



'Birddogging' project helps frame key issues in presidential debate

Birddog: to follow a subject of interest with persistent attention; to monitor

Howard Dean was on the spot.

The Democratic presidential candidate was at an August meeting in Hooksett, New Hampshire, with leaders of the state AFL-CIO, when AFSC staff person Arnie Alpert asked about his position on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). "I'm not sure what's in it," Dean replied. Arnie mentioned that it did not include protection for workers' rights. "In that case," Dean said, "I'm against it." At that point, Arnie offered to provide Dean's staff with more specific information.

Several days later, AFSC intern Liana Foxvog encountered Dean and asked him again about his position on the FTAA. This time, Dean was prepared. "I'm against it," he declared at once.

Score one small victory for AFSC's Presidential Primary Project.

'Elevate the general debate'

Informally called the "birddogging project," it was undertaken by the AFSC office in New Hampshire with support from New Hampshire Peace Action. The project seeks to "mobilize the grassroots and elevate the general debate," explains Arnie, the New Hampshire project coordinator. He adds that it will raise and help frame major issues and have an impact on the national debate by engaging the presidential candidates on issues that concern all U.S. citizens.

In New Hampshire, the project focuses on three issues: affordable housing, peace and nuclear weapons, and fair trade policy. In Iowa, where the project is run in cooperation with the Clarion Alliance, the focus is on peace and raising the visibility of nuclear policy issues.

Volunteers attend training sessions that include role playing and learning effective ways to ask questions and position oneself to get a candidate's attention.

Jim Jontz, a former congressman from Indiana, attended such a session last spring, and says that the project is helping citizens find their voice. He has been working with the New Hampshire project to raise awareness about the cur-

rent global trade agenda and its impact—on workers, the environment, and human rights.

It's important "to help people relate the sometimes nebulous issue of 'global trade' to what is happening in their own neighborhood or to *campesinos* [rural farmworkers] thousands of miles away," Jim says.

Gephardt takes a stand

The project's success with Howard Dean has been replicated with other candidates.

Mary Lord, AFSC's Peacebuilding Unit director, happened to be in Concord, New Hampshire, when Representative Richard Gephardt (D-Missouri) was speaking at a Main Street shoe store. Mary dropped in and asked about his position on mini-nukes. "I'm firmly against them," he replied.

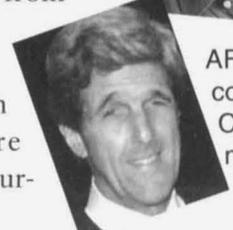
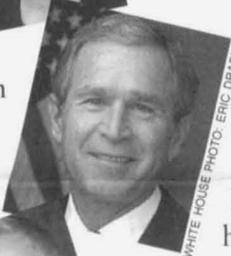
As Mary notes, "Raising a topic with the candidates is a way of reinforcing that it's of concern and importance to the public."

And at a New Hampshire breakfast meeting, Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) gave pat answers to a question about housing from project coordinator Cathy Haigh. Then, in the stump speech Kucinich gave when he opened his New Hampshire headquarters an hour later, he included housing among key issues.

"Part of what we're trying to do," Arnie says, "is look at the important issues that affect people. It's not about electioneering or partisanship. It's about shaping the issues that affect all citizens and getting them into the national debate."

Get involved

For more information about the Presidential Primary Project and how you can become a "birddog," log onto the AFSC website at www.afsc.org/nhprimary or contact Arnie Alpert at 4 Park Street, Suite 209, Concord, NH 03301; phone: (603) 224-2407; e-mail: aalpert@afsc.org.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CANDIDATES' CAMPAIGNS, EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Take action

Economic security is one of the keys to lasting peace. Below are a few ways you can promote economic security by supporting AFSC's work to encourage fair trade and cancel the developing world's crippling debt.

Buy fairly traded coffee/cocoa

While many people benefit from the coffee and cocoa trade, the farmers who grow the beans often subsist below poverty and in a perpetual cycle of debt. The AFSC Coffee Project, in partnership with Equal Exchange, supports these small farmers and offers a simple way for you to transform a daily ritual into a socially conscious action. For more information, call AFSC's Cambridge, Massachusetts, office at (617) 661-6130 or go to the Coffee Project's website at www.afsc.org/newengland/coffee.htm. To order coffee, call Equal Exchange at (781) 830-0303 or visit the Equal Exchange website: www.equalexchange.com.



Support fair trade policies

Connecting with others makes the movement for fair trade stronger. There are various fair trade campaigns that need your help. Find out more about these campaigns and AFSC's work on trade issues at www.afsc.org/trade/activism, or call Jessica Walker Beaumont, AFSC's Trade and Debt Specialist, at (215) 241-7277.

Help cancel Africa's debt

While Africa is the world's poorest region, and receives \$12.7 billion a year in aid, the continent spends about \$15 billion a year on debt repayment to wealthy Western countries. AFSC's Life Over Debt Campaign, part of the three-year Africa Initiative, is working to change this reality. Find out how you can help at www.afsc.org/africa-debt. You also can call (215) 241-7168 or send an e-mail to africa@afsc.org.

A change is coming

Starting with the next issue, the look and frequency of Quaker Service Bulletin will undergo significant changes. We'll be using a magazine format and publish three times a year. The information you get from us will not only look better, it will be more current and in-depth. We are able to do this because printing costs have dropped recently, so rest assured that your contributions are still being used responsibly. Thank you for your continued support.

Subscribe to AFSC's monthly online newsletter at www.afsc.org

Reject the politics of fear

by Mary Ellen McNish

On September 7, President Bush addressed the nation. In essence, his message was, "be afraid, be very afraid." Near the end of his speech, I was alarmed to hear this summary of the administration's foreign policy:

And for America, there will be no going back to the era before September the 11th, 2001—to false comfort in a dangerous world. We have learned that terrorist attacks are not caused by the use of strength; they are invited by the perception of weakness.

The President's statements stand in sharp contrast to the example of Rick McDowell and Mary Trotochaud, AFSC's representatives in Baghdad, who spent the first week of September in Philadelphia. [Read their column on the facing page.]

Rick and Mary hear gunfire everyday in their Baghdad neighborhood. They live on a street where children have been kidnapped, where UN workers once lived. They have no generator so, with their Iraqi neighbors, they share the consequences of the power outages that still plague the city.

If anyone might be afraid, you would think it would be Rick and Mary. But they have chosen to spend each day trying to build a new Iraq, to heal the wounds of war—to be, as Rick says, "Americans without guns and flak jackets." How many times and in how many places since the First World War have AFSC staff and volunteers been called upon to be the other face of America?

Rick and Mary have returned to Baghdad to carry on their work and witness. They continue to supervise AFSC's water projects and have begun to look at how AFSC can work with disabled Iraqis who face a particularly vulnerable future in the absence of government services. In addition to this direct aid, Rick and Mary are making contacts with emerging civil society organizations to share their own community organizing expertise in a country where voluntary associations have been severely limited for two decades.

I am humbled by Rick and Mary's example. I know that their work in Iraq is the antithesis of the message of fear promoted by some. For eighty-five years AFSC has said no to the politics of fear, whether it be the internment of Japanese-Americans, the hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee, or the scapegoating of immigrants. Instead, we have said yes to hope, yes to the good within the human spirit. I am proud—and grateful—that this AFSC tradition continues.

Mary Ellen McNish is the AFSC's General Secretary.



Mary Ellen McNish

Picking up the

Peace and social justice begin at home, as this issue's cover story demonstrates. Yet, while efforts such as the birddogging project work to change the debate in the United States, AFSC continues its tradition of helping people in the United States and developing countries build better, more secure, lives. This work often takes place in regions of past, present, and—potentially—future conflict. Following are three examples of how AFSC furthers the cause for peace by working with people to secure the basic necessities of life.

Afghanistan Education spurs a nation's recovery

Afghanistan is piecing itself back together after years of conflict, and AFSC is part of this story of a fragmented nation becoming whole again.

AFSC's focus is on constructing and repairing primary and secondary schools for girls and boys, and providing playground equipment. AFSC also runs literacy programs for women. Early accomplishments include:

- construction of the Kakoor School just outside of Kabul, with three more schools in the Bamiyan province of central Afghanistan set to be completed by the end of October
- establishment of literacy projects for women that also provide war widows with vocational training and a community where they can share their grief and gain peer support
- reconstruction of the Government Blind School, where AFSC also purchased and installed playground equipment



Subaila (right), head mistress of an AFSC-funded school for girls, with a student.

"One teacher told us that when AFSC installed the playground equipment at the Blind School, some of the students climbed out of the window during class—the teacher is blind, too—and managed to find and test the new equipment," notes AFSC fundraiser Tom Moore, who went on site visits to AFSC's programs in Afghanistan this past June with Alice Andrews, coordinator of AFSC's Asia Region.

Words from our "sponsors"

Each week without fail, the long gray envelope arrives at AFSC—no return address and a postmark in Tennessee. Inside are three one-dollar bills. For years this generous, anonymous donor has wordlessly supported our programs around the world.

The reasons the Service Committee's contributors give are as diverse as the donors themselves. Often there is a personal connection to the organization such as that experienced by Helen Fredrickson who now lives in Chicago. She was a volunteer in Finland from 1946-47 and maintained a lifelong friendship with her Finnish "right hand," Sirkka Nevanlinna. When Sirkka recently died, Helen wrote, "It is only right that I make a gift in her memory to AFSC."

A couple in Iowa was moved by the human agony caused by the war in Iraq and its aftermath. They sent a note along with their \$15 check saying that they had decided not to go out to lunch one Sunday after church. Instead, the money they would have spent came to AFSC to aid Iraqis. They did say, however, that it was "too bad it doesn't cost much to eat out in our town!"

In response to an AFSC appeal, we received a note from Venus

Ramey, Miss America 1944 (the first redhead to win!). Saying she agreed with the points made in the letter, she kindly offered to lend her name for publicity "if that would help the cause."

Children at the Friends School in Detroit provided the art for this year's holiday card (see "Gifts with Heart and Hope" on the back page). In the accompanying letter, art teacher Winkie Covintree described the process: "I told the students that the squares they worked on would be arranged to spell the word 'Peace' and the words would be surrounded by other images—sort of a quilt. We talked about the use of quilts to send messages along the Underground Railroad and that our paper quilt would become a card to send a message of peace."

AFSC's "sponsors" make all the difference. They complete the partnerships that the organization has built with the many communities in this country and abroad—partnerships through which we pursue the Quaker value of the basic human dignity of all people.

Whether it's \$3 or \$300,000, we appreciate and applaud our donors who, since 1917, have helped us bring aid and the message of peace.

e pieces

Alice adds: "That AFSC was able to complete these projects quickly has been an important contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction work which, overall, has been terribly underfunded. At this point, 90 percent of the outside resources going to the country are for the military—primarily U.S. forces—rather than for economic needs."

Bosnia/Herzegovina Gardening helps heal wounds of war

The AFSC Community Gardening Project was established in early 2000 to provide a safe and supportive space where people from different ethnicities could work side by side to grow food for themselves and their families.



Garden project participants in Tuzla show off their crop.

The gardens provide material support to people left with little or nothing after the 1992-1995 civil war. They also offer a rare opportunity for people from different ethnic groups to interact in a secure setting.

The project began with one garden in Sarajevo and has succeeded beyond all expectations. Today, there are eight gardens with 962 participants.

Each of the gardens fills a different niche in its community. For

example, one garden is tended by Bosnian women who cannot return to their homes due to security concerns, while another serves as a form of therapy for people with psychological disabilities. The project also includes educational classes that allow children from an orphanage in Sarajevo to get closer to nature, plant vegetables, and learn about organic gardening.

North Korea Agricultural support promotes peace

Despite the current tensions on the Korean peninsula, AFSC continues to help the people of North Korea overcome the devastating effects of economic collapse, sanctions, and a series of natural disasters that significantly decreased food production.

To date, AFSC, with support from the Mennonite Central Committee, has contributed nearly \$2 million in farming supplies and equipment to the rehabilitation of four large North Korean farms. AFSC has contributed an additional \$500,000 in food and clothing to other areas.

The farming assistance has included tons of fertilizer, small irrigation pumps and mobile rice threshers to reduce crop losses due to drought and field pests, and expertise that has allowed farmers to experiment with rotating corn and soybean crops and using varieties of green manure. Rice and corn harvests of the four farms have been about 30 percent higher since AFSC began its work.

Helping North Korea become more economically sustainable is a fundamental requirement for peacebuilding in the region. Providing technological and material aid not only improves the standard of living but also allows North Korea to retain its national identity and interact with the world community in a positive way.



These green manure test plots will help reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers.

For more information about these and other AFSC development programs, please visit the AFSC website at www.afsc.org.

AFSC in Iraq



Americans without guns

by Mary Trotochaud and Rick McDowell

Iraq, the cradle of civilization, is a conflicted country at the crossroads of history. With nearly 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, the presence of Americans, without guns and committed to dialogue and nonviolent solutions to conflict, is essential. People understand the physical risks associated with military solutions; those committed to nonviolent solutions must also be prepared for the inevitable risks since life for people in Baghdad and throughout Iraq remains precarious.

As AFSC representatives living in a neighborhood in Baghdad since May, we have learned much and have, in a small way, shared in a few of the hardships Iraqis endure day after day. With AFSC, we have chosen the active role of engagement rather than that of passive bystanders.

An ongoing commitment

AFSC has a history in Iraq and a commitment to her people dating back to 1991. In addition to ongoing advocacy programs in the United States, AFSC contributes to relief and reconstruction efforts, including water/sanitation projects.

For example, the poor, rural agricultural community of Abosoda is located on the Euphrates River in a conflict-ridden area. As is true for many in this war-torn country, the approximately 3,000 people of Abosoda do not have access to safe, potable drinking water. Diarrheal disease among children under age five is on the rise and if not treated can result in rapid dehydration or malnutrition leading to death. AFSC has responded by providing a Water Compact Unit that will restore an acceptable quality and quantity of water, thereby improving the health of Abosoda's families and saving the lives of its children.

Prior to the war, AFSC, along with partner organizations, pre-positioned food supplies and 2,000 gallon water bladders for use by vulnerable families in Baghdad, Mosul, and elsewhere. The organization also recently provided crucial medicine for the treatment of chronic diseases.

In addition, AFSC is contributing to programs that serve vulnerable populations, including abused women and people with disabilities. For example, AFSC is participating in a Deaf Education Project that will upgrade instructors' teaching skills and the materials, facilities, and curriculum in the twenty-two schools for the deaf in central/southern Iraq.

Beyond relief

But our work goes beyond that of traditionally recognized relief organizations. Iraq has a vibrant emerging civil society that needs the support of the international community. This is why, in line with Quakers' historic roles of advocacy, peacebuilding, and reconciliation, we plan to focus on dialogue with and support of Iraqi organizations involved in programs of social uplift.

We have been amazed at the fortitude and resilience of the Iraqi people in the face of prolonged suffering. Our experiences allow us to write about daily life in Iraq, to tell the stories of peoples' struggle for survival and independence, and to share our thoughts with the Quaker community and others. Our stay in Baghdad is scheduled to end in early March, but we will continue telling the story of Iraq—a story that U.S. audiences need to hear.

Mary Trotochaud and Rick McDowell are the AFSC Iraq Country Representatives. Read about their experiences in Iraq online at the AFSC website, "Iraq Aftermath: The Human Face of War" (www.afsc.org/human-face).



Blankets and health kits were part of AFSC's relief efforts in Iraq.



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To learn more, contact the AFSC Office of Gift Planning at 1-888-588-2372, ext.3, or send an e-mail to GiftPlanning@afsc.org.

In addition to the charitable gift annuities, AFSC offers other income-for-life gift plans. If you would like a complimentary copy of our new brochure, "Invest in Dreams," please contact the Gift Planning Office. At the same time, you can sign up for our periodic newsletter, "Sharing Principles," where you can read about supporters who have income-for-life gifts with AFSC. (See contact information on the right.)



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Gifts with Heart and Hope

This blessed holiday season, AFSC offers a meaningful way to honor your relatives and friends while supporting our worthwhile and life-serving programs at the same time.

For every contribution of \$35, we will send you a lively "Peace" collage card, created by students at the Friends School in Detroit. Inside is the message of your gift, and brief descriptions of the programs you choose are included with your order.

For peace, for dignity, for learning, for hope—for a world in need of all these things—

make your holiday gifts through AFSC!

In Iraq, a gift of \$100 can provide potable water for 100 people for a year.

In Logan County, West Virginia, a gift of \$200 can buy 30 4' x 8' wall boards to rehab a dilapidated home.

In rural Haiti, a contribution of \$75 can purchase two healthy female goats that produce nutritious milk to improve a family's diet.

In Mozambique, just \$50 can provide an AIDS orphan's school fees for one year.

Finding modern expression for Quaker values is the hallmark of AFSC. *A donation of \$35 or more supports all of the Service Committee's work for peace, justice, and human dignity around the world.*



Fill in the amount for each project. You may give the suggested amount or you may buy a "share" (@ \$35) of any project. For each \$35 we'll send you a children's art "Peace" card and the appropriate program descriptions.

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