

Newsletter



Alaska Peace Center

Issue 3

Fall 2007

♦ ALASKA PHONE MARATHON ♦ To call for an end of the occupation of Iraq



Now until October 27, 2007

CALL FOR PEACE

Are you frustrated that nothing is being done to bring and end to the war in Iraq? That the illegality of the war is not being prosecuted? That the Administration is not being held accountable for torture and irresponsibility in the conduct of the war and occupation? That the Administration is rattling sabers toward Iran and neither Democrats nor Republicans seem opposed?

You **CAN** do something that will make a difference!

Every morning from 6 am to 9 am & from 4 to 7 pm
from now until October 27,
the Alaska Peace Center is hosting a phone
marathon to:

Call Congress,
Call presidential candidates,
Call the media, and
Call friends to do the same...

You can help by volunteering to call, and by
helping to research to prepare calls.

WHAT TO BRING OR DO?

- Bring a cell phone or a calling card with minutes, or
- come with a laptop with wireless,
- e-mail a coordinator (cf. schedule) to sign up for a time,
- and bring your address book to call friends and any other numbers you think would be useful

It is fun and inspiring to talk to other groups around the country. It's a great chance to connect with old friends and family to motivate them to do something. It's a chance for us all to hike up the volume for peace.

WHY OCTOBER 27th?

The group United for Peace and Justice is planning peace rallies for major cities all around the country that day. This is a chance for us to also organize a major rally in Fairbanks.

If you want to help, please see the table (verso) to contact a coordinator for the time slot you are interested in. Or come by the Peace Center during marathon hours.

To schedule a time, call or write to the coordinator for a slot (any week up until October 27) [see table].

Also, consider becoming a coordinator for an open slot, if you can, all the help is needed...



Now until October 27, 2007

slot	Coordinator	phone	e-mail
Sunday Noon to 3 pm	Stan Read Ann Mallard		sread@alaska.net amallard@pobox.alaska.net
Mondays Morning 6 am – 9am	Rob Mulford	457-5578	mulford.rob@gmail.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm	Rob Mulford	457-5578	mulford.rob@gmail.com
Tuesdays Morning 6 am – 9am	Heather Koponen Solveig Pedersen	479-0981 347-2881	posopps@yahoo.com way2thesun@gmail.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm	Rob Mulford	457-5578	mulford.rob@gmail.com
Wednesdays Morning 6 am – 9am	Heather Koponen David Koester	479-0981 479-6781	posopps@yahoo.com swarming@mosquitonet.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm			
Thursdays Morning 6 am – 9am	Heather Koponen	479-0981	posopps@yahoo.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm			
Fridays Morning 6 am – 9am	David Koester	479-6781	swarming@mosquitonet.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm	Stacey Fritz		info@nonukesnorth.org
Saturdays Morning 6 am – 9am	David Koester	479-6781	swarming@mosquitonet.com
Evening 4 pm – 7pm	Solveig Pedersen	347-2881	way2thesun@gmail.com

★ EYES WIDE OPEN ★

Reflections...

The Alaska Peace Center and the North Star Borough sponsored the AFSC exhibit at Fairbanks Bicentennial Park, September 20-22...

To the bitter fruits of war,
These rows of empty boots and shoes resound,
Of young and old flung at heaven's door,
The remembered dead on sacred ground.

Don Ross



One hundred and ten empty combat boots surrounded by 330 empty civilian shoes... to represent the casualties of the US led illegal invasion of Iraq... 110 empty boots of soldiers from Alaska, or based in Alaska, to remember 2826 soldiers fallen so far... 330 civilian shoes to symbolize a million plus "collateral damages", loss of civilian lives directly as a consequence of the US invasion of Iraq, a country that did not pose any threat to the World nor the United States.

As I aligned the shoes these mornings of September, it would eventually hit me... all these lost lives... and for every single death, all the sorrow... repeated a million times...

How can the people responsible for this carnage not feel it? How can we go about our lives not feeling how heavy the air has become...

Claire Alix

Empty Boots Create Space For Reflection

Marjorie K. Cole

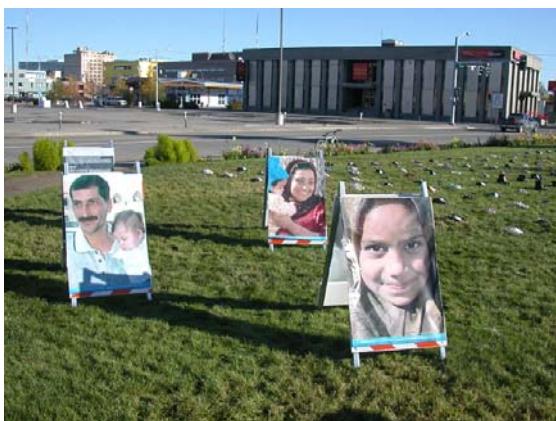
Published September 16, 2007, four days before the opening
<http://newsminer.com/2007/09/16/8888>

Stacy Livingston's brother Joe Bickenstaff drowned in Iraq in 2003 when his combat vehicle slipped down an embankment into a canal. A year and a half later she spoke at a display of "Eyes Wide Open" at the Seattle Center.

Eyes Wide Open, a traveling exhibit from the American Friends Service Committee, comes to Veterans Park, Fairbanks, at 8th and Cushman, Sept. 20, 21, and 22.



Organized by the Alaska Peace Center, it creates a place where Americans can step out of the whirlwind of opinions about the war in Iraq, and simply live for a short while with its human cost. Visitors to an Eyes Wide Open display of combat boots, civilian shoes, and informational posters learn the names of victims and learn about the human cost to their own state. The display gives civilians a chance to experience a little bit of what our troops have had to witness—the loss of comrades and suffering of civilians.



"I hope that people who see this exhibit can understand what each pair of shoes or boots represents... a life, hopes and dreams," said Stacy Livingston.

Veteran journalist Chris Hedges in his book "War is a force that gives us meaning" reminds us how the excitement, romanticism, glory, myths, and all the life-and-death intensity of wartime cast a spell on people. The drama of war raises feelings we didn't know we were capable of. These feelings obscure some human realities. "Eyes Wide Open" seeks to bring us back to the human losses. "For every pair of shoes," said Stacy Livingston, a hundred more troops "are suffering from PTSD and depression," and their families are hurting and missing them.

The exhibit honors the troops and acknowledges civilian deaths as well. In modern history, far more civilians than soldiers die in war. It's one more tragedy of war that participants grow numb and sometimes stoic about the killing. "The rain don't fall on the flowers when it's falling, the rain just falls," and so do bombs, bullets and shrapnel.



I keep thinking about the children. Since 2003 I've kept a photograph of one victim of the coalition forces' bombing of Basra. She's a dark-haired girl being held by a man old enough to be her grandfather. Her eyes are closed, her face dirty but at peace, one arm flung out. She looks unhurt except that from the legs of her pink trousers dangle not feet but shreds of bone and tissue.

The man holding her doesn't look horrified or angry yet. On his face is shock. How would you feel, picking up a child, perhaps a relative, who had been running through the streets just moments before? How have these thousands and thousands of deaths made me safer?

And why should I grow stoic toward these deaths, though some leaders try to demonize our opponents? We all know what demonization means. If you can believe

that opponents are less than human, it's easier to summon up the rage needed to kill them. Popular culture during every war does just that to soldiers and civilians from the enemy country-- condemns them as a group, diminishes their humanity and individuality.

But something about a person's shoes reminds us that each death was that of an individual, trying to accommodate to the planet just like each one of us. He or she was a person of a certain height and weight, with certain habits, his or her own way of walking, a personal set of gestures, a unique voice that was special to someone else.

Eyes Wide Open has traveled throughout the country, and was displayed complete on Memorial Day this year with 3,400 pairs of combat boots. Now the full exhibit would have to include over 3,770 pairs of boots to represent U.S. casualties.

Volunteers from the Alaska Peace Center have been collecting shoes for this special Alaskan exhibit. There are children's shoes among them, representing those children who have died, all of them victims of the inevitable, indiscriminate chaos of war.

* * *

What I Gained from Eyes Wide Open

Rob Mulford

The recent Alaska Peace Center sponsored "Eyes Wide Open", memorial displaying the cost of war, was for me an emotional and spiritual experience that I will long remember.



I admit that I had originally started out with the attitude that this was just another war memorial. I

believed that memorials by nature of honoring fallen military heroes, indirectly glorified war, making it possible to dupe more young into fodder. What I learned was that the narrowness of my belief was keeping me from benefiting from a source of great nourishment that will help me continue with the struggle for peace and justice. I felt the need for my own sake to attend all three days.

First, there was the man who told me that his son was deployed in Afghanistan and that we need to "kill all those hateful people over there"; that we need to "rebuild their country in the image of America and give them our cultural values because we're America". His words made me take inventory of my own fears and anger and strengthen my resolve not to let fear or hate be a factor in my own behavior.

Then, there was the young Marine who told me his story. He had lost several close friends in a fire fight and remained with their



lifeless bodies for days before being rescued only to be redeployed to a unit searching Iraqi homes for insurgents. He said, while choking back tears, that the members of his unit had all lost friends to the insurgency and that they did not take prisoners. I saw before me another victim who was still suffering. I could not stop my own tears from flowing.

Then, there was the woman who returned the second day to take photos of the display. She was particularly taken by the pair of small Spiderman slippers with the attached name of an Iraqi child. Although she knew that the shoes were not actually the possessions of the persons whose names were displayed, the humanity of it struck home. She had recently purchased a pair of similar shoes for her own grandchild.

Finally, there was the father of one of the fallen soldiers who told me of how his son's life was taken by a roadside bomb. He had been informed by the military that they believed they had captured the men responsible for placing the device that killed his son. He said he wanted to go to Iraq and show them photos of his son's sisters. He said that they (the insurgents) only saw a soldier of an enemy army who was invading their country. He wanted them to know that his son too was a human being who loved and was loved. This man's words held no vestiges of vengeance or hate. I accepted them dearly as gifts of spiritual strength.

Wage Peace

REPORTS ON PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Update on the Occupation Project *Rob Mulford*

On January 18, 2007 a group of Alaska residents delivered a petition of grievance to the local offices of the Alaska Congressional Delegation. It proclaimed their total opposition to the invasion and occupation of Iraq and emphatically requested they sign and / or agree publicly to the terms of the "Declaration of Peace" (<http://declarationofpeace.org/>).

On Feb. 5th (Sen. Murkowski's office), on Feb. 20th (Sen. Stevens's office), and on March 13th (Cong. Young's office), the group of Alaskans returned to the congressional Delegation to nonviolently reiterate the request by reading the names of American and Iraqi war casualties. When ordered to leave, Don Muller of Sitka and Rob Mulford of Fairbanks exercise Peaceful Nonviolent Civil Disobedience and continued the reading of names. They were arrested.

Don was charged with one count (AK) of Criminal Trespass in the Second Degree (Feb. 20th) and was tried in April at the Fourth Judicial District Court in Fairbanks. He was convicted and sentenced to 15 days in jail, and served eight days at the Fairbanks Correctional Center.

Rob was charged with two counts (AK) of Criminal Trespass in the Second Degree (Feb. 20th and March 13th) and one count (Federal) of "Refused to Depart Premises" (Feb. 5th).

Rob had six legal briefs (4 from Rob and 2 from the State), seven hearings (covering Self Representation and Evidentiary Oral Argument over the defense of necessity), eleven calendar calls, and went through a jury selection. However, to everyone's surprise, the State dismissed both counts of Criminal Trespass against him (for more information about the details of the dismissal you can go to <http://www.trialthewar-notrob.info/> and <http://www.fairbanksopenradio.org/>).

Below is an excerpt of Rob's last statement on his case:

"... I guess I felt cheated in a way for not having had the opportunity to try to present my intentions (to try and put a stop to the supreme international crime of aggressive war) to a jury. I had put together a fairly impressive collection of evidentiary exhibits to justify my intentions and prosecute my defense. In the process of doing so I learned a fair amount of history and law (both U.S. and International) and I continue to learn.

The jury selection process provided a glimmer of hope. During voir dire - the process where the prosecution and the defense question the jury to ferret out beliefs that may be prejudicial to the case - the D.A. asked several questions to elicit the jurors' thoughts on the Iraq War and Civil Disobedience. The responses were heartening. One prospective juror stated that the Iraq war was a war for greed. Another candidate said that she was a hair dresser who had many GIs and their families for customers. She said that she thought the war was wrong and that she applauded my actions. One prospective juror who identified himself as an active duty Air Force dentist said that his job requires him to prepare soldiers for Iraq, that he originally supported the war but now believes it to be wrong, and that it should be ended. The dentist also stated that he looked on my case not as one of trespass but of civil disobedience. He made reference to Rosa Parks and her heroic act of disobedience that was so important to the civil rights movement. One prospective juror stated that our country was founded on an act of civil disobedience. Of course these prospective jurors were rejected by D.A., but this discussion between the prospective jurors was uplifting to my spirit. When it came my turn to reject jurors I stated "your honor I value the moral conscience of my fellow human beings and will not reject anyone".

I've come to the realization that even if we somehow do convince our legislators to stop this horrible act of aggression, if we do not investigate and prosecute

crimes against peace and war profiteering, this history will repeat as it has been repeating. There are laws covering crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes (see Principles of Nuremberg, U.N. Charter, Hague Regulations, War Crimes Act, the Geneva Conventions, and U.S. Army Field Manual 10-27) but most are not self executing. We need to put the mechanisms in place to correct this. One step may be a revitalization and reformation of the United Nations making it more democratically responsive. Another may be the ratification of the Rome Statute and support for the I.C.C. This may all sound impossible but as John said "You may say that I'm a dreamer..."

The Occupation project continues. For more information, go to www.vcnv.org."

* * *

No Nukes North

Fall 2007 Update on Alaska's Role in Global Militarization and the Militarization of Space

Stacey Fritz

In 2007, the world's largest rogue weapons program spread to even more Alaskan locations while its expansion into Poland and the Czech Republic sparked a resurgence of the Cold War with Russia. At the same time, North Korea is shutting down its nuclear weapons program, which was the main justification given for the Alaska-based ground-based mid-course missile defense system. Alaska now hosts:

- around 15 interceptor missiles installed of the 40 planned for Fort Greely (next to Delta Junction)
- continued launching of mock target missiles from the Kodiak Launch Complex for missile defense tests (\$85 million per test)
- an enormous sea-based X-band radar that is homeported in Adak in the Aleutians and which roams around to classified locations
- smaller radars and sensors at several locations around the state, including a transportable x-band radar, previously unannounced and with no environmental impact studies/public comment done, headed for Juneau

The military announced that the missile defense system was operational and could respond to potential intercontinental ballistics missiles (ICBMs), despite the fact that a quarter of the silos at Greely flooded during heavy rains around Delta last summer. This was a big boon for Boeing, who built the cement money pits and then got a huge contract to repair them. "Operational" apparently just means that they can turn the power on since there has never been a realistic test of the system, and even the highly scripted tests often fail. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that we wouldn't know the exact time and trajectory of an enemy ICBM, or that an enemy missile would deploy decoys. Unfaltering optimism about the system is not surprising, however, when the Missile Defense Agency and its contractor cronies are getting \$9 billion a year to deploy something that does not have to work to secure its funding.

Debate over the technological infeasibility of the system detracts from the larger problem, which is that ICBMs are low on the US's list of realistic threats. Building a missile shield therefore provides a false sense of security while ignoring nuclear proliferation and more likely attack scenarios. Alaska is profiting mightily from Uncle Ted's space pork, but arms control agreements have been steadily destroyed by the deployment and expansion of missile defense.

This update coincides with the Global Network's annual Keep Space for Peace Week: International Days of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space. During October 4 - 13, there are actions all over the world opposing the arms race in space and calling for:

- the end of star wars research and development
- a stop to endless war
- conversion of the military industrial complex to fund human needs.

No Nukes North is a grassroots, Fairbanks-based 501(c)3 non-profit peace & anti-nuclear organization that promotes educated opposition to star wars ("missile defense") in Alaska and the militarization of space. Visit www.NoNukesNorth.net for more information or email coordinator Stacey Fritz at info@nonukesnorth.net.

Voices in Wartime

<http://www.voicesinwartime.org>

War--the concise version

Rachel Bentham

contention between people
this is how we begin

specific conflicts
armed hostilities

the “art of war”
- it’s certainly not a science, is it?
but doesn’t art create?

strategy and tactics
been in the wars?

war baby
war bride
war crime that which violates
international laws of war...
as if laws are effective
in wartime.

war cry
war of attrition
war of nerves
war grave

war weary, just hearing the words.

War Weary

Rich Moniak

In the documentary film *Voices in Wartime*, visual images accompany the words of British poet and novelist Rachel Bentham. In the pause between each scene, her lines rest in near stillness as if we don’t want to go on. We know what’s next, and indeed, are weary of the war’s resistance to all forms of compassionate thought.

Lately we’ve become justifiably weary of the ineptitude of our nation’s politicians. Their cheaply costumed rhetoric easily infuriates the anti-war warrior. We’re weary of the news media, its opinions and attention deficit regarding the civilian suffering in Iraq,

while the silent masses tune out via the new season of sitcoms and the NFL. Patience is a different war of nerves as the work continues to put this war into its grave.

Voices in Wartime is not a rallying cry for attention. It’s not going to burst out of the shadows to illuminate a path out of Iraq. The world tomorrow morning won’t look any different to those who passionately seek an end to the madness.

Still, *Voices in Wartime* is much more than a documentary film. It is our voice in reflection, reaching inward to possible meaning that is too easily lost in the urgency of the cause. Laying down our anger and frustration, we enter as listeners to the gentler breathing of poetry and storytelling. The truth of human sadness is a powerful respite.

History suggests that’s all we’ll get, a break between conflicts. Weapons proliferation won’t cease. Leaders of nations will always have an eye on their neighbor’s resources. The collisions of opposing belief systems never cease to spill blood. The history of war continues to be taught as a trivial pursuit of heroic names and strategic battles for the sake of political lifelines.

For a moment imagine the war’s end as a lingering respite rather than the illusion of lasting peace. Within the peace itself there is still much to do, and education of tomorrow’s citizens must play a major role in our work. The *Voices in Wartime Education Project* seeks to move the high school and college classroom experience toward an engaging discussion about war through the personal stories told by the witnesses to war. In poetry, essays and narratives that expose the human tragedy, students are asked to ponder the deeper meaning of war’s horrific emotional trauma. These quietly direct the imagination toward humanity’s greatest question: What must we do to end the use of warfare as a tool to settle conflicts between peoples of the world?

The *Voices in Wartime* curriculum has been successfully implemented at two community colleges in

Washington State. At Aviation High School in Seattle, *Voices in Wartime* partnered with Laotian Legacies of War to produce *Torn by War ... Healing Through Hope*, an innovative home gallery of historical archives that thoroughly engaged more than 100 sophomores.

There is hope for the future. If the effort to end the Iraq war is wearing you down, consider taking a break from fighting the politicians and follow war's tragic sadness through the beauty of poetry and emotional narratives at the *Voices in Wartime* website. See the film, sign up for the newsletter, or publish your story as a way to begin to heal war's traumatic impact on your life.

* * *

Changing the World Through NonViolence Training

Solveig Pedersen

As snow gently covers our community, we have time to prepare for winter and reflect on the summer. This summer was special for me. I participated in the Metta Center Nonviolence Integration Internship program in Berkeley, California, along with nine others from throughout the U.S.

The program included both practical work experience and training. Each intern was matched with a partner organization where we worked four days a week. Fridays we met for discussion and training with the other interns at the Metta Center for Nonviolence Education. My partner organization was Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service, the organization that developed the *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living* study program. Throughout the ten weeks at Pace e Bene I learned the day-to-day workings of a small non-profit organization. It was good to work with a staff that obviously cared about one another and encouraged each other not only to work for nonviolence, but to be nonviolent to themselves. I attended trainings with the authors of the *Engage* study program, and worked with people I admired and respected.

The two Metta Center staff members who guided and supported us throughout the summer were well-organized, knowledgeable, and impressive role models, as well. Each Friday morning at the Metta Center was

devoted to group dialogue about our internships. During that time we helped one another with the various difficulties we were facing at work, and shared our positive experiences. We also had guest trainers from all over the Bay Area volunteer their wisdom about subjects such as: self care, consensus decision-making, nonviolent communication, community organizing, conflict de-escalation, and anti-racism/anti-oppression work.

The combination of practical work experience, and moral support and training once a week, was a fantastic way of enabling us to learn more about ourselves, nonviolence work, and the world. The genuine caring and teamwork that was built among the interns throughout the summer was moving. As part of the internship we also wrote research papers about nonviolence integration and presented them at a reception in August. The research papers were written on a fascinating mix of topics related to nonviolence: food justice, privilege, working in impacted communities, communication, qualities of young people who choose social justice work, leadership and empowerment, internalized oppression, and the prison system. At the end of our time, we left as ten strong individuals heading off into the world—to India, Sierra Leone, France, North Carolina, Washington DC, California, and Alaska.

I share this summer's story as an example of positive, hopeful work that continues to happen in the midst of the frustration and devastation in the world. I was touched with the humility and optimism of my fellow interns, as well as the concrete ways each one is helping to work for change. It has given me motivation to continue being involved, and reminded me the importance of sharing in community and kindness with one another. Happy winter!

The *Engage* study program is being facilitated again in Fairbanks on the UAF campus. The group will meet on Wednesdays in the Gruening Building, room 310. All are welcome!

If you're interested in copies of Solveig's research paper, *Changing the World through Nonviolence Training: A Communication Analysis*, please contact the author at way2thesun@gmail.com.

PAST EVENTS

held at APC and/or coordinated by groups associated with APC

Summer and Fall 2007

May 2007

- 05/19: APC and GI Rights Hotline booth at Clucking blossom Festival
- 05/25: Friday Movie & Feed, showing *Walking Life* a film by Richard Linklater (2002); Food: Vegan Chili

June 2007

- 06/01: Friday Movie & Feed, showing *The Pianist* by director Roman Polanski (2003); Food: Pierogis
- 06/02: Declare Peace. Walk a loop through Fairbanks in support of the Declaration of Peace and nonviolent efforts to raise awareness of the true cost of this war, organized by students from the Engage Course in Nonviolent Living
- 06/08: Friday Movie & Feed, showing *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's war on Journalism* by director Robert Greenwald (2004); Food: Fruits
- 06/13: Potluck and Letter Writing Party
- 06/15 Seth Friday Movie & Feed, showing *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* by Stanley Kubrick (1964); Food: Spaghetti
- 06/21: APC booth at the Midnight Sun Festival from 9.00 am to Midnight.

- 6/28: Friday Movie & Feed, showing *The Sorrow and the Pity* by director Marcel Ophuls (1971); Food: potluck



David Koester & Rob Mulford at the Tanana Valley State Fair, August 2007

July 2007

- 07/12: Movie & Feed night, showing *Who Killed the Electric Car* by Chris Paine (2006)

August 2007

- 08/03 to 08/11: APC booth at the Tanana Valley State Fair

September 2007

- 09/07: First Friday at the Peace Center, Exhibition of peace poster by artist Lester Doré.
- 09/20 to 09/22: APC sponsors Eyes Wide Open Exhibit at Veterans' Park Memorial

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 27, 2007

BIG RALLY TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

3.00 pm at the Bicentennial Park, on Cushman Street... Stay tune for details on the program planned for that day and hope to see there...

For more information contact Anna Godduhn at anna.godduhn@gmail.com

November 14 to 16, 2007

In Anchorage on November 14,

In Fairbanks on November 15:

Military Law Task Force Training for civilian attorney and legal workers

Nov. 16: potluck and talk by the trainers, open to all...

For more information contact Alison Carter at alisoncarter2@yahoo.com



First Friday at the Alaska Peace Center, Exhibit of Peace Poster by artist Lester Doré



ALASKA PEACE CENTER PLEDGE FORM

Name:

Address:

City/State/ZIP:

Phone:

e-mail:

May we add this email address to the APC's email list? Yes No

I am interested in volunteering to staff APC open hours Yes No

My check for \$1000 \$250 \$100 \$25 \$_____ is enclosed.
Record my donation as a monthly quarterly annual pledge of support.

The Alaska Peace Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations to APC are tax deductible.

Alaska Peace Center
507 Gaffney Road
Fairbanks, AK, 99701

The Alaska Peace Center is committed to nonviolent conflict resolution and to working for peace within ourselves, our community, and our world. APC opened in 2005. It is a non profit organization with 501 (c)(3) status. APC meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month.

Board Members and Officers:

Don Ross, David Bantz, Alison Carter, Ann Mallard, Pete Bowers, Dick Heacock, David Koester, Stan Read, Claire Alix, Heather Koponen, Marianne Eininger



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