



PEC Calls for Ceasefire in Gaza

BY NELSON BROWN

The Peace Education Center calls for the immediate ceasefire in Israel and Palestine, a release of all hostages, and the opening of the border to Gaza for humanitarian aid. While we abhor the killing of civilians by Hamas, we find the response by Israel for collective punishment of Palestinians unacceptable.

For humanity's sake and this country's national interests, the United States must openly break with Israel's current brutal policies and use whatever power it has to stop Israel's war crimes in Gaza.

This moment of catastrophe for the Palestinian people, the "Nakba," has struck because Israel's ultra-nationalist government has exploited Hamas's killing of over 1,300 people to create a war hysteria to justify its own war crimes against millions of Palestin-

ians. In the fury of the moment, for Israel and for its supporters in the United States, all barriers to the righteous slaughter of Palestinians and their means of survival have been lifted.

Unless this situation is reversed soon, 2.3 million will face privation, disease, and death. This is evil of epic proportions. Yet many Americans cheer this on either willingly or thoughtlessly because the desire for vengeance against Hamas has risen so great that they cannot separate Hamas from all Palestinians.

Before the Hamas attack, Israel had thought it could contain Palestinian resistance to occupation and subjugation by "mowing the grass" – an expression meaning Israel would use its intelligence and selective military repression to keep Palestinians in Gaza and on

the West Bank under permanent control in an apartheid state. But the Oct. 7th attack against Israel shattered this illusion. Through Hamas or a future movement resisting subjugation, Israel could never completely contain Palestinian anger. So, from the ultra-nationalist government's perspective, what is the solution to the Palestinian problem if "mowing the grass" doesn't work? Certainly not a two-state solution or one Israeli/Palestinian state.

The most extreme Zionist supporters have always believed that the only solution to protect the Jewish state was to rid the land of non-Jews – that is to expel Palestinians from it. In other words, ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands. And that is exactly one aim of Israel's current barbaric assault on the people of Gaza: to kill and terrorize

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thousands of people, and to destroy any capacity that Hamas or anyone can operate something resembling a civilized society.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog said: "It is an entire nation out there that is responsible. It's not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved. It's absolutely not true. We are defending our homes, we are protecting our homes, that's the truth, and when a nation protects its home, it fights and we will fight until we break their backbone." In essence, all Palestinians are guilty and are fair game for whatever violence Israel chooses to inflict.

Soon, thousands of people may be killed or driven into the Sinai Desert in a reverse Exodus. Maybe a "humane" Israel will offer them a "humanitarian" corridor to go to Jordan, which will not accept them. After the

bombing stops, if it does, thousands may be trapped and left to live in squalor or die in Gaza amid hunger, thirst, disease, and permanent Israeli terror. And a trickle of humanitarian aid will not make a dent in the needs.

Israel and the United States may offer a few crocodile tears for these desperate circumstances, but really they say that they brought it on themselves. Such is the smug belief in the moral superiority of Israel, the United States government, political commentators, and the mainstream American media as they support Israel's current assault on the people of Gaza.

Hopefully, the moral blindness afflicting much of America will abate as the humanitarian crisis becomes evident. We must hope that as it does become blatantly obvi-

ous, public and governmental pressure can stop Israel's war crimes. President Biden must support the United Nations' call for a ceasefire and for humanitarian aid before the destruction of Gaza is complete and irreversible.

The 75-year-old American policy of unconditionally supporting Israel or at least quietly tolerating its actions, no matter what acts of violence, of land confiscation and of violations of human rights it commits – all under the ceaseless mantra of "Israel has a right to defend itself" – has reached a crisis point in the Gaza. This should compel a change in that support before the United States becomes even more complicit in Israel's war crimes because of its political and military support for them.



Gun Buy Back Event Removes 106 Guns from Lansing Homes and Streets

BY MARCIA TYRIVER & PAUL BRUN DEL RE

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Lansing, held its second annual gun buyback on Saturday, Oct. 7, with more than three times as many guns being collected this year than last year.

Last year the demand was so great, money was exhausted quickly when 32 guns were collected. More money had been raised this year to meet the demand of people who have guns to dispose of and who would like them destroyed afterwards.

This year's event was aided by a large grant from the local Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren, with the help of its Michigan District and National Church of the Brethren. \$100 was given for handguns and shotguns and \$200 for rifles. With more money available this year, 106 firearms were collected.

Guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the U.S. This constitutes a public health crisis in our country. As of Aug. 1, 2023, ABC News reports that more than 26,000 people have been killed by guns this year, including suicides.

Why do people want to exchange their guns for less cash than they are worth? Why do churches, businesses, and individuals donate to a buyback event? Because many people want to remove unwanted guns from circulation and have them destroyed, never to fall into either intentional or accidental misuse. The purpose of this voluntary gun buyback is to provide a safe and easy way for people to get rid

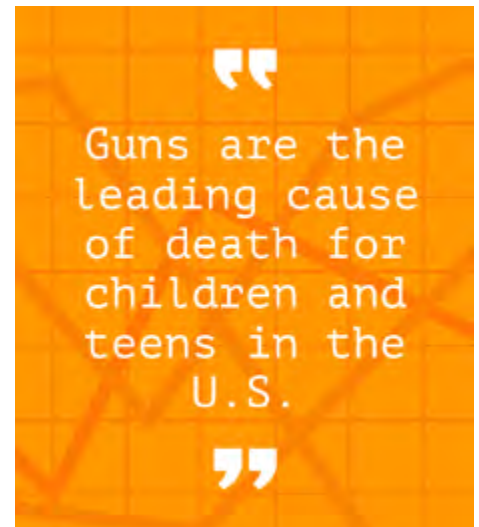
of unwanted guns for cash.

People brought their unloaded, workable guns in the rear of their vehicle; and they remained in their cars while their guns were collected and processed by the Lansing Police Department and the Ingham County Sheriff's Office, after which the guns were destroyed by Michigan State Police.

The event was sponsored by St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Lansing, and First Congregational Church, UCC, Charlotte. Help was given by Crime Stoppers of Mid-Michigan. In addition to sponsors' funds from St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Lansing, and First Congregational Church, UCC, Charlotte, funding was contributed by many individuals and groups, including:

Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren, East Lansing; Renaissance Massage, LLC, Lansing; LIUNA of Michigan; Episcopal Diocese of Michigan; Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence; Shaheen Automotive Group; St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lansing; All Saints Episcopal Church, East Lansing; University Lutheran Church, East Lansing; Meijer's (6200 S. Pennsylvania, Lansing); Red Cedar Meeting, Lansing; and many individuals.

Lansing's Moms Demand Action handed-out gun locks. META Peace Teams, Lansing, were present to help de-escalate any potential conflicts. Thank you to all.





War is (Still) Not the Answer

BY BECKY PAYNE

Another day, another war. Are our planet's wars getting more frequent and more strident, or is it just my imagination? Can't we, supposedly the most intelligent being on the planet, with universities and governments and treaties, figure out a better way to settle territorial disputes than sending young people to kill each other and blow stuff up?

In the Ukraine war – what has to happen to end this? Does Russia have to experience enough losses that they declare “enough?” Or does Ukraine have to see their country sufficiently bloodied, poisoned, their agriculture and cities and culture demolished, that they cry “enough?” Is that the best we can do?

And now, Israel/Palestine. After sitting with our eyes closed for years to the increasing panic on both sides, now we are treated to “they started it,” and “look what they did to us!” just like children in a schoolyard. How do we pick sides? Where do we weigh in?

Perhaps instead of sending more weapons

and soldiers to kill more people and blow up even more stuff, we could announce that we are sending massive numbers of soldiers, along with ambassadors, medics, etc., not to bomb and raid, but to stand in the way of the slaughter. We, the mighty United States, should have some clout. Are guns our only recourse?

If I were Omnipotent Leader, I would:

1. Take the profit motive out of industries of war. As long as our economy depends on supporting the production of weaponry, you can be sure that wars will continue.
2. Empower an impartial United Nations, staffed with the best and brightest minds from all corners of the world, our full support and as much money as we spend on the Pentagon.

As Wendell Berry said in his poem Questionnaire: “... State briefly the ideas, ideals, or hopes, / the energy sources, the kinds of security; / for which you would kill a child. / Name, please, the children whom / you would be willing to kill.”

War and Climate Change

BY TERRY LINK

As I sit to write these thoughts our world is ablaze with war – Ukraine/Russia, Israel/Palestine, and numerous civil wars scattered around the planet. The intensity of the Israel-Hamas war is overshadowing the Russia/Ukraine war as well as many other issues of consequence. I have no crystal ball in where this trajectory will take us globally or locally.

What I do realize is that climate scientists have noted that each of the past three months have been the hottest on records for the Earth since we humans emerged from the swamps, with a 99.5 percent chance that 2023 will be the warmest year on record.

September showed the largest increase beyond long-term averages ever recorded. Acclaimed climate scientist James Hansen foresees the 1.5-degree threshold possibly being breached as soon as next year when the full impact of the emerging El Nino plays out. He notes that we may never again see a return to lower temperatures in our lifetime.

For more on the science, see this report from the [Yale Climate Communications Center](#).

The immediate visuals of the horrible attacks by Hamas and Israel's response to them, even before their threatened ground offensive, stirs us immediately. Whereas the slow and persistent increase in climate change numbs us to its impacts, unless a

localized hurricane, forest fire, drought, flood, or other event hits us where we live.

Linking war and climate change is easy enough if you look at the work of the Climate Crisis and Militarism Project of Veterans for Peace. But even if you simply pause for a moment to look at the photos of devastation and destruction of the current wars, the amount of energy used for the destruction coupled with all the necessary energy to manufacture and rebuild in the aftermath, surely adds immensely to greenhouse gas emissions we are trying to reduce.

Through war and militarism, we are collectively destroying the present while diminishing our children's and grandchildren's chance for a future of peace and prosperity.

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has so insistently implored national leaders, we must enact ceasefires in all these horrific conflicts as a necessary first step to restoring peace among the human race and with the planet that has sustained us until now.

We need huge investments in dialogue and negotiation. It is probably impossible to invest too much in seeking ceasefire agreements. Investing more in weapons and wasteful consumption is a devil's bargain with no long-term winners.



Challenge Book Bans:

Literary Censorship and its Consequences

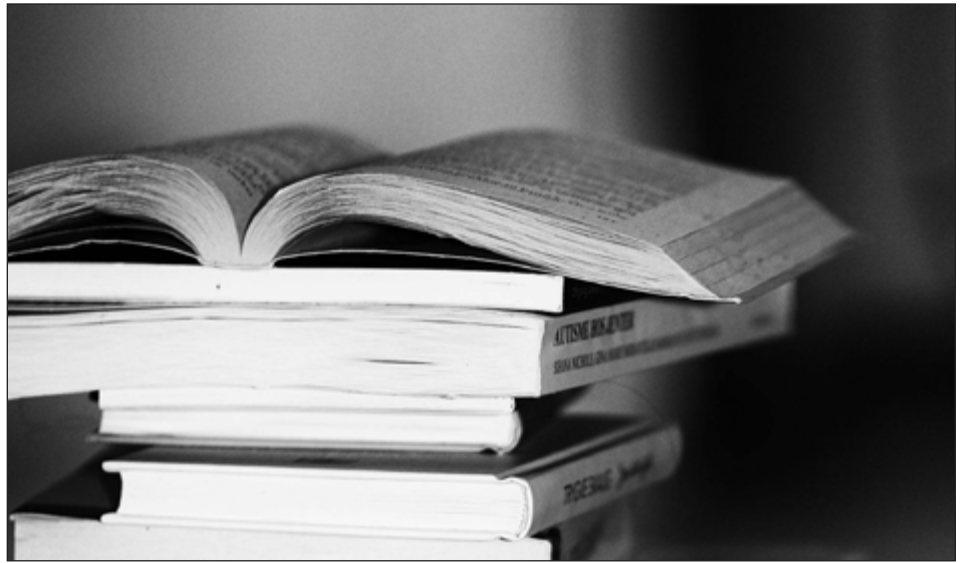
BY CASEY ORR

In the past few years, book bans have gained attention as they target public and school libraries by “challenging” books alleged to have mature themes. Usually, book bans center on public collections, such as schools or public libraries, and the consequences of “banning” a book can lead to its restriction or complete removal from community access.

Book bans have occurred throughout history and the world; while they are not unprecedented, their growing presence in the American consciousness should be a cause for concern.

According to the American Library Association, most challenged books were “written by or about members of the LGBTQIA+ community or by and about Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color,” (American Library Association, 2023). The challenged books center around historically marginalized voices that offer discussions on racism, the LGBTQ+ community, and more.

Book bans and challenges limit what materials are available and accessible. One person’s right to read should not be impacted by what others find inappropriate. Addition-



ally, what is deemed inappropriate is not the democratic social consensus. The Washington Post found that “The majority of all school book challenges in the 2021-2022 school year came from just 11 people” (Nantanson, 2023). Thus, less than a dozen people are limiting literary content and access of their entire community.

The reasons for book challenges are often flawed or objectively biased. Parents claim that access to sexually suggestive material will increase their children’s likelihood of being “groomed” or victimized. The problems with this are three-fold. First, the same books claimed to cause or exacerbate grooming have been used to help youth identify abuse and seek help (see Maughan, 2014).

Secondly, many challenged books portray consensual relationships between same-sex or LGBTQ+ individuals. The “grooming”

argument thus builds on age-old homophobia that equates being LGBTQ+ with being a predator.

Finally, with the unrestricted internet access that children now have, they are more likely to be victimized, exploited, or exposed to inappropriate content by strangers across the web – not books from the school library.

Public library challenges also harm more than just book availability. With sweeping book bans, libraries face funding reductions and closure. Libraries do more than provide books – they also provide resources, technology support, and other social programs.

The volume of book challenges in 2023 is on track to surpass previous records, and the book-banning frenzy is far from over. To learn more, visit your local library and see what you can do to fight book bans, limit censorship, and protect your community’s right to read.



Democratization: Essential to Meaningful Change

BY JOHN METZLER

I was strongly impacted by David Orr’s presentation at a recent Peace Education Center-sponsored event. Like so many others who try to live up to the moniker of progressive, I have been deeply concerned with the continued erosion of our already imperfect democracy. Orr clearly demonstrated in his presentation the interconnection between the very real threat of climate change and our endangered democracy, presenting a cogent argument that adequately addressing climate change will not happen absent significant reforms in our political system that allows for, and promotes, genuine democratic engagement and decision making.

Inspired by Orr’s presentation, I eagerly read the first section of his edited book, “Democracy in a Hotter Time: Climate Change and Democratic Transformation” titled “Democracy?” It would be impossible to give justice to the three excellent articles in this section in this piece. Instead, I will briefly focus on the second essay, “No Decarbonization without Democratization: To Save the Climate, Open Democracy,” by Helene Landemore, a professor

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Democratization CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

of political science at Yale University.

In this chapter she offers a climate-focused summary of her recent book, "Open Democracy: Reinventing Popular Rule for the Twenty-First Century," in which she presents a lucid case for a reconstruction of our flawed democratic system. In her book chapter she begins with an assertion that jumped off the page as I read it, "[I]n truth there can be no decarbonization without democratization. Addressing climate change requires fighting off the technocratic temptation and instead deepening democratic decision making at all levels – local, national, and global. It also requires extending democracy to the economic sphere, specifically to firms and organizations where climate-affecting decisions are made.

The point is to include more people, interests, and ways of thinking in the relevant law and policy processes. And, because of the urgency of climate change, democratization... deepening and extending – must therefore happen quickly and decisively."

What is true for decarbonization is also true for other issues that we deeply care about, poverty, inequality, militarization, egregious military spending, gun violence, etc., which cannot be adequately addressed with-

out democratization. That is, for example, meaningful structural reforms in our economic system to address the urgent issues of poverty and growing inequality, will not happen, as Landemore asserts, without democratization.

Although I find Landemore's arguments for and her detailed outline of what an Open Democracy looks like, cogent and persuasive, as she herself admits, it will be difficult to achieve quickly in the United States. In the meantime, it is urgent that we push for changes in our political system that don't restrict democratic participation and will facilitate a more meaningful addressing of the urgent issues threatening our survival.

A good place to start are the reforms championed by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, in their just published book, "Tyranny of the Majority": insuring voting rights in every locale allowing for all citizens to participate in elections, abolishing the electoral college, reform of the senate to make it more proportional increasing the number of senators from a given state based on population, end Gerrymandering nationally (follow the example of Michigan), institute rank choice voting, nationally and proportional representation (replacing a system of "win-



ner take all' in which a party receiving less than 50 percent of the total vote in an election, can dominate a legislative body locally, statewide, or nationally.)

As I am writing this piece, horrific scenes of unjustified violence are taking place in Israel and Gaza. I am convinced that the systemic injustice in this region that informs this violence cannot be adequately addressed without genuine democratization in the U.S., Israel, and Palestine.



Democracy in a Hotter Time

BY TERRY LINK

Dr. David Orr returned to his alma mater – Michigan State University – to speak about the interplay of democracy, climate change, and education in recognition of World Democracy Day (September 15).

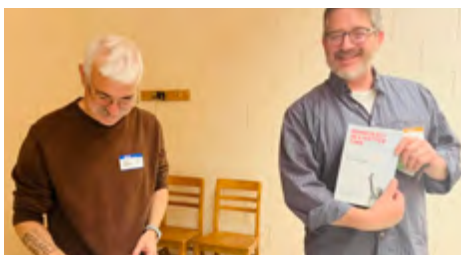
MIT Press was just releasing his new book, "Democracy in a Hotter Time," a book he edited with numerous contributors looking at various ways these intersect.

His talk depicted the rigorous science behind our climate crisis and the trajectory we're on that spells increasing catastrophes the longer we take to constrain our emissions and unravelling of our ecological systems. He coupled this with a penetrating analysis of the unravelling of our democratic systems here and abroad.

Before entertaining questions and signing copies of his book, he offered some potential alternatives to the current systems. It is a time he said "for concerted action with urgency."

He offered that doing so requires courage, with and understanding that there were no guarantees our actions would be sufficient. If you missed his talk you can [view the recording here](#).

His talk was sponsored by the Peace Education Center, the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, Michigan Climate Action Network, League of Women Voters – Lansing, and MSU's Department of Community Sustainability.



VIEW THE EVENT



The Peace Education Center's Annual

Alternative Holiday Sale

Friday, November 17
Saturday, November 18

Come celebrate an annual community tradition!

It's back!

The Lansing Area Peace Education Center's annual Alternative Holiday Sale will be held:

Friday, Nov. 17, from 5 pm - 9 pm
Saturday, Nov. 18, from 9 pm - 4pm

Edgewood United Church
469 N. Hagadorn, East Lansing

With a variety of vendors, many offering local artists' gorgeous creations, as well as practical goods for home and body, the sale provides holiday shoppers with a wonderful opportunity to shop in a way that makes spending money feel good and do good for the world.

Supporting local vendors promotes the economic growth of our area and is a sustain-

able shopping option. Furthermore, some profits from the sale will go toward assisting the PEC in its yearly programming and peace and justice initiatives.

Like last year, a Ten Pound Fiddle concert will take place during the sale on Friday night, which this year features the internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Joe Jencks.

Jencks is a 25-year veteran of the international folk circuit, an award-winning songwriter, and celebrated vocalist based in Chicago. Merging conservatory training with his Irish roots and working-class upbringing, Joe delivers engaged musical narratives filled with heart, soul, groove and grit.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JENCKS.

Entry to the sale is free, but tickets are necessary for the concert. In addition to all the sale items, meals and snacks will be available for purchase.

More information is available at the [PEC WEBSITE](#).



PeaceQuest 2023: Events Many and

BY TOM OSWALD

PeaceQuest, the Lansing-area's annual celebration of peace and justice, took place this September, providing an eclectic range of activities, including peace vigils, a sing out for peace, yoga and meditation, a quilt exhibit and much more.

PeaceQuest (PQ) is a community-wide celebration that happens every September. Its mission: To celebrate the United Nations' International Day of Peace, which was

declared by the UN General Assembly with a resolution passed unanimously on Sept. 21, 1981.

The events are sponsored by many local organizations that promote peace and justice, including the Peace Education Center, the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, and many others. For a complete list of PeaceQuest organizers, please visit the [PQ WEBSITE](#).

One of the more well-attended PQ events this year was the Salaam Peace Festival,

held at the Islamic Center in East Lansing.

One of PQ's most popular events is the Art Challenge, in which students are invited to create an original poster on a certain issue. This year's was Understanding Refugees' Challenging Life Journeys of Hope and Resilience.

This year's winners will be announced soon. For information visit the [PQ WEBSITE](#).



Counter Offensive in Ukraine Has Failed; Time to Negotiate a Settlement has Arrived.

BY NELSON BROWN

The interventionist, "full-spectrum-dominance," foreign policy of the Biden Administration is exploding in its face and is turning key areas of the world into a bloody mess.

Until recently, the administration had two major challenges to confront: the Ukraine War and the rising conflict with China. Suddenly, the Middle East has blown up its face exposing the failure of 75 years of a flawed policy of backing the Israel carte blanche, no matter how extreme its government and regardless of its level of violence against the Palestinian people.

While the peace community must address all the challenges, the Ukrainian war is still a stalemate but out of the public eye for the moment. The peace community must still push for a negotiated settlement as the only realistic way to extricate Ukraine and the United States from an pointless bloodbath.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022, Ukraine and the U.S. had to decide how to respond. While President Obama was president when a Ukrainian government sympathetic to Russia was overthrown in 2014 and replaced by one seeking a possible NATO entry, Russian-supported separatists in the Donbas region and Crimea took over this area. Confronting this move, the Obama offered defensive support to Ukraine, but was not prepared to support a full-fledged proxy war against Russia.



In retrospect, this was a wise decision. But when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, both Ukraine and the U.S. confronted a new choice after the Russian thrust toward Kyiv was repelled. Ukraine either could enter negotiations with Russia to salvage at least part of the land Russia had taken in 2014 or could mobilize to fight the Russians in a full-fledged war.

Initially, the Ukrainians were prepared to negotiate even when they knew concessions must be made -- with Crimea likely remaining part of Russia. But at this point Britain and the U.S. decided that NATO would support Ukraine fully in a war to drive Russia out -- a war that they believed would "weaken" Russia. Since then, Europe and the United States have poured billions of dollars' worth of military and economic support into Ukraine.

The United States expected a strengthened Ukrainian army could at least score substantial land gains and, at most, could recapture Crimea. Thus, 2023 was to be the year of the great Ukrainian counteroffensive to push Russia back on its heels, but we now know this did not happen. The counterof-

fensive has flopped securing modest gains against a well-prepared Russian defense.

Now the winter months are approaching and both sides will go into hiatus to prepare for another round of likely stalemate in the spring. Of course, Russia will strengthen its defenses over the winter and the Ukrainians will try to reenforce it military. But the likelihood that Ukraine can rebuild its military strength enough to reverse a future stalemate remains unrealistic.

Thus, the choices confronting the United States and Ukraine seem obvious: either continue with more bloodletting without any real expectation of Ukrainian total victory or seek out negotiations with Russia to find a compromise diplomatic settlement to end the war.

Until recently, the United States was probably prepared for more fighting, but stopping the explosion of increasing violence and instability in the Middle East may now loom as a higher diplomatic priority than Ukraine. The peace community must push Biden to support negotiations with Russia, even as we focus more effort on containing the violence in the Middle East.



JOIN US! PEC HOSTING **WRITE FOR RIGHTS** THIS DECEMBER

Sat, Dec 9, 2023 from 2 pm - 4 pm
PEC Office, 1120 S Harrison, East Lansing

Snacks & drinks will be provided!



PEC Appreciates Your Support!

For more than 50 years the Peace Education Center, an all-volunteer organization, has worked to build bridges instead of walls. We have sought to bring people together rather than push them apart. We have sought to create a healthy planet where there truly is Peace on Earth.

The Peace Education Center's core mission is to promote education and action to press for an end to war and militarization. One of the ways it does this is to bring nationally known speakers to the area.

This past year we hosted some members of the crew of the Golden Rule, a refurbished ship that sailed the Pacific Ocean in the late 1950s protesting nuclear war. We also hosted a talk by David Orr, a Michigan State University alumnus who discussed his latest book about war and climate change, "Democracy in Hotter Times."

In addition, we played a major role in initiating and facilitating the statewide Michigan Peace Alliance, including hosting and maintaining its website; co-sponsored a month-long series of events known as PeaceQuest 2023; hosted a Mother's Day event that helped remind us of the true reason for the day; and met with representatives from the offices of Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Sen. Gary Peters and Rep. Elissa Slotkin to promote a peace and justice agenda.

We gave out Peacemaker of the Year Awards to long-time local activists Willye Bryan and Ody Norkin. We awarded

our Lifetime Peacemaker Award to John Metzler. And gave out the Tom Schneider Award and scholarships to Avery Blair of Okemos High School; Isabella Grass of Grand Ledge High School; and Colin Scheib and Katelyn Ryals, both of Bath High School.

We published four issues of Peace Notes and have promoted nonviolence, conflict resolution and peace through e-mails, petitions and social media. On Nov. 17 and 18 we will sponsor our popular Alternative Holiday Sale, which benefits non-profit peace and justice groups.

As we look to 2024 and to continue this important work we do, we ask for your support with a tax-deductible contribution to the Peace Education Center. Please also consider leaving a gift to the center in your will and supporting the Tom Schneider scholarships (note any designations on your check).

If you would like to assist us in our volunteer campaigns, we would relish your time and energy.

You can contact us at:


peaceedcenter@gmail.com or visit the **PEC WEBSITE!**

You can also make a **secure donation online!**

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