

QuakerAction



AFSC responds to the needs of Hurricane Katrina survivors

Work in Afghanistan moves forward despite obstacles

Communities stand up to anti-immigrant vigilantes

Cindy Sheehan's Iraq war protest stirs the conscience of a nation



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On the cover

Painting by Julie Paschkis (www.juliepaschkis.com) for AFSC's 2005 holiday card. Find out more about the card and other holiday gift options on page 15.

Correction: In the previous issue, an article about nationwide rallies on the second anniversary of the Iraq war stated that United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) organized a rally in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. In fact, the rally was endorsed by UFPJ but organized by Quaker House and a coalition of groups including the Fayetteville Peace & Justice Coalition, North Carolina Peace & Justice Coalition, Military Families Speak Out, and Veterans For Peace. Also, the rally did not take place in Ft. Bragg but in nearby Fayetteville.

Who we are

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.

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AFSC photo

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AFSC photo

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Starting over

AFSC responds to the needs of Hurricane Katrina survivors

As Gulf Coast residents start on the long road to recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, AFSC's response addresses both the short- and longer-term needs of survivors.

To help with immediate relief, AFSC earmarked \$1 million for partner organization Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston to cover the expense of feeding evacuees in Houston's Astrodome. Staff also made contact with Friends meetings along the Gulf Coast to see how we could best assist them in their relief and recovery efforts.

Initial relief work

As this issue of *Quaker Action* goes to press, the Board of Directors has approved a short-term response plan for Hurricane Katrina totaling more than \$2 million. The plan combines initial relief work, recovery phase startup funding, and work to help the public understand the policy failures that magnified Katrina's destructiveness.

Working with Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, we expect to help fund evacuee resettlement once the Astrodome has been emptied. In addition, we have reserved funds for a major grant to a partner African American

organization and funds to assist Quaker meetings in their work with evacuees in various cities.

Rebuilding from Katrina will take years of work.

The AFSC's Southeastern and Central Regions are fielding assessment teams to see where AFSC can make the most strategic long-term commitments. Prior to reports from the assessment, we assume that our work will focus on the working poor and African American and immigrant communities.

A national coordinator and up to 15 crisis responders and situation assessors will begin short-term operations and lay the groundwork for longer-term operations in one or more affected communities in the Gulf region.

Finally, there are important issues to be addressed that go far beyond AFSC's work to deliver relief and help in the recovery. Natural disasters exacerbate inequities that existed before the catastrophe. Furthermore, the prioritizing of counter-terrorism over preparations for natural disasters played a major role in the disorganization of the federal response. Weeks of television images have given Americans painful evidence of these truths.

When Hurricane Camille hit the Gulf Coast in 1969, AFSC called national attention to racial inequities in

aid distribution that led to major reform of federal emergency response procedures (see "Eye of the storm" on page 14).

Holes in the safety net

Katrina has exposed how years of cuts in the social safety net and neglect of infrastructure have left some of the country's most vulnerable inhabitants in harm's way when disaster strikes. AFSC is mobilizing public opposition to cuts in safety net programs through our campaign for a "moral budget" (see "Campaign to save Social Security" on page 8). In September, AFSC helped generate 4,000 calls to Congress, asking them to fully fund federal programs that help people meet basic needs.

AFSC will monitor how aid is delivered and recovery work is framed to help ensure that New Orleans and the other cities of the Gulf are rebuilt for all their people. We will also use this opportunity to expose the short-sightedness of policies that overlook poor people and people of color.

For more information about AFSC's response and how you can help, log onto www.afsc.org/hurricane/

SEASONS OF CHANGE

Work in Afghanistan moves forward despite obstacles

BY PATRICIA OMIDIAN

Afghans are hard at work—building, repairing, fixing, and mending things that are broken. The open wounds of war in Kabul are slowly being closed. Yet, I wonder if these wounds are healing. When we hear of the war continuing in the southeast and the east, we know that healing has yet to begin.

Nonetheless, hope still exists here for peace and nationwide development.

AFSC's Quaker Service Afghanistan builds schools and has programs for children in Bamiyan, a province that is a full day's drive from Kabul, where we are based. We find it difficult to travel there more than once a month.

Stress levels rise as we work full out over the summer months. Afghanistan's climate means that all our work in rural areas only happens between April and October. By November sev-

eral areas where we have schools are becoming snow bound.

AFSC work in Afghanistan has three program areas, all of which are interconnected. The school program is the most visible, with physical structures being built in communities that request them.

We prefer working in more remote areas where other nongovernmental organizations may not work. In these areas the communities are particularly appreciative and usually work hard to make sure they have a school that meets their needs. Unfortunately, schools are often too small once they are built because there are so many children and no way to count them all or plan for all the returnees.

We have a child-to-

child program in most of the communities. Once a month, a selected group of children receive training in mine awareness, children's rights and responsibilities, and other topics. In turn, the children train friends and classmates on that month's topic.

We also have sister school arrangements with Quaker schools in the United States. The children write letters to each other, share diaries, and exchange gifts. The Afghan children look forward to letters from their



A bridge that connects two worlds

by Cong Wang

What might the green, misty hill country of North Carolina and breathtaking mountainous heartland of Afghanistan have in common? Very little, a first-time outside observer might conclude. Yet, a bridge is quietly being built between these two vastly different places.

As part of AFSC's "Ten Days" diary writing project, the students at Carolina Friends School of Durham, North Carolina, and Tob Chi School in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan, are busy writing about and photographing ten days of their lives, giving each other a glimpse into their worlds from their unique points of view. (Tob Chi School is one of nine schools AFSC has spon-

sored to build or furnish in Afghanistan.)

These writings and the captions of the photos will be translated into English, Pashto, and Dari (two official languages in Afghanistan) and shared with all participating students.

Launched in the fall of 2004 with the help of AFSC staff Patricia Omidian and Abdul Aziz Yaqubi in the AFSC Kabul office, the project has already yielded an amazing collection from participating students.

Cong Wang is an AFSC volunteer who set up the "Ten Days" diary project.



found the women greatly improved and noted positive changes in attitudes and behaviors.

One woman, whose son was killed by another village youth, had wanted revenge. But after Focusing and imagining her son with one

of the great leaders of Islam, she decided that she was sad for the loss of her son, but there would be no revenge as her son was now closer to Allah than she was—meaning he is in a better place now.

Even more exciting than seeing the changes in the women is the fact that their husbands are requesting the same training for themselves. Anger management is a key issue and we are finally

found the women greatly improved and noted positive changes in attitudes and behaviors.

Our youth program has been slow to start, but we have learned many lessons from this past year. Modeled after AFSC's work with Palestinian youth, Afghan youth mentor other youth in designing and carrying out community projects of their choice.

During the pilot phase in Kabul, several of the male youth who live in the dormitories of one of the universities in Kabul started cleaning up their block. Others started laughing at them for doing the work of gardeners and cleaners. But they told the other students, "This is our home and we have to take care of it while we are students." They cleaned the place and planted flowers.

Soon there were contests between the different blocks for whose block would look the best.

In war-torn Kabul, this action



and emotions. (More information about Focusing is available online at www.focusing.org.) Focusing, along with psychosocial wellness training, and peace and conflict resolution training, are necessary in order for Afghans to deal with the trauma of war and the difficulties of their lives now.

We find Focusing particularly helpful for Afghans, as it mirrors processes developed by Sufis in Afghanistan.

Several of our programs concentrate on women, and with funding from UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women), we have conducted two Focusing projects in rural areas. After the trainings, we

touching on ways to help men and women deal with their anger in non-violent ways.

was a visible reminder to all that restoration starts locally.

Patricia Omidian is the AFSC's Country Director for Afghanistan.



Photos: (page 4) **Focusing workshop for training of trainers** (Jerry Conway)

(page 5) top: **AFSC-supported construction of a new school;** middle: **students line up for school** (AFSC Afghanistan staff)

bottom: **Baj Gah school in northern Bamiyan Province** (Aziz Yaqubi)

Vigilantes at the border

Communities stand up to anti-immigrant patrols

BY SHAN CRETIN

Vigilante: *One who takes or advocates the taking of law enforcement into one's own hands.*

The militarization of the Mexico-U.S. border, already underway in the 1990s, took on a new intensity with the advent of the war on terrorism and its accompanying rhetoric of fear.

Overnight, migrants forced north for economic reasons were painted as something far more sinister: potential terrorists. Groups that had long denounced those crossing the southern border latched onto a new way to rally broader opposition. A call went out for “Minuteman patrols” to “defend” the borders, starting with Arizona’s

Cochise County on April 1, 2005.

AFSC staff in Tucson, Arizona, feared for the safety of the migrants who arrive in Arizona, often disoriented after spending days in the desert with little food or water.

Unsure what to expect from a group of untrained vigilantes, Caroline Isaacs, director of the Arizona office, and Beth Sanders, an intern, joined Ray Ybarra from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to prepare 150 volunteers as legal observers who could ensure that the Minutemen respected the rights of any immigrants intercepted at the border.

Even before the Minuteman Project’s official launch in Arizona, the joint AFSC/ACLU Legal Observer Project had an impact on how the group described their plans.

Alerted to potential violations of state and federal law, Minuteman organizers stopped talking about “intercepting” migrants and “convincing” them to remain until the Border Patrol arrived. Instead, they spoke of observing migrants while alerting law enforcement of suspected immigration violations.

Despite the huge media build-up, fewer people than expected participated in the Minuteman Project. They were accompanied by an almost equal number of reporters and video cameras. However, media interest waned when the anticipated confrontation at the border failed to materialize.

The presence of trained legal observers and reporters helped keep the peace in Cochise County. However, as the media presence dwindled by the end of April, the remaining Minuteman volunteers were more apt to be openly hostile to the legal observers.

Video exposes vigilante movement

This fall, AFSC will release *Rights on the Line: Vigilantes at the Border*, a half-hour video that documents the role of the vigilante movement in intimidating local communities, violating the human rights of migrants, and creating an atmosphere of fear and xenophobia. The video, available in both Spanish and English, exposes the ugly politics behind the vigilante movement and calls on communities to resist its simplistic solutions.

The video is being produced in partnership with WITNESS, an international human rights organization that provides training and support to local groups to use video in their human rights advocacy campaigns, and the ACLU. It will be one way of helping ensure that border communities and immigrant groups are not the only voices calling for change.

For more information and breaking news on the vigilante issue, log onto www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/.

Focus on California

After April, the vigilante movement turned its focus on San Diego, California, using the names Border Patrol Auxiliary, California Minutemen, and Border Watch. Christian Ramirez, Pedro Rios, and Benjamin Prado, AFSC’s San Diego staff, have long been engaged in documenting conditions at the border and training human rights observers.

In late July, observers monitoring the Border Patrol Auxiliary’s outposts near the U.S. border town of Campo, California, noted the presence of handguns and



self-identified former law enforcement officers carrying firearms.

On July 23, AFSC received reports that, in two separate incidents, shots were fired near Campo, wounding at least two people. Mexico’s National Commission for Human Rights confirmed that two would-be migrants were hospitalized with bullet wounds in the Mexican border city of Tecate, about fifteen miles west of Campo.

Mexican government claims that both incidents were the works of bandits inside Mexico were disputed by the National Commission for Human Rights. One migrant interviewed from the hospital placed the attack inside the United States.

A familiar scenario

The scenario now playing out at our southern border is not new. The United States has a long history of racially restrictive immigration policies. When the social fabric becomes frayed, when economic times are hard, when people are fearful, those with the most to lose look for—and find—scapegoats.

Meanwhile, vigilante movements escalate tensions in border communities but do nothing to address the complex global economic and political factors driving immigration.

This past June, border community groups from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California met in AFSC’s San Diego office to announce the Border Community Alliance for Human Rights. The group called for a compre-

hensive platform of reforms on border and immigration policies. In a statement, the alliance decried the criminalization and persecution of migrants whose “only crime has been to look for work that can provide for the well-being of our families.”

Christian Ramirez, director of AFSC’s San Diego Area Program, explained, “We are all committed to ensuring that the voices of immigrant and border communities, those that are hit the hardest by border and immigra-

tion policies, are in the forefront of the calls for policy changes.”

This fall and winter, AFSC and border communities are mobilizing to counter the expansion of the Minuteman Project into California, as well as other increased vigilante activity.

Shan Cretin is the Director of AFSC’s Pacific Southwest Region based in Pasadena, California.



Benjamin Prado

Photos: (top, left to right) Former AFSC intern Beth Sanders, the ACLU’s Ray Ybarra, and a volunteer were among those who kept an eye on Minuteman participants in Arizona; (bottom) Community forum in San Diego to discuss the Minuteman Project.

News from around AFSC

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

AFSC ends overseas shipments of used clothing, steps up hygiene kit collection

The collection and shipment of used clothing to people in need overseas has long been a cherished program of AFSC, but as relief and donation practices have changed in recent years, we have looked carefully at the program and its efficacy and have decided to end foreign shipments of clothing from our Philadelphia warehouse.

To protect local textile and garment industries, many countries now prohibit imports of used clothing and those governments that still allow imports increasingly charge high duties and taxes. Along

with other charities, we have learned that purchasing locally to support communities in crisis is timely, cost effective, and supports local economies.

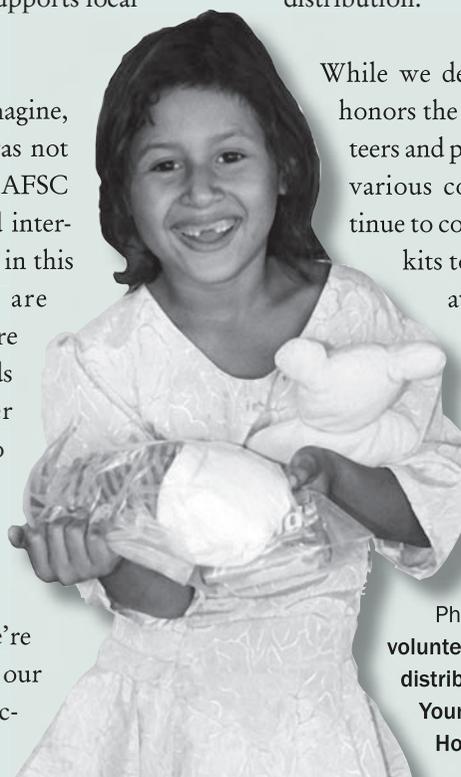
As you may imagine, this decision was not reached lightly. AFSC has a long (and interesting!) history in this area—and we are especially aware of the thousands of people over the years who have supported this work with open hearts and generous spirit. We're glad to say that our regional collection centers in

Cambridge, High Point, and San Francisco will continue to receive clothing and other donated goods for U.S. distribution.

While we develop new work that honors the devotion of our volunteers and provides outreach to our various constituencies, we continue to collect hygiene and infant kits to be stored for immediate shipment when emergencies arise.

Read more about clothing and kit collection at afsc.org/emap/

Photos: (left) Young volunteers fold clothes for distribution (1997) (right) Young kit recipient from Honduras (1999).



ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Campaign to save Social Security

"AFSC believes Social Security is a moral issue," says Roberta Spivek, national representative for AFSC's Economic Justice Program. "With Congress threatening to slash basic services funding and give new tax breaks to the most affluent, even in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, our nation shouldn't also erode the safety net under our elders, disabled workers, and the four million children who receive Social Security benefits."

AFSC's Economic Justice Program has launched a petition drive to keep Social Security a universal public insurance program. The drive is part of the SOS! (Save Our Services) campaign to convince Congress to adopt a moral federal budget.

To sign or download AFSC's petition and for related resources, visit www.saveourservices.org, or call Roberta Spivek at (215) 241-7037.



Alice Hoffman (in blue), daughter of one of Social Security's key architects, during a Social Security 70th birthday party at AFSC's Philadelphia office in August.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE**Monitoring prison abuses**

The traditional Quaker concern for criminal justice is carried out through numerous AFSC programs across the country. Recently, Bonnie Kerness, coordinator of AFSC's Prison Watch Project in Newark, New Jersey, testified before the Commission of Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons on her many years of monitoring prisoners' conditions of confinement. She and her colleagues receive more than 1,800 letters each year that tell individual stories of deprivation, isolation, and emotional desolation.

Bonnie noted in her testimony that the number of communications from women has risen dramatically. Judith V., 45-years old and a mother of three serving a life sentence, said that she had stopped bathing and combing her hair. She spent three years in isolation with no access to recreation, the library, television, or church and could make no phone calls or receive visitors. Stories like Judith's are repeated over and over again.

At the conclusion of her testimony, Bonnie said, "In a system where 95 percent of prisoners return to our communities, the impact of these practices is felt beyond prisons. To take away someone's civil rights is something we can and should debate regularly as a society. To take away someone's human rights isn't negotiable."

Ask Congress to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq

Step by step, Congress has been moving away from its early unflinching support of war in Iraq. The next step to maintain the momentum toward peace is the bipartisan House Joint Resolution 55, "Homeward Bound." The resolution calls for the administration to begin withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq no later than October 1, 2006. It also requires the president to announce a withdrawal timetable from Iraq by the end of this year.

The bill, which had seven sponsors and cosponsors when introduced in mid-June, had 56 Congressional cosponsors as of press time. This is a perfect opening for us to show Congress that the majority of people in the U.S. want peace.

Please join us in calling on our Congressional representatives to cosponsor H.J.Res. 55. Visit our online Action Center at support.afsc.org and click on the "Homeward Bound" link to write your Congressperson today.

(AFSC also supports the Friends Committee on National Legislation's STEP resolution. To find out more, log onto www.fcni.org.)

Support the olive harvest in Palestine

For thousands of rural families in Palestine, agriculture is the main economic activity, as well as the major source of food. In particular, the economic significance of the olive harvest in Palestine is enormous: olive fruits are the second largest crop in Palestine.

Yet, since September 2000, Israeli military occupation and closure policies have restricted farmers' ability to tend to olive trees, harvest the olives, and market the olive oil. Palestinian olive producers have been brought to the brink of destitution.

As part of AFSC's response, a delegation will be in Palestine from October 8-17 to support the olive harvest. You can help by sending a letter to your representatives in Washington, D.C., urging them to help exert pressure on the Israeli government to ensure a safe and productive olive harvest for Palestinian farmers this fall. Log onto www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/activism/olives for an easy way to contact your congressional representatives.

Find out more about how olive trees contribute to economic security for Palestinian farmers at www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/Ziyarat-az-Zeitoun.



Casey's boots

Cindy Sheehan's Iraq war protest stirs the conscience of a nation

To a child, a gold star means a perfect score on a spelling test or a new piano piece well played. To Cindy Sheehan, a gold star means loss, sorrow, anger, and grief—the realization that she will never hug her child again.

Cindy's son, Casey, was killed in Iraq on April 4, 2004, just a few days after he arrived in that war zone. Out of her anguish, Cindy and dozens of other families banded together to create Gold Star Families for Peace. They have been outspoken opponents of the war, pointing out the deception and false premises on which the United States invasion was based.

The AFSC's Eyes Wide Open exhibit, which has traveled around the country, uses a pair of combat boots to represent each U.S. military person who has died in Iraq—nearly 2,000 to date. The boots are tagged with the soldier's name and state. Cindy wanted to support this dramatic memorial in a personal way and donated Casey's own boots to the exhibit. Other families have done the same thing, knowing that viewers will be moved by the silent witness to death that the boots symbolize.

As Cindy noted in a recent article, "After the 21-gun salute and after our

children are cremated or lowered into their permanent, premature graves, they are forgotten about by almost everybody. Except by their families who mourn them every second of every day. Where is the war memorial for our honored dead? When one sees pairs of empty boots that will never be filled again by living, vibrant human beings, one begins to understand that 1,492 [the number of dead at the time the article was written] is not just a number.

Look at all the people who are never coming home.... [As of September 17, the number of U.S. dead was 1,900.]

"I fully support what the American Friends Service Committee is doing to enlighten the citizens of our country to the true horrors of war. We families of fallen soldiers don't need the visual to comprehend the tragedy and the trauma but America does."

In August, Cindy was in Texas near Crawford where President Bush was vacationing at his ranch. Her request was simple: to meet him and ask for what "noble cause" her son died.

Her solo vigil soon captured the

imagination of hundreds of citizens who want the war to end and U.S. troops to come home and they joined her at what became known as "Camp Casey." AFSC supported Cindy in her vigil and on August 22, Marq Anderson, national tour manager of Eyes Wide Open, joined her in a press conference

during which he returned Casey's boots to her.

The gesture symbolized the connection between AFSC and this passionate mother whose commitment to her son—and to the troops still in Iraq—stirred the conscience of so many Americans.

Photos: (top) Cindy Sheehan speaks at the Eyes Wide Open exhibit in Philadelphia this past July; (bottom) on Aug. 25, the weekly peace vigil in San Francisco, cosponsored by AFSC, was held in part to support Cindy and the Gold Star Families for Peace.



Photos: (top) Terry Foss; (bottom) Arthur Koch





Bringing forth ‘a beautiful flower’

Nuclear abolition gets a historic boost in Massachusetts

BY JO COMERFORD

For more than 30 years, AFSC’s Western Massachusetts office has commemorated the U.S. bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This past summer, our grassroots organizing efforts reached a historic milestone when Massachusetts State Representative Peter Kocot and twenty of his colleagues spurred the passage of the first U.S. State House of Representatives’ resolution calling for nuclear abolition by the year 2020.

That victory was especially fitting since this year marked the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies and as such was rather auspicious. Sixty years in Japan signifies the full turning of a zodiac and offers us all the redemptive opportunity to be born again—this time with 60 years of learned wisdom.

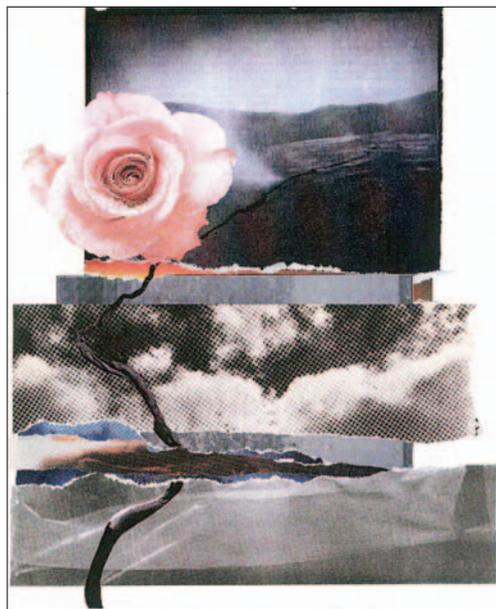
Mayors for Peace

Kato Shonin, head monk of the Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Pagoda (a Japanese Buddhist order) in nearby Leverett, Massachusetts, began speaking with members of the AFSC community last year about this particular anniversary. The Peace Pagoda is a long-time and beloved friend and collaborator of ours.

Through conversations with Kato Shonin and Joseph Gerson, Director of AFSC’s New England Regional Peace and Economic Justice Program, I also came to know more about the tireless and inspiring efforts of Hiroshima Mayor Tadashi Akiba.

Mayor Akiba has called on his global peers—the mayors of the world—

to take up the work of nuclear abolition. I came to understand that Mayors for Peace was the transformative piece of work we needed at this time: it connected us to the global community and required that we stretch the work of



that global community to the grassroots corners of our region.

With the help of Smith College senior Shira Wolf and community volunteer Joyce Rosenfeld (whose collage is featured on this page), we educated ourselves, created outreach/educational materials for the mayors and their constituents, located groups of willing collaborators in the eleven western Massachusetts cities, and supported our colleagues as they petitioned their mayors.

The organizing work was painstaking, but slowly, organizers came forward and the mayors agreed to consider signing on. After the first five

mayors joined, we realized that this work needed to reach farther.

Broadening the scope

In consultation with the local Physicians for Social Responsibility representative, I approached Massachusetts State Representative Peter Kocot (1st Hampshire District). Peter liked this campaign and the idea of a grassroots call for nuclear abolition. Peter and I wrote a resolution based on Article 92 of the U.S. Conference of Mayors calling for total nuclear abolition by 2020.

It passed in the House after significant wrangling on Peter’s part—the first U.S. State House to pass a nuclear abolition resolution. Then, with another push from the grassroots, State Senator Stanley Rosenberg agreed to introduce a concurrent resolution in the State Senate.

This fall, after what we expect will be a victory by Senator Rosenberg, we plan to approach Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and ask him to press for a similar resolution in the U.S. Congress. We will call on him to, in the words of Mayor Akiba, bring forth “a beautiful flower, namely the total elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth by the year 2020. Only then we will have truly resurrected hope for life on this planet.”

Jo Comerford is the coordinator of AFSC’s Western Massachusetts Program based in Florence, Massachusetts.

Collage created by AFSC volunteer Joyce Rosenfeld for the Mayors for Peace effort.



Taking away the occasion for war

UN conference focuses on conflict prevention

BY DICK ERSTAD

AFSC and Quakers worldwide have engaged the United Nations from its earliest days to bring nonviolent expression to its founding purposes: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.”*

AFSC efforts to shift the UN from “reaction to deadly conflict” to “prevention” have their roots in the Quaker vision of “taking away the occasion for war,” which AFSC has translated into conflict resolution training, mediation, advocacy, and systems for early warning and action.

It’s a vision that came into sharp focus at the UN this past July when Quakers, along with AFSC staff and partners, participated in a global conference, Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace.

In his welcoming remarks, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan emphasized the importance of civil society—non-

governmental, citizen-led organizations and alliances—in conflict prevention: “You [civil society] are uniquely placed to facilitate local conflict resolution; to mobilize public support for peace settlements; to support disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants; to champion human rights; and to build trust to encourage healing and reconciliation.”

Behind the scenes

Quaker UN Offices (QUNO) in New York and Geneva have worked behind the scenes for more than a decade with UN officials, diplomats, and non-governmental organizations to create a “prevention” agenda at the UN. QUNO staff also made sure the UN included partnerships with civil society as a priority.

As a result of this history and the urgency of the topic, AFSC had a prominent role in helping to shape the July conference, which drew about 900 participants from civil society, government, and academia, as well as UN staff. AFSC and QUNO’s role included:

- working with UN staff to plan the conference.
- organizing preparatory regional gatherings in the Middle East and Latin America.
- presenting workshops on local efforts worldwide to prevent violence, stem the flow of small arms, and other related topics.
- facilitating grassroots participation from the U.S. and abroad, which included bringing ten in-

ternational participants, five each from the Middle East and Latin America/Caribbean.

At the end of the conference, participants presented a Global Action Agenda that lays out a plan to

- promote human security and address the root causes of conflict.
- make prevention the goal of any security arrangements.
- strengthen the peacebuilding capacity of civil society groups.

Quaker UN staff will take leadership roles in the global steering group for conference follow-up, and will bring UN attention to “forgotten conflicts.” AFSC staff will be central in implementing plans in the Middle East, the Caribbean, and the Andean Region of South America, including joint projects with UN agencies working on peace. The regional small arms control networks, built with Quaker and AFSC support, will also elevate their impact as a result of the conference.

To find out more about follow-up activities, log onto www.global-conference.net.

Dick Erstad is the Regional Director of AFSC’s Latin America and Caribbean Regional Programs.

Photo: Several members of the QUNO Joint Delegation to the UN conference are (left to right) David Jackman, Fadi Abi Allam, Anna Morgan, David Atwood, Stella Sabiiti, and Tharmalingam Thayaparan.

Photo: AFSC



Staff picks ❁ The sequel

Tips on movies, books, and music to expand your horizons



For the previous issue of **Quaker Action**, AFSC staff were asked to submit capsule reviews of books, websites, music and other media that helped them make sense of the world or contributed in some way to their work. Their enthusiastic responses were too numerous to fit in one issue, so here's part two of what inspires some AFSC staff.

BOOKS/MAGAZINES

The Color of Freedom: Overcoming Colonialism and Multinationals in India

by Laura Coppo and David Albert

The love story of Jagannathan and Krishnammal, two remarkable people whose lives start with the struggle for Indian independence and cover almost a century of Indian history. Now in their 90s, they continue to live simply and work tirelessly for justice and dignity.

Robert Dove, Cambridge

Ode

This European magazine offers innovative solutions to problems around the globe. It has an international focus with articles about heavy issues like global warming, but also health tips, eating well, the role of religion in society, etc.

Jeffrey J. Weiss, Des Moines



ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Empire Notes (Blog) by Rahul Mahajan

A web log (or Blog) with distillations and analysis of news and events in Iraq. This is a good and useful reference for people eager for other perspectives on the continuing occupation. URL: www.empirenotes.org.

Noah Merrill, Providence, Rhode Island

Global Rich List

A thought provoking and people-centered website—by a London-based social justice organization—that examines the world's distribution of wealth. URL: www.global-richlist.com/index.php.

Roxanne Lawson, Philadelphia

Indian Comics Irregular

This fun and insightful e-newsletter, published intermittently, analyzes depictions of Native Americans in pop media outlets such as TV, movies, and comic books. To subscribe, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/IndianComicsIrregular.

Willie Colón Reyes, Philadelphia

FILM

Blood Makes the Grass Grow: Conscientious Objectors and the Gulf War

A documentary that raises critical questions for those considering enlistment. Ideal for service people contemplating conscientious objection and for anyone concerned with basic issues of militarism in a democratic society. This film features four men and two women who were among the 2,500 U.S. soldiers who attempted to become conscientious objectors during the Gulf War.

Oskar Castro, Philadelphia

Mad Hot Ballroom

Excellent documentary about inner city (New York) kids given the opportunity to learn and experience a part of their culture through ballroom dancing. Enjoy!

Selma Plascencia, Pasadena



IN BRIEF

Book: Silencing Political Dissent: How Post-September 11 Anti-Terrorism Measures Threaten Our Civil Liberties by Nancy Chang and the Center for Constitutional Rights, with a Foreword by Howard Zinn.

Alice Perry, Portland

Book: You Call This A Democracy? by Paul Kivel

Nina Laboy, Seattle

Film: Voices in Wartime: The Movie (For more information and to order copies, go to www.voicesinwartime.org/)

Jonis Davis, Seattle

Blog: Informed Comment (Access at www.juancole.com)

Peter Lems, Philadelphia



Catastrophe and hope

A message from AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish

As I watched the footage of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the city of New Orleans, I was taken half a world and half a century away to two other devastated cities. Earlier in the month I had been in Japan for the sixtieth anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the flooded streets of the Ninth Ward looked different than the scorched streets of 1945, I could not help but think of the shared devastation, the uncertainty, and the desperate searches for family members.

I also found hope in the resilience I had seen among the people of those two cities. After the devastation, the Hibakusha—the survivors of the bombs—and so many other people in Japan gave themselves wholly to seeing that history did not repeat itself. Scars and memories became teaching tools and today the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki lead the Mayors for Peace Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons. (With support from AFSC staff and volunteers in the Boston area and Western Massachusetts, the Massachu-



setts House of Representatives recently became the first state legislative body to sign on to the mayors' call.)

I hope that in fifty years we can look through the horror of Katrina to see it as the event that taught us once and for all that we chip away at the social safety net and infrastructure spending at our peril. I hope we can say that we learned that popular tax cuts that benefit the most affluent cannot come at the expense of the lives of the most vulnerable among us.

Between that day and the present, there are years of slow recovery—of rebuilding communities, reopening schools, and creating new employment in the devastated region. The scope is daunting and the scale of the resources needed staggers the mind, but in addition to whatever material assistance AFSC brings to the people of the Gulf Coast, I pray we bring the gift of hope.

Mary Ellen McNish

REFLECTIONS

Eye of the storm

In the wake of Hurricane Camille, AFSC documented injustice

by Ed Nakawatase

On August 17, 1969, Hurricane Camille hit Mississippi with unprecedented force, assaulting the Gulf Coast with 200 mile-per-hour winds. It left a trail of hundreds dead, thousands more homeless, and extensive physical damage throughout the region. A month later, after receiving disturbing reports about the recovery efforts, the AFSC Community Relations Division put together a team to monitor the post hurricane relief. I was part of that four person group, led by Ed Peebles, professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Camille's scope and destructive power remained highly visible for weeks afterward. But our focus was on the human damage, particularly the underreported impact on the poor, many of them Black. For more than a month our team documented stories of discriminatory treatment in receiving services and the dispersal of relief aid, delays in getting replacement housing, and a general lack of attention and priority by state and federal agencies to those who had the least.

AFSC published its findings in a public report that received broad media coverage. Most importantly, the report had an impact on public policy. Agencies such as the Red Cross revamped their policies and practices and, with the assistance of AFSC's Washington, D.C.-based staff, the U.S. Senate held hearings on the Gulf Coast about Camille assistance. Those hearings focused on the performance of federal and other relief agencies; they also helped facilitate a broad reexamination and change of federal disaster policy.

Ed Nakawatase is the National Representative for AFSC's Native American/Native Peoples Program.

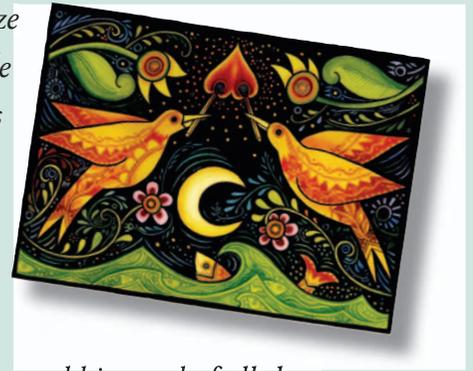


Gifts with Heart and Hope



This holiday season, the AFSC offers a meaningful way to recognize the importance of your loved ones. You can support the worthwhile and life-serving programs of the AFSC, while honoring your relatives and friends at the same time.

For each \$35 (or more) gift, you will receive a card with colorful original art by renowned artist and illustrator Julie Paschkis. It includes a gift message and an inspirational quotation.



For dignity, for learning, for health, for security, for hope—for a world in need of all these things, make your holiday gifts through AFSC!

The AFSC uses a holistic approach in our international development programs. With the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency, we know that education and training are crucial to the success of the work. For example, providing animals to a family or community means that proper care and feeding instructions must be given, too. Your gifts made to the projects below will be used in this spirit.



Afghanistan



Mozambique



Vietnam



Haiti

In Afghanistan, AFSC's focus is on education—building and furnishing schools primarily in Bamiyan Province where there is strong support for classes for girls and boys.

A gift of \$60 is enough to purchase desks and chairs for four students.

Dengalenga village in Mozambique was founded by refugees fleeing war and is remote and largely inaccessible, especially during the rainy season. AFSC will provide animals such as chickens and goats that can increase income and the nutrition of the families, oxcarts for more reliable transportation, and ploughs to reduce hand labor.

A gift of \$120 can buy seven goats for Dengalenga.

Tanh Hoa Province in Vietnam is one of the poorest areas of the country and has low soil fertility. The Service Committee provides high-yield seeds for vegetables, rice, soybeans, and melons, as well as climate-suitable fruit trees and biofertilizer.

A gift of \$80 can provide 22 trees each for eight needy families.

Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. In the Grand'Anse, AFSC's development program includes reforestation, fisheries and other economic projects, as well as the only health clinic and training center for some 40,000 people.

A gift of \$175 is enough to provide vitamins and iron supplements for 200 Haitian children.

Across the United States and around the world, AFSC promotes justice and equality, provides economic opportunities for those in need, and works tirelessly for a more peaceful world.

Your gift of \$35 will support all of these vital programs.

**To buy Gifts with Heart and Hope:
Call toll free 1-888-588-2372, ext. 1, or
go online to www.afsc.org/give**

Build a Future for ... *Women*

Most of AFSC's development programs around the world focus on women. In fact, AFSC was a pioneer in understanding that the best way to raise an entire family's standard of living is to expand a woman's skills and options.

In Southeast Asia, innovative micro-credit programs provide loans for fishing nets and water buffalo.

In Haiti, chickens and mango trees supplement families' diets and provide income.

And along the Mexico border, we've helped women factory workers organize to win better wages and working conditions.

All of this is possible, in part, because of supporters like you who remember AFSC in their estate planning.

AFSC values all bequests, whether large or small. Together, these gifts ensure the vitality of AFSC's ongoing witness for peace, justice, and human dignity.

By naming AFSC in your will or trust or as the beneficiary of your retirement account, you can reduce estate taxes and continue your commitment to Quaker service. Best of all, it's quite easy.



Photos: top right: Haiti, Denise Davis
left: Bosnia, Michael Valoris
bottom right: Colombia, Natalia Cardona



To learn more about including AFSC in your estate plan call Mike Valoris of our Gift Planning office at

1-888-588-2372, ext. 3, send an e-mail to GiftPlanning@afsc.org, or check the box on the enclosed reply envelope.



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