

# North Country Peace Builder

Minnesota Fellowship of Reconciliation

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## The Great Dakota Gathering and Homecoming: Reconciliation in Action

by Cindy Eyden

Three years ago, while river towns along the Mississippi celebrated the "Grand Excursion" with a re-enactment of the first steamboat to go as far north as Minneapolis, Winona had other plans. The town's leadership took on an impressive task - to begin a healing process with those forced from their lands when the riverboats brought Europeans and ruin to the Dakota lifestyle and culture.

With the support of community organizations and the will of city leadership, the first Great Dakota Gathering and Homecoming took place. It was to be a time for the Dakota to share stories of their ancestors and the atrocities committed against them - and to have them heard by the people of Winona. The Homecoming was based on the truth and reconciliation processes used in Peru and South Africa. This year was the third annual event. It is growing in participants - Dakota as well as Winonans. Dakota come from across the Midwest and Canada because being welcomed and listened to has been healing.

Stories were told three years ago, and more this year, of forced marches and the internment camp at Fort Snelling (referred to by some as a concentration camp), of broken treaties and families torn apart, of genocide and biological warfare. A story told of a baby being snatched out of a mother's arms and dashed to death during a forced march in the cold of November. Stories of starvation and cruelty were told by the descendents of those who survived. The men of Minnesota's history - Sibley, Ramsey, and Marshall, whom we were taught to admire - gave orders causing the destruction of the language, history, spirituality and culture of the Dakota Nation. The Homecoming was an opportunity for the people of Winona to ask questions, to acknowledge what the Dakota had been subjected to, and simply to meet face to face.

This is not at all a grim experience! Ambrose

Littleghost, spiritual advisor, led a Sunrise Ceremony and the peace pipe was passed to each of us, one by one, around the circle. He proudly told us that this pipe is the only Treaty Pipe still in the hands of its people. The smoke was earthy and lingered throughout the day. At the end of the ceremony the circle broke and snaked back on to itself with each person greeting and shaking the hand of every other person present, a touching and heartwarming experience. Then it was time for a feast, and so it was throughout the weekend: Winonans and Dakota side by side listening, talking, sharing, feasting, watching games, visiting artisans, dancing when invited at the powwow, and enjoying the entertainment including singers and hoop dancers.

The groundwork for healing and continued understanding has been laid in Winona. The community has expanded its commitment by setting aside land and approving funding for Unity Park. The park is being developed for everyone's use, creating a space that is culturally correct for the Dakota people as well as other native people who would like to use it. There are efforts underway to create scholarships for Dakota youth to attend Winona area colleges, and to have tribal mentors available to help maintain their culture in the midst of college life. The vision and dedication of Winona Mayor Jerry Miller, organizations such as Winona Community Foundation, Winona-Dakota Unity Alliance, Diversity Foundation, and leaders of the Dakota Nation (among them Ernest and Leonard Wabasha) has been inspiring and enriching. These tender beginnings of reconciliation promise much for the future of these communities and serve as a model for other communities in Minnesota. To learn more or participate in this event next year visit the website [www.dakotahomecoming.org](http://www.dakotahomecoming.org).



The Fellowship of Reconciliation envisions a world of justice, peace, and freedom. It is a revolutionary vision of a beloved community where differences are respected, conflicts addressed nonviolently, oppressive structures dismantled, and where people live in harmony with the earth, nurtured by diverse spiritual traditions that foster compassion, solidarity, and reconciliation.

## Congratulations Albert and Edie!

On a recent visit with long-time FOR member, Albert Fenske, I took advantage of the opportunity to congratulate him on his marriage (and one-year anniversary!) with Edie Seefeldt, and to learn more about Al's story and relationship with the FOR.

"I was born in 1915 and grew up in the Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena, California", says Albert, "but I became too liberal for my church. Every Sunday after worship I returned to my parents' home and listened to the radio sermon by Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick of Riverside Church in New York. I was also influenced by Albert Edward Day, Pastor of First Methodist Church in Pasadena. During this time I declared myself to be a conscientious objector."

"I quit teaching in 1941 and went to Cambridge for graduate study in Philosophy at Harvard. In 1942, I was drafted and placed in Civilian Public Service. This is when I joined the FOR. I was sent to a camp operated by the Quakers in New Hampshire. I wielded an ax and was at the end of a two-man saw, cleaning up timber from the 1938 hurricane. I also worked in the kitchen and laundry. Later I was sent to a camp operated by the Forest Service in California. After less than a year with CPS I received a medical discharge and returned to Cambridge to teach. On the weekends I preached in local churches."

Albert was ordained a minister in the Congregational Church in 1946 and called to a church in Atlantic, Iowa. He later served churches in Aitkin, MN and St. Paul Park, MN, where he first met Edie, the woman who was to become his bride some fifty years later. From 1960-1981, Albert taught Philosophy and Psychology at Bemidji State. "Peace activist and SOA protestor, John LaForge was one of my students at Bemidji State", said Al. When we go to Aitkin we visit him at the federal prison in Duluth."

While serving the church in Aitkin, Albert was on the local school board. He also served on the board of the Minnesota FOR. "Even though it was well-known in Aitkin that I was a pacifist", recalls Al, "time after time I was invited by veterans groups to speak at their meetings - these were combat G.I.s." "We need to hear from you, Al!" they assured him.

The Minnesota FOR salutes Albert Fenske for a lifetime of service and witness to peace through nonviolence; and we delight in offering Al and Edie our heartiest congratulations!

-Don Christensen



Wedding photo of Al Fenske and wife Edie Seefeldt  
(Submitted photo)



From the July delegation to Israel, Palestine with Inter-Faith Peace Builders: on the right is Don Christensen and on the left, Zougbi Zougbi, director of "Wiam" (meaning "cordial relationships"), a center for conflict resolution in Bethlehem, West Bank. Zougbi is an elected member of the Bethlehem City Council and a friend and advocate of children and the poor in the Bethlehem area. 'Wiam' conducts workshops which help children transform anger into compassion. "The suffering of our children continues to grow", said Zougbi. "Child abuse, bed wetting, nervousness and sleeplessness are all on the rise. With the Wall snaking around us, the kids don't see anything to live for. We should have learned from history that walls don't bring security." (Photo: Rachel Christensen)

### WAR PLAYS PROJECT SEEKS SUPPORT FOR "VETSPEAK"

*"What I saw when a man was coming back from Vietnam after 13 months of what they call 'in country' was something they call the 'thousand yard stare'. It took me a while to catch on. These men, their eyes were set back in their heads; they were tanned, deeply tanned from being out in the bush and then they'd look, they'd look as if they were seeing something off in the distance – when they were in combat they were seeing some pretty horrible things."*

These haunting words, spoken by Minnesota Vietnam War veteran, Jim Lovestar, bring the reality of the military experience alive. His memories, along with those of nine other veterans from the Vietnam, Gulf, and Iraq Wars are captured in compelling interviews under the banner of "VetSpeak," now being produced by the War Plays Project.

The War Plays Project is a non-profit organization created to educate citizens, particularly young people, about the impact of violence and war on individuals and society through theatre, the spoken word and the facilitation of dialogue. It was founded by actor, director and peace activist Frances Ford. With support from the Twin Cities Friends Meeting, Veterans for Peace Chapter 27, The Minnesota Fellowship of Reconciliation and individual donors, the War Plays Project offers its presentations to students, educators and community groups.

Financial support is requested so that "VetSpeak" can be produced in DVD format and provide copies free-of-charge to schools, colleges, church groups and other organizations seeking to promote thoughtful discussion about

war and how it affects individuals, their families and the broader community. It is also hoped that "VetSpeak" will prompt other veterans to share thoughts about their own war experiences.

Donations of any size are gratefully welcomed. Contributions are tax deductible and should be made payable to the 'War Plays Project'. Mail to: War Plays Project, Inc, 711 Jesamine Av. E., St. Paul, MN 55106.

Don Irish, War Plays Project Board of Directors  
Chante Wolf, Vice President, Veterans for Peace

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#### From the editor:

##### Check out:

The CodePink Women for Peace report, "Iraqi Women under Siege", by Marjorie P. Lasky at [www.codepinkalert.org/downloads/IraqiWomenReport.pdf](http://www.codepinkalert.org/downloads/IraqiWomenReport.pdf).

The report cites several sources such as Human Rights News, Amnesty International, World Health Organization, U.S. State Department, Journal of the American Medical Association, Middle East Review of International Affairs, and U.S. and international news services documenting the violence, hardship and fear characterizing women's lives in Iraq. The situation has significantly worsened since the U.S. invasion including random assaults, kidnapping or death plus restricted access to jobs and education. "Iraqi women, before the occupation, were still active in many aspects of their society. Now that that situation has dramatically changed." Noted is some hope for political participation in the new Iraq, but concern about a need for more education, and the power of religious courts over personal matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and property inheritance. The report suggests vigilance in monitoring and reporting rights abuses, responding to requests for support from Iraqi women's groups, and supporting an end to the occupation.

##### Watch for:

**Nonviolence: Twenty-five Lessons from the History of a Dangerous Idea**, by Mark Kurlansky to be published this month (September 2006) by Modern Library/Random House.

##### Intelligence News Flash:

War is not safe for children and other living things!

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At left: Jo Clare Hartsig with the Peace in the Heartland sculpture at the Minnesota State Fair (Submitted photo)

## Answering the Call to Peace

By Abigail Ozanne

Burning in my mind is the memory of witnessing children face teargas and machine guns to go to school. On school patrol in Hebron, West Bank, I remember the children poking their heads around the corner of the street to see if it was safe to continue on their route. They saw me with other Christian Peacemakers in red hats and moved forward with relief. They felt safer, because people were there willing to intervene with settlers and soldiers to reduce violence. My first trip to Palestine in 2003 introduced me to the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and raised within me the desire to do more to stop the injustice and violence that fractures our world.

In late September I will join Christian Peacemaker Teams in Palestine. Team members work with each other and local groups to reduce violence and get in the way of injustice through public witness, nonviolent direct action, and human rights reporting. For example, when I was in Hebron in 2004, I witnessed an Israeli soldier yelling at a Palestinian man at a checkpoint. The angry soldier seemed about to shoot the Palestinian in the chest from a few feet away. An international observer stepped in and put his hands on the shoulders of both men. The soldier turned and started yelling at the international, but the tension diffused. Because an international witnessed the event and spoke calmly to the soldier, no blood was shed that day.

When I tell people I am going to Palestine to do peace work, many echo the news they hear, and argue with me about how Israel is merely defending itself against terrorists. I think of the Palestinians I know, such as Atta Jaber, who has had his home demolished twice and yet speaks of peace and will offer soldiers tea. I think of the members of Bereaved Families for Peace, such as Rami Elhannan, an Israeli who lost his daughter in a suicide bombing and yet speaks for peace, saying "we must break the cycle of violence." I know there is injustice, that the U.S. government is helping to fund it, and that it is important to take action.

Again and again people tell me that "it's dangerous over there," implying that perhaps I should not go. I visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem when I was in Israel in 2004. The leader of our CPT delegation explained that he always visits the museum because he was raised by parents who were involved in the Dutch resistance. He said that the museum reminds him that such atrocities happen through the indifferent silence of the masses and that he must speak out when he sees injustice, even at a risk to himself. I hear the innocent crying out for justice. I hear God calling me to work for peace. I know that I must answer the call.

*Abigail is a 2005 graduate of Cornell College in Iowa and the daughter of long-time FOR members Linda Gesling and Steve Ozanne.*



CPTers participate in a 2006 demonstration in east Jerusalem against the Separation Barrier.  
(Photo: Abigail Ozanne)

## Nonviolence Training for Students November 3-5, 2006 at Hamline University

The Minnesota FOR will offer an intensive training workshop in nonviolence – “Creating a Culture of Peace” – for area students, November 3,4 and 5 at Hamline University. Drawing upon the writings and experiences of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hahn and nonviolence leaders from different social justice movements and communities of faith, the MN FOR nonviolence training team will guide participants through a holistic process oriented toward personal, interpersonal and social transformation.

This training model, based upon materials of ‘Pace e Bene’, utilizes a experiential, popular education approach that builds upon the wisdom and experience of the participants and assumes that more people would join social movement organizations if the movement offered a friendly, safe, supportive and loving environment.

Facilitators will guide participants through five modules, which explore the roots and dynamics of violence and nonviolence in a variety of situations, and begin planning for personal and social transformation. The training will seek to balance social and political analysis, skills and tools for use in one’s personal life, and spiritual resources for sustenance on the journey.

The leadership team for this event includes CCP trained facilitators Alice Kloker of Minneapolis, Ken Beidler of Iowa City and Don Christensen of St. Paul. **Total cost, including meals, materials and program is \$45.** For more information or to register, contact Dylan Wright at [dwright07@hamline.edu](mailto:dwright07@hamline.edu). **Registration deadline is October 21.** You are encouraged to register early, as participation is limited to 25 persons.

## News of the MN FOR - Good Bye to Katy Gray Brown!

When Katy Gray Brown moved to Minneapolis 14 years ago, the first call she made was to the local FOR group. The next thing she knew, “I was at a Board meeting”. Lucky for us, she has stayed at the MN FOR table for all that time filling in various roles as Chair, Treasurer, National Council member, US Representative to IFOR (International FOR), gracious host of many meetings, and bulk mail maven!

Currently, Katy is finishing teaching her “Introduction to Peace Studies” course at the U of M. For many years, she taught courses in the General College on political philosophy, power, social change, nonviolence, and logic. She has just completed work as co-editor of *Spiritual and Political Dimensions of Nonviolence & Peace*.(Rodopi Press).

Most importantly Katy’s household grew from one FOR member to four in those 14 years. She and her partner, Davis Hupp have produced another generation of FOR members with 2 year old Sam and Cal, who arrived earlier this year.

Katy, David, and the boys are moving to Manchester, IN, where she will be teaching philosophy and religion and peace studies at Manchester College. When asked what was most exciting about the move, Katy said, “Professionally? Being part of an established peace studies program at a teaching (rather than research) institution. Personally? Being home – back with my family. Small town joys – riding my bike at night worrying about only potholes - that sort of thing. And Indiana thunderstorms. “ Thank you, Katy, for your faithfulness, your passion, and your guardianship of FOR “culture” here in Minnesota. We send you with our love and gratitude, and greetings to our FOR family (and yours!) in Manchester. As of 2007, the new address for the Brown and Hupp household: 710 East Street, North Manchester, IN, 46962.

-Jo Clare Hartsig

## Unity Makes Force: Report on Nonviolent Student Organizing and Conflict Resolution Workshop in Zinder, Niger

by Katie Dick

The workshop closed, and I looked around the empty conference room. Flipchart paper hung on every wall, a trail of where we'd been over the last two days. On the front chalkboard I scanned two pieces of paper posted side by side. On the right, were names such as "SNCC, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks..." and on the left, "Tuareg Rebellion, 1999..." Thinking back on all of the connections made during the workshop between seemingly disparate themes, activities, and people, one is reminded of the Hausa proverb, "Hannu biyu ke cuda juna." Literally translated as 'two hands scrub each other' but more commonly, 'unity makes force.' This idea became more apparent as the facilitators forged inspiring links between Nigerien student movements, the civil rights movement in the United States, and other nonviolent movements around the world, as students from schools all over Zinder networked with each other, and as Zinder student leaders became closer to their University of Niamey union counterparts.

The students discussed the history of nonviolent student movements around the world, and the history of struggles of Nigerien students and peoples. They debated contemporary student issues, organizing and conflict resolution work, and thought of creative ways to instigate change through nonviolent means in Zinder, brainstorming and role playing about effective language usage during common conflict situations in schools and during student actions.

Forty-three student leaders from nine colleges and high schools in Zinder participated. From the beginning, I knew this workshop would be unique in terms of commitment and interest. Though most meetings start anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour late here (what is jokingly referred to as "le temps Nigerien"), many participants came early to the 7:00 a.m. Saturday registration and everyone else showed up well ahead of the 8:00 a.m. start time on both days.

Two guest speakers, the newly installed Zinder juvenile court judge and a local human rights organization representative discussed the students' local, federal, and international rights and responsibilities. Yero Abdoulaye, the assistant to the education program for Peace Corps, was the main facilitator. Boka and Ousseini, two student union leaders from the University of Niamey, served as co-facilitators. Nine Peace Corps volunteers provided logistical support and joined breakout groups throughout the day.

As it turned out, the workshop could not have come at a better time. Days after, University of Niamey students took to the streets, demanding three months (out of six) of unpaid government scholarship money.

Students and police officers were injured as students attempted to break into government buildings, burned vehicles and confront the officers.

This latest installment of violent conflict results, in part, from increasing pressures on the public education system in Niger. The rapidly expanding population is fast outpacing the economy and the Nigerien government's ability/willingness to meet the formal educational needs of the people. Dissatisfaction is growing among students, especially residents of towns outside the capital where resources are few. In Zinder, there are student strikes and protests every year that often turn violent, with property destruction. While workshop moderators did not tell the students what to do, they tackled some difficult questions with them about why one would choose to be nonviolent. By the end of the workshop, most students cited nonviolent action and conflict resolution as the way to go.

Most students pledged to take what they learned to their student councils. Hopefully, the workshop has helped plant the seed of nonviolent student activism among some trusted student leaders in Zinder that will be realized in future student planning and activities. I left the workshop feeling inspired by students who were so clearly leaders, continually engaged throughout the workshop and ready to make positive changes in their schools and communities.

A big thank you to the Fellowship of Reconciliation and everyone at Hamline University who generously donated to this workshop and made it possible. 100% of contributions payed for workshop supplies, speakers, student manuals, food, workshop space--and most importantly, over a *very* hot weekend--cold water delivered throughout the day. In Hausa, Mun Gode Sosai! (We thank you very much!)

\*\*\*The opinions expressed in this article reflect the opinions of the writer, and not those of Peace Corps, the Nigerien government, or the United States government.

*Note from Katie: I am finishing my second year as a Community and Youth Education Peace Corps Volunteer in Matameye, Niger. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to write to me via email at [katieniger-blog@yahoo.com](mailto:katieniger-blog@yahoo.com), or postal mail at Corps de la Paix, B.P. 14, Matameye, Niger, West Africa (until June 2006--From July 2006-July 2007 I will be at Corps de la Paix, B.P. 10537, Niamey, Niger). Also, visit my blog at <http://www.katherinehdick.blogspot.com>.*



Nonviolence workshop participants in Niger. (Photo: Katie Dick)

### The United States and Iran: Single or Double Standard?

by Don Irish

With U.S. insistence, the United Nations recently issued an ultimatum: if Iran doesn't cease uranium enrichment, sanctions may be applied after August 31, 2006. Iran contends, correctly, that it has the right to produce nuclear power for energy purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency thus far lack conclusive proof that Iran is in violation of the UN treaty. Iran is a Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty signator. What are the obligations of "nuclear powers" that signed the Treaty?:

*Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. [Article VI.]*

The United States lacks virtually all legal and moral leverage over Iran (and other nations) unless we proceed to implement Article VI of the Treaty. If promptly and in good faith we act regarding Article VI, other less powerful nations would lack any valid reasons for seeking to gain or maintain nuclear arms. The international community could then marshal wide support to move to a nuclear-disarmed world.

*Hans Blix [former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency] said that American unwillingness to cooperate in international arms agreements are undermining efforts to curb nuclear weapons. . . . If Washington does not take the lead, there could be more nuclear tests and new nuclear arms races . . . treaty-based disarmament was being set back by an increased U.S. skepticism regarding the effectiveness of international institutions and instruments coupled with a drive for freedom of action to maintain absolute global superiority in weaponry and means of their delivery. [New York Times, 6/1/06]*

Fellow citizens, our beloved nation may be the world's greatest problem! After WWII many Americans asked, "Didn't the Germans know?" Now, we should ask, "Aren't the Americans aware?" If not, why not? We need to get off this military-industrial treadmill economy/polity. Otherwise, our 51<sup>st</sup> state may be a perpetual "State of War"! We have the knowledge. Presumably, we share the values for survival. But, do we have the will to obey international law, apply single standards, cease our "unilateralism" and "exceptionalism" and avoid arrogance in relating to other nations? Our children and grandchildren will hold us responsible. We humans are very capable of creating our own world-wide tragic 'Armedgeddon'.

North Country Peace Builder is produced quarterly by the board of the Minnesota Fellowship of Reconciliation. It is also available online at [www.osb.org/for](http://www.osb.org/for). Please email articles, photos, letters and comments to [minneso-tafor@gmail.com](mailto:minneso-tafor@gmail.com) or to [sjmoore@smig.net](mailto:sjmoore@smig.net) with NCPB in subject line; or write to Minnesota FOR, Attention: NCPB, PO Box 14792, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0792

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### **MN FOR Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, November 12, 2006 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
MACALESTER – PLYMOUTH UNITED CHURCH, ST PAUL**

Join us in celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi's introduction of "Satyagraha" in the liberation struggle in South Africa – a foundational stone in the nonviolence movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We also celebrate the founding of FOR USA on November 11, 1915. We invite you to come for dessert, fair trade coffee, and a "conversation café" on building the nonviolence movement in our communities here in Minnesota. Local peacemakers will be honored, and we will elect new leaders to help guide the Fellowship in Minnesota. We look forward to seeing you on November 12!

### **MN FOR In Transition**

The MN FOR is in transition. Several current leaders are changing roles or moving on, and new leaders are needed. Don Christensen will no longer be serving as paid Coordinator (although he will be joining the Board and continuing to be an active volunteer), and our Treasurer, Katy Gray Brown is moving to Manchester, Indiana to assume a faculty position at Manchester College. Others Board members are retiring, so new hands and faces are needed to help with the web site, work on the *North Country Peace Builder*, and serve on the Board. If you are passionate about peace with justice through nonviolence and would like to be part of a joyful circle that believes that the world is changed by small groups that seek to "be the change you want to see in the world", the MN FOR may be a community of service for you. Let us know by contacting Don: [chris385@umn.edu](mailto:chris385@umn.edu), (651) 690-2609; or Jo Clare: [maddenuf@aol.com](mailto:maddenuf@aol.com), (952) 476-4782.