is our position that both Fatah and Hamas should be included in discussions about the fate of the Palestinian people.

5. The entire region should be declared a nuclear-free zone. Israel is known to be a nuclear state and it must accede to the normal inspection regimen of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Other states in the region would be more likely to follow suit. Whenever possible, weaponry must.

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MN Metro News

The Commons--Now at the Heart of
War and Peace

From Member Jan Hively

Natural gifts such as air and water, and social creations such as science and the Internet, are the common assets that constitute our shared inheritance. It's our job and the state's job to nurture and protect our common assets that sustain life and community. But market forces have both taken valuable common assets and privatized them, and/or dumped wastes into the commons and polluted them. The state has abandoned its role to maintain a healthy balance between the commons and the market and become a single-minded champion of the market. The recent purchase of Texas water rights by T. Boone Pickens exemplifies the problem. As the commons shrink, conflicts over their ownership expand.

Harriet Barlow, a Minneapolis resident, started the Friends of the Commons to take an inventory of the assets that belong to everyone, assess their value and how well they are being managed, and make recommendations. Now part of the Tomales Bay Institute, Friends of the Commons published "The State of the Commons" in 2003, and "The Commons Rising" in 2006. The latter report focuses on the rich explosion of commons-based solutions to our many environmental, economic and social problems. Look at the work of the Tomales Bay Institute on www.onthecommons.org.

On Saturday, March 15, from 10 am to noon, Julie Ristau will talk at the WILLPF monthly meeting about:

- ...the work of the Tomales Bay Institute
- ...the state of six important commons
- ...basic principles for managing our common assets
- ...ways to get involved to protect what we've got and leave it in better condition for future generations

Julie is a hog farmer from southern Minnesota who became an expert in sustainable ag, the publisher of *Utne Reader*, and now managing fellow and publisher for the Tomales Bay Institute. She is also an effective presenter!

We guarantee a fruitful discussion about a challenging topic that lies at the heart of war and peace issues. Plan to attend on March 9.

Listen to women for A CHANGE is produced every other month by MN Metro WILLPF. Please submit letters/articles/complaints (!) to the editor at 1233.ingerison@earthlink.net.

Copy is due on the 10th of the month preceding publication. Next issue: January-February

Editor: Leslie Reindl

A Response from Keith Ellison to Member

Jan Hively

October 11, 2007

Dear Dr. Hively,

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns regarding the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008*. I am honored to hear from you and I am proud to represent you in the United States Congress. Since coming to Congress I have been working very hard to advance my policy agenda based on four key priorities - peace, prosperity for working families, environmental sustainability, and support for human and civil rights.

You may be pleased to know that on May 17, 2007, I voted against the *Defense Authorization Bill* (H.R. 1585). Unfortunately H.R. 1585 passed the House 397 - 27.

I believe the *Defense Authorization Bill* is misguided because it includes funding for unneeded new weapons systems. For example: the bill includes funding for a new technology to create reliable replacement war-heads (RRW). A recent analysis by the National Nuclear Security Administration illustrates that we do not need this new technology. The report found that the pace for dismantling our nuclear warhead stockpile increased by 146% in 2007. This is significant because this increases the availability of replacement parts and missile components for our current warheads, drastically decreasing the need for the new technologies like RRW.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me regarding this or any other matter of concern. Please sign up for my e-newsletter by visiting my website at www.house.gov/ellison.

Sincerely,
Keith Ellison
United States House of Representatives

The Battle Against the School of the

Americas Continues

In what has become the nation's largest annual gathering for peace and human rights, over 20,000 people protested outside the gates of Fort Benning, GA on November 18, 2007. Eleven were arrested on federal criminal charges and face up to six months in prison.

Fort Benning is the site of the internationally notorious U.S. Army training school for Latin American military and security personnel. For decades it was called the School of the Americas (SOA) - it is now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). The school has graduated hundreds of military officers who have led or participated in nearly every human rights atrocity in the hemisphere. Organizations across the world, including Amnesty International USA, have called for its closure since discovering copies of torture manuals used at the school. In June 2007, 203 members of the U.S. House of Representatives voted to close the scandal-ridden school--six votes shy of the margin of victory.

Building a Community for the Future: Editorial

By Leslie Reindl, Editor

This is the holiday season--the time when for many of us time seems to slow down and thoughts turn to family, to the needs of others, to the hope to make a difference in the world, to plans for the future. For many it is also a time of frenetic shopping, worrying, traveling, eating and drinking.

For me, this year, it is a time to take stock even more intently of where our leaders and we their electorate have arrived in our foreign affairs--in pursuing a genocidal occupation against the Iraqi people, in threatening a preemptive war against Iran, in continuing to support Israel in its unacknowledged war against the Palestinian people, in creating an arms race in space, in promoting new "free trade" agreements that ruin small farmers and manufacturers both here and abroad, in continuing an environmentally devastating policy of pesticide spraying in Colombia, in unilaterally isolating Cuba, and on and on.

I have to temper my own wishes for a joyful season with the knowledge that for the majority of the world's people there will be little joy or hope for the future, primarily today because of policies promoted by the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, that markets must be open and free to foreign competition and that family planning to help control population is not an option; and because of increasingly severe climate disruptions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has just released its final opinion about climate change. In taking into account recent events, especially the coal-based growth of the Chinese and Indian economies, it has had to radically shorten the timeline of its predictions of unprecedented changes. It calls for immediate and dramatic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, not slow steps extending out to the year 2050.

If one adds to these predictions the officially admitted diminishing quantity of oil left for our oil-based economies; the already obvious competition (and wars--Iraq, and start watching Africa) for this resource, and the necessary price increases; and the weakness of the debt-ridden dollar along with the mortgage debacle and the funny money that has been created by investment firms under the benign gaze of former Federal Reserve chairman Greenspan, the future for the U.S. economy in particular and the world economy in general is not promising. Taking all these together--climate change, economic turmoil, and peak oil--portends a very different future for us all. We privileged Americans may find that future very difficult to deal with emotionally.

For me, this is a time to rethink what is important in life, the extent of my own culpability for and participation in the state of our world, and how I want to spend whatever time I have remaining in changing myself and those I can influence in preparing for a very different future.

One of those changes is that I will be stepping down as editor of this newsletter, after the next issue.

And I have some other ideas for changes for myself and for building and sharing community--in lifestyle, needs, and capabilities. Maybe you have some ideas too.

If you do, and wish to share, please contact me--651-633-4410 or alteravista@earthlink.net.

Protesting the Space War Shoppers in Omaha

*By Bruce Gagnon, Coordinator, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
October 10, 2007*

Local activists in Omaha made a huge shopping cart yesterday and stuffed it with mock missiles and boxes labeled as depleted uranium and other weapons now being produced by the weapons corporations gathering inside the Quest Convention Center.

The convention, called Strategic Space and Defense 2007, is billed as *The Global Security Conference for Space and Defense Professionals*. Translated, that means several thousand uniformed military brass and weapons contractors filed into the convention center while our group held banners outside. The truck, with shopping cart mounted on top, drove up and down the street in front of the convention center and pulled a small trailer with hay bales on it. Seated on the bales were several activists singing songs calling on the conventioners to "stop shopping" for war in space.

One full {bird} Colonel stopped by our vigil for some time and talked, and debated, with several of our folks. In the end he told them that it was true that StratCom is in charge of preparing the attack on Iran and that in order to stop others {like Iran} from having nasty nuclear weapons we have to hit them first and if necessary to suspend civil liberties in the U.S. to ensure full compliance at home. We later heard that as the conference inside began the master of ceremonies began his talk

by thanking Nebraskans for Peace for holding their demonstration outside - just once more proving that the military guaranteed our precious right to assemble.

No media showed up, which appears to be normal these days for such events, as the corporate-dominated mainstream media runs cover for the new arms race in space. It is a subject not to be publicly discussed, especially the fact that there are people standing outside the convention holding signs and banners. It would be a danger if tax payers found out that the new arms race was going to be "the largest industrial project in the history of the planet Earth" necessitating the destruction of social progress in order to pay or it.

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Middle East Continued from page 2

be reduced, based on mutual agreement of the parties. We recommend, for regional security, that Israel become a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaties. Treaties to this effect could be a basis for a lasting peace in the region.

6. Within both Palestinian and Israeli society, women can be found in high leadership positions. We are happy to note that this is the case, and hope that UNSCR 1325, which calls for the inclusion of women's voices at all levels and a gender-sensitive approach to decision-making, will be adhered to in the discussions of peace. Women in the region, including members of our own organization, have much to say that is relevant to achieving a durable and lasting peace.

7. We continue to believe that the "creation of facts on the ground," which includes house demolitions, land confiscations, settlement-building, the construction of Jew-only bypass roads, the Separation Wall, and hundreds of checkpoints are all obstacles to peace. They are detrimental to all of the peoples residing there, as they set up artificial barriers to the normal interaction of people as neighbors.

Our organization believes that peace is achieved through building bridges, not walls. In the end, a good deal of this artificial infrastructure will undoubtedly need to be dismantled, and the sooner that occurs, the more likely that normal relations can be re-established, including employment, commerce, travel, and regular activity that leads to a higher quality of life. We would encourage by this the implementation of UNSCR 181 regarding economic union.

8. It is disingenuous to say that the parties must settle their differences themselves. Because of the high level of financial support the U.S. has given to Israel over the years, including military weapons sales, the U.S. is very much involved in the heart of the conflict. Although we cannot make the final determination of the end to the conflict, the U.S. must resolve to assist in its termination. The simple reason for this is that all of the parties suffer during a continual state of war, or near-war, and that everyone benefits from peace.

We hope that you, Secretary Rice, and the State Department will consider our extensive and personal involvement in the region, and our many contacts among residents at all levels of society, to be invaluable as the talks progress. We are hopeful that they will progress, and that the information we are providing herein will serve as a guideline to you in seeing that the "talks" are productive towards a just peace in the region.

This letter represents our U.S. section, and is supported by our branches in the following locations across the U.S. [There follows a list of 15 branches, being added to before the letter was sent.]

Minnesota Metro WILPF, P.O. Box 14752, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 651-458-7090, www.wilpfmn.org

Name _____

Address _____

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U.S. Section (national) membership \$35 _____

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Making donation to MN Metro WILPF: Not tax deductible _____

Tax deductible (make check out to JAPA) _____

Subscription to WILPF International \$15 (Make check payable to WILPF, mail to MN Metro) _____

Space War Continued from page 4

At 4:30 pm today we do another vigil on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Omaha which has a StratCom facility on campus. I'm told the facility, built largely with public funds, is top-secret and is one more example how our academic institutions across the country are being militarized as is the rest of our culture.

This is the way fascism lives and grows. Secrecy, fear, flag-waving, and aggressive military interventions. The resistance to this growing fascism must grow as well or we will in the end find ourselves in even deeper trouble than we are today.

We have to stop being sheep that are being led to slaughter.

Star Wars Coverage Misses Point (Excerpt)

By Bruce Gagnon, October 1, 2007

In an article entitled "The Shield" published in October in Rolling Stone Magazine, Jack Hitt concludes that the Pentagon's missile defense system will never be finished and is completely unnecessary. "Missile defense is the single most-expensive weapons system in the American arsenal. The Bush administration nearly tripled Clinton's average missile defense budget, to \$11-billion a year – a sum almost four times larger than the U.S. government's total spending on energy research." By 2013 research and development is expected to grow to \$19-billion a year.

Hitt never considers that "missile defense" is not really supposed to work because the program is not about defense - it is an offensive, Star Wars program to give the U.S. "control and domination" of space and the Earth below. ...The U.S. well understands that those who have military "space assets" in place will win the wars on the planet below. When the Pentagon launched the 2003 "shock and awe" attack of Iraq in 2003, 70% of the weapons used in the initial attack were guided to their targets by military satellites now in space and working quite effectively.

Hitt's article fails to outline the real U.S. military doctrine that exists today - preemptive first strike attack. His article determines that "missile defense" is about end-less corporate welfare. He is right about that. But he leaves out the true military role for space technology, which is to enhance and ensure U.S. military control of the entire Earth and all of its diminishing resources on behalf of corporate globalization.

Preemptive attack, directed by space technology, is the future of U.S. military doctrine. The sooner we all understand that, and openly debate the policy, the sooner we put an end to the expansion of U.S. empire.

