

by Leslie Wolcott

Peace Education Center Celebrates 40TH Birthday



What began as a community response to the Vietnam war and global nuclear threats has become so much more over the last 40 years. From fighting wrongful imprisonment to protesting wrongful occupations, from demonstrating on and near Michigan State University's campus to participating in nationwide marches, when there has been a fight for peace or justice, the Peace Education Center (PEC) has been there.

This year, as we celebrate our 40TH anniversary, we will be taking a look at everything we've done in the past 40 plus years and looking forward to what we might achieve in the next 40, for there's plenty of work still to be done.

We will be sharing with the peace community photos and videos, interviews and recordings, all from those who have worked with the PEC over its long life. Check out our website to find some of the interviews we've already done with key peacemakers in the PEC's history. There are many, many more of you we would like to interview. If you have great memories of the PEC you'd like to share, please contact us by calling 517-515-5634 or emailing us at peaceedcenter@gmail.com.

But first...to kick off our year-long 40TH anniversary celebration, the Peace Education Center of Greater Lansing will host an open house and art auction on Saturday, March 6, 2010, from 6 p.m.—9 p.m. at 855 Grove Street in East Lansing.

Featured artists include illustrator and calligrapher Kate Darnell and potter John Masterson. Also for auction will be Chinese brush paintings done in traditional spontaneous style by Laurel Ponist.

PHOTO: The weekly peace vigil including PEC, GLNAWI, MPT and others.

Light refreshments will be served. Harpist Melissa Osborn will be playing several selections throughout the evening, as well as auctioning a harp performance, perfect for weddings and other celebrations.

Proceeds will benefit the Peace Education Center in our efforts to promote peace with justice through serving as a resources center and information clearinghouse; assisting in organizing, coordinating, and creating networks for peace and justice activities; and offering educational programming and services to groups and individuals in the Lansing area. The Peace Education Center also works with state, national, and local peace and justice groups.

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Co-chair Report

» FROM MELISSA OSBORN & TOM RICO

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Ruth Borgelt
Becky Payne
Tom Rico
Leslie Wolcott

Peace Notes is a quarterly publication of the Peace Education Center. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board.

The Power of the "Power of We"

The Peace Education Center worked throughout 2009 to retool and prepare for a new decade of activism. With a timely tip from former board member Jason Weller and the grant writing skills of PEC coordinator Leslie Wolcott, we were successful as an organization in attaining an \$18,000 grant from the "Power of We" Consortium in Ingham County. The grant was a capacity building grant aimed at improving our operations and our ability to fulfill our mission. (The grant was not for programming.)

The grant enabled us to hire consultant Mark Fisher, who specializes in working with values-based non-profit organizations. Mark met with our board members on a number of occasions last year and challenged us to revisit and review our mission as a peace organization. He led us in healthy discussions about our commitment to our mission and how best to carry it out. Mark's work was just the beginning, as he gave us new insights on how to continuously improve as a board and how to improve our organization's work in the community. Also, he helped us strategize to improve our fundraising and public relations efforts.

The grant allowed us to replace the office's aging computer equipment. Gone is the slow, wheezing computer that seemed ready to melt down at any moment. The two new computers and a laptop will allow us to keep pace with the high speed world that is the Internet. Our capabilities to produce alternative media are improved, as well, with a new digital camera and video recording equipment.

We got a complete image makeover using the grant. The PEC recently introduced a new, upbeat logo and color scheme, which was displayed in the newly redesigned PEC brochure. With this issue of Peace Notes, we return to the printed page with a revamped look and style to our quarterly newsletter. Roberto Ty of TyDesign had the artistic vision to express PEC's energy and spirit in all the design work. We hope you like the new look.

On behalf of the PEC Board of Directors, we would like to thank the Power of We Consortium and those who helped us through the grant process including Lori Baird, Joan Nelson, and Suzanne Miel-Uken. Also, thank you to Mark Fisher and Roberto Ty for sharing their expertise with us. And thank you for the tip, Jason Weller!

Finally, many thanks to our coordinator, Leslie Wolcott, for her hard work on the grant, for handling all the paperwork and contracts, and for moving everything through the process.

Now we can move forward advocating the Power of Peace.

Yours in the struggle,

MELISSA OSBORN

TOM RICO



PHOTOS: (left) Last Year's Youth Outreach Program training session. (right) Carolyn Callen and Sandra Cade work the information table at Sexton High School in Lansing.

by Becky Payne

Youth Outreach Program Works with Lansing School Board

The PEC Youth Outreach Program succeeded this fall in helping the Lansing School Board clarify its policy for handing over student information to the military.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, high schools must turn over students' names and addresses to military recruiters. This heavy-handed policy puts schools in the awkward position of compromising student privacy and collaborating with the military recruitment process. Students may well feel that joining the military is approved or recommended by their school.

The only way to prevent schools from handing over kids' names is for the students or their parents to "opt out" in writing at the beginning of the school year. Locally, high schools have paid little attention to helping students opt out. Forms for that purpose were poorly designed and had misleading and contradictory requirements. Few students even knew that forms were available.

As a result of PEC intervention, there is now a standard, clearly written opt-out form. The school board for the Lansing School District directed high schools to distribute the opt out form to each student at the beginning of the year.

And the Board agreed to drop the requirement that parents must sign forms for those under 18. This is a positive step for local peace recruiters. Now when Youth Outreach members set up tables in schools to counter the influence of recruiters, students can sign up to opt out on the spot.

In addition, the PEC was able to reiterate that the only information that should be given to recruiters is a student's name, address and phone number. Social Security number, grades, aptitude, height, weight and other student information is not to be released as part of this act.

PEC Youth Outreach members Ann Francis and Becky Payne spoke to the school board of its responsibility to protect its young charges from recruiters who prey on teenagers' inexperience and propensity to ignore danger. They provided information that included articles on brain development and risky behavior in teenagers and informed the



PHOTO: PEC's Youth Outreach Program addressed the Lansing School Board in 2009 about the district's opt out policy.

board that it was illegal to recruit children under age 17 and asked about current board policies to prevent students under age 17 from being recruited.

To further their task of separating recruiting from schooling, Youth Outreach members have been handing out surveys to students asking them at what age they first talked to recruiters in their school. If results show that recruiters are regularly talking with students younger than the legal age, the PEC will return to the school board to urge that recruiters be restricted from setting up tables in hallways or cafeterias and only be allowed to meet with students over 17 in guidance offices with parental permission.

Visit the PEC website for information on why joining the military is a bad choice for young people today.



Make a Run for Peace!

Join the Peace Education Center in running the Heart of a Spartan run on May 2nd. There are many ways to participate: recruit pledgers to sponsor you on the mile fun run, 5k, and 10k distance options; make a donation to one of the PEC's team runners; recruit pledgers for runners; or come out and cheer for the folks running for Peace on May 2nd. More details can be found at www.peacecenter.org/heartofaspartan.

PHOTO: Sparty at JazzFest

The Peace and Justice Agenda, Year 2010: Back to the Future



The negative forces nationally—starting with the military-industrial complex—may have thought we would have gone away or given up by now. Alas, we return with protest sign in hand to confront issues that are all too familiar.

by Tom Rico

As the Peace Education Center works through its 40TH year, we confront situations our founding members can find eerily familiar. The public policy challenges confronting the peace movement in 2010 will most likely have us protesting like it was 1970 all over again. The negative forces nationally—starting with the military-industrial complex—may have thought we would have gone away or given up by now. Alas, we return with protest sign in hand to confront issues that are all too familiar.

Vietnam vs. Afghanistan

The U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan does not come near our numbers in Vietnam, and hopefully never will. Still, the difficulties of the military engagement are familiar. America is sending young men and women into an unfamiliar foreign country, embedding them into a region where the culture is little understood. Afghanistan's rough terrain is mostly controlled by decentralized tribal factions and remains one of the most extreme environments for military operations. The consistent failure of foreign occupiers over centuries has earned the country the tagline "The Graveyard of Empires."

The American death toll in Afghanistan is already approaching 1,000. The Obama Administration's ongoing build-up of U.S. troops and escalation will increase casualties noticeably, especially as the spring thaw arrives in the region. The increased casualties combined with a lack of clear strategic goals, plans for withdrawal, and burgeoning financial cost will be disheartening to both the American public and troops the longer the occupation continues.

We can rightly return to our vocabulary the usage of the word "quagmire."

Military Spending Over Community Investment

After 40 years, the military-industrial complex—long ago called out by President Eisenhower—still has a tight grip on our federal budget priorities and foreign policy. (Also see Becky Payne's article on page 6.) Over 50 percent of the federal budget is dedicated to military spending, far out-spending all other countries including China. Thus, it should be shocking—less so to the peace community—that President Obama proposes a freeze on discretionary domestic spending yet leaves military spending untouched and unchallenged. Do we really need more than 700 military installations in over 120 countries around the globe? No. We didn't need empire 40 years ago and we don't need it now.



PHOTO:
East Lansing Protester
in 2009



PHOTO: East Lansing, Oct. 15, 1969. From Poster in current PEC Office.

National Health Care: Not Then, Not Now, Not Ever?

Got national health care? No. Not 40 years ago, not now, and possibly, by the looks of things today, not soon.

On the topic of national spending priorities, the U.S. stands out among nations for not providing national health care for its citizens. There are approximately 50 million Americans—our neighbors, family, friends, and co-workers—who have no health care coverage. There are millions more people who are either under-insured or struggling to attain the benefits they thought they had under their existing policies.

We have witnessed billions of public bailout money doled out to irresponsible Wall Street financiers, banks, insurance companies, and corporations. The public credit card is casually swiped whenever the military needs billions in supplemental spending for ongoing occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. When 50 million Americans need health care coverage, we are told it is not affordable. We are told scary stories that health care coverage for all is socialism, communism, or fascism (take your pick). We are told anything and everything to dissuade us from national health care and from hurting massive profits of American insurance companies and their cohorts in the predominant anti-labor corporate community.

We are told many things about national health care, except that is the right thing to do and no less feasible here as in any other Western country.

Nuclear Proliferation

Don't look now, but the nuclear issue is making a comeback. Admittedly, the nuclear issue never went away. Each day over the last 40 years we have lived under the specter of nuclear disaster, from weapons to power plant meltdown. We predict the nuclear issue again will move to the forefront of the public policy debate and the public cannot continue to be complacent. We recently saw President Obama using his first State of the Union address to support a reduction in nuclear weapons, which is a good start. However, in the same address he advocated for the building of nuclear power reactors. Advocates for nuclear power claim it is "clean" energy. These same nuclear power advocates never explain where exactly the radioactive waste will be safely stored; we can guarantee they won't offer up their own backyards.

Corporations Are Persons, Too

The right-wing side of the U.S. Supreme Court recently reminded us, rather harshly, that corporations are persons, too. In one of the biggest power grabs in our country's history, the John Roberts-led court went out of its way to give corporations fundamentally free-reign with political campaign donations. This throwback issue goes back further to 1886 when corporations were first granted rights as persons in the U.S. The court's 2010 decision allows the infusion of cash into the political system by corporations, including many tied to the military-industrial complex, Wall Street, insurance companies and the like. Causes for peace and other progressive issues will suffer as a result. It is judicial activism at its most obvious.

Oh yes, labor unions—those dwindling institutions nearly impossible to form because of numerous organizing road blocks—can make donations, too. Some consolation.

Conclusion

The challenges are no less daunting now than they were in 1970. The struggle for justice continues to endure and has no timetable. In a recent interview with the PEC, renowned peace activist Peter Dougherty talked about living a values-based life and about digging in for the long haul: "Many years ago, early on in this peace movement life, I realized that the world was not going to change by the end of the semester. It becomes a way of life..."

National Spending Priorities: A Massive Injustice

by Becky Payne

Horrible...shameful...unbelievable...criminal. Those words come to mind when comparing the amount our government spends on war and militarism each year with the amount it spends to prevent war and on foreign aid.

This year alone, almost a trillion dollars is going to the Pentagon—\$770 billion directly to war spending, with more budgeted for veterans' care and interest on past years' military spending.

Compare that to the foreign aid budget of \$38 billion. Foreign aid gets less than 4% of the military budget amount. That includes all U.S. aid to other countries—all our embassies, health and education programs to impoverished countries. That's everything we send overseas that would actually help people—and prevent the hunger, desperation and ignorance that often leads to war.

HERE ARE OTHER NUMBERS TO CONSIDER:

\$1 TRILLION is the amount the Pentagon "lost" a few years back. During Senate hearings in 2003, the Pentagon admitted it couldn't account for a trillion dollars.

\$18 BILLION is the amount the Pentagon uses each year just to manage its finances. Gee, do they need a few billion more?

\$26 BILLION is the 2010 budget for the Department of Energy. All of our alternative energy programs are in there somewhere, along with money for coal, oil, natural gas and bureaucracy. (Actually, the wind power industry was thrilled to get \$80 million! Eighty million sounds like a lot until you consider that it is .00008 of the military budget.)

46% is the amount the Department of Education's staffing has fallen since 1980. Pretty soon schools will be entirely dependent on bake sales for funding!

And one very sad number—**\$20 BILLION**. That's the amount it would take to feed all the hungry people in the world for a year.

Right now we have a chance to pressure the government to correct this massive injustice. Michigan's Senator Debbie Stabenow is on the Senate Budget Committee. A local ad hoc group has formed to collaborate with Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and other national organizations to urge Senator Stabenow to hold budget hearings geared toward shifting these budget priorities. The group met with Senator Stabenow on February 10.

Want to help? Call or write Senator Stabenow at 517-203-1760 and urge her to use her position on the Senate Budget Committee to shine a light on military waste.

U.S. Social Forum Comes to Detroit

by Leslie Wolcott

The US Social Forum (USSF) is a new kind of people's movement, and this year it will be right here in Michigan, June 22–26, 2010, specifically in locations around Detroit and centered at Cobo Hall. So if you haven't heard about the USSF, or want to find out more, here's your chance.

According to the organizers' website, USSF is "a [quite sizeable] gathering whose participants produce our own agenda and our own programs" in an effort to unite the struggles of oppressed peoples and communities within the United States to the struggles of oppressed nations in the third world.

Chris Singer, who attended the last USSF in Atlanta in 2007, said "the people are great at the forum. I met Medea Benjamin (of peace group Code Pink), some great guys from Iraq Veterans Against the War, talked with some Palestinian filmmakers...but the coolest person I met was Dennis Brutus [a recently deceased South African poet/activist who was imprisoned with Nelson Mandela]."

The USSF, among other aims, writes that they "Believe the USSF is important because we must have a clear and unified approach at dealing with social justice issues, and meaningful positions on global issues." This conference is a natural fit with the mission and work of the Peace Education Center.

Therefore, the PEC would like to sponsor 5–10 high school or college age students to attend the conference. This would involve covering the student's registration and other costs. Your donations to the PEC can help this and other similar efforts. Please use the enclosed donation card or contribute online from the "Donate" page at our website.

In addition, many members of the PEC community hope to attend, including Chris Singer. He writes, "I have high expectations for Detroit this year. I believe having the USSF in Detroit is really important because what's wrong in Detroit highlights what's wrong in our country. The USSF in Detroit offers the people of Detroit and Michigan an opportunity to spotlight what's good about Detroit and Michigan. I hope the PEC community will join in the USSF movement and take advantage of the forum being in Michigan."

If you'd like to attend the USSF with the PEC, please email us at peacecenter.org or call the PEC office at 517-515-5634. You can find out more about the USSF at <http://ussf2010.org/>

Ann's work has been not only in ameliorating American race relations, but also in the larger arena of pursuing equality and human rights for all people.

by Leslie Wolcott

Interview with Peacemaker Ann Francis

Ann Francis has been working for peace and justice for a few years longer than the Peace Education Center has been in existence. She was the first coordinator of the Lansing Area Peace Council (the predecessor of the PEC), and I sat down with her in January to talk about what keeps her traveling the difficult path of forging peace and justice in 2010.

It seems that the support of other people, whether family, friends, or students, has been a sustaining force in Ann's activist life. Ann was teaching at a black college in Tennessee the day Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed. She remembers that one of her students called her aside and asked her why she wasn't doing more to fight racism in the United States.

So Ann did. Her work has been not only in ameliorating American race relations, but also in the larger arena of pursuing equality and human rights for all people. Ann has worked as a teacher in locations as diverse as Tennessee and Malaysia. Even now, she goes into schools with the PEC's Youth Outreach Program to encourage high school students to look at alternatives to military service. She has worked in factories in Michigan and she is a national board member and Co-clerk of the Great Lakes Region of the American Friends Service Committee. She is a founding member of Greater Lansing Network Against War and Injustice (GLNAWI). She's also well known in her neighborhood as someone with tireless energy and enthusiasm for community events.

It doesn't take long to see why Ann has been so successful in her activist work.

When asked why she continues to donate to the PEC, Ann replied that she thinks it is important to have a staff and a central location from which peace and justice work can be coordinated. She also points out that program work—like the visits she organizes with the Youth



PHOTO: Ann Francis (left) confers with Paul Brun Del Re at the Friday peace vigil.

Outreach Team to area high schools to offer alternatives to military enlistment—cannot be done without money.

To hear all Ann has to say about her work for and belief in peace and justice, check out the video posted at the PEC web site or on the Internet YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/peacecenter.

Outreach Team

» UPDATES

The Cost of Militarism Educational Team (COMET)

MEETS: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month 6:45 p.m.—9 p.m. at Everybody Reads Bookstore, 2019 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing.

The first part of the meeting is reserved for discussion of books that relate the impacts of American military and foreign policy, global corporations, intelligence agencies, and the established media upon peace and justice issues in both this country and worldwide. The next book to be discussed is "It Takes a Pillage: Behind the Bailouts, Bonuses and Backroom Deals from Washington to Wall Street" by Nomi Prins. The group plans and implements projects and is currently working to bring timely and relevant segments of Democracy Now!, the independent award-winning news program, to local cable television.

Youth Outreach Team (YOP)

MEETS: 2nd Wednesday of the month at the PEC, 7 p.m.

Make a difference in YOUR local school. The Youth Outreach Program invites you to work with us. We educate kids on military enlistment and related issues during lunch hours. Contact PEC for more information.

Middle East Awareness Committee (MEAC)

MEETS: 2nd Thursday of the month at the PEC, 7 p.m. MEAC's next meeting is March 11, 2010.

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Peace Education Center

» CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2010

- 03 COMET Meets
- 04 PEC Board Meets
- 06 Art Auction/Open House
- 10 Youth Outreach Program Meets
- 11 Middle East Awareness Committee Meets
- 17 COMET Meets
- 19–20 Iraq War Anniversary (actions TBA)

APRIL 2010

- 01 PEC Board Meets
- 07 COMET Meets
- 08 Middle East Awareness Committee Meets
- 14 Youth Outreach Program Meets
- 17 Annual Membership Meets
- 21 COMET Meets

MAY 2010

- 02 Heart of a Spartan Run
- 06 PEC Board Meets



The weekly Peace Vigil continues every Friday at the Capitol at noon. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the vigil. Signs are provided.
