

# Newsletter



## Alaska Peace Center

Issue 5

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### Fort Richardson Conscientious Objector Honorably Discharged from Army

#### - Conclusion to the Michael Barnes Case -

On September 22, 2008 the Honorable Judge Sedwick of the Federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the earlier recommendation of Federal Magistrate Roberts and ruled that the Army acted improperly when it denied the conscientious objector application of Ft. Richardson soldier, Michael Barnes. (See the Spring/Summer 2008 Issue at [www.alaskapeace.org](http://www.alaskapeace.org) for a full story).

The judge directed the Army to "forthwith discharge [Barnes] consonant with his service record and his status as a conscientious objector." We understand the Army would have liked to take the case all the way to the US Supreme Court, but time ran out and the Army was advised by the Department of Justice to obey the court order. Barnes was released from military service in November 2008.

We are extremely grateful to attorneys Stephen Collier of San Francisco and Sam Fortier of Anchorage for their diligence and excellent work on taking this precedent-setting case to federal court.

The accompanying good news is that these attorneys who worked so hard on the case at the request of the G.I. Rights Hotline-Alaska have applied to recoup attorney fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) (5 U.S.C. § 504;

28 U.S.C. § 2412) which provides for the award of attorney fees and other expenses to eligible individuals who are parties to litigation against the government. An eligible party may receive an award when it prevails over the government, unless the government's position was "substantially justified" or special circumstances make an award unjust.

Another huge thank you goes to GI Rights counselor Alison Carter and attorney David Miner of Seattle who laid the groundwork for the federal court action by participating in the application and rebuttal process early on.

Michael Barnes plans to work within the criminal justice system as an advocate for troubled youth.

The G.I. Rights Hotline - Alaska has several generous attorneys doing pro bono work on behalf of service members. Your tax-deductible contributions to the Alaska Peace Center help to pay for travel, research, court costs and other expenses in select cases like this one.

Thank you for your support.

## PEACE WORK ON CAPITOL HILL

*David Bantz*

The week following the election I traveled to Washington for the annual meeting of the Friends Committee on National Legislation – a Quaker educational and lobbying organization that has been a consistent witness for peace and justice on Capitol Hill for 65 years. The week also provided other opportunities for peace activities.

On Wednesday 12 November, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture led a march to the White House with a brief demonstration

toward war by declaring elements of Iran's military a "terrorist organization" and by calling for a blockade of Iran – an act of war in international law.

The primary item of business for the FCNL meeting was setting priorities for the 111th Congress. Our work as a committee is to distill the many peace and justice concerns into a concise document of legislative priorities on which staff can focus. This entails some painful trade-offs as we are mindful that a comprehensive list of concerns is really no



Demonstration Against Torture at the Whitehouse, November 12, 2008 (photo D. Bantz)

encouraging President Obama to sign an executive order on his first day in office clearly prohibiting torture and "extraordinary rendition" – outsourcing torture to other countries, and holding all US officials accountable for humane treatment of prisoners. If you haven't signed on to this effort, please visit <http://www.nrcat.org/> to personally endorse this call for an executive order to ban torture.

Thursday, I and 60 others visited members of Congress to urge support for direct talks between the U.S. and Iran. I noted to staff of Senator Murkowski that five former Secretaries of State have called for such dialogue: Albright, Baker, Christopher, Kissinger, and Powell. Despite growing consensus across the political spectrum emphasizing diplomatic over military options, Congress has edged the US

prioritization and would dilute the effectiveness of staff and lobbying. This year's document reflects a growing sense of the fundamental interconnectedness of the issues on which we work – that peace is dependent upon sustainable community, which must respect human diversity and promote justice. The final priorities, adopted by consensus of the 200 committee members, are grouped into four major themes in FCNL's vision: a world free of war and the threat of war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, an Earth restored. The final document is available at [http://www.fcnl.org/priorities/priority\\_111th.htm](http://www.fcnl.org/priorities/priority_111th.htm).

As you may imagine, most of the delegates were still in election-induced altered states. Whether

romantic believers in the promise of US ideals, realists who have worked within the political power system, or cynics who were confident the US could not elect an African-American, everyone has had to reevaluate their assumptions and their tactics. How will we work to achieve the progressive goals espoused so eloquently during his campaign? How will we work to moderate the drift toward further wars against Afghanistan, Iran, or Pakistan? Our hopes soar, but a disconcerting reality is that the devastation of 40 years of deferred work on social progress (40 years in the wilderness - from the violent hate-filled devastation of Democratic reform in Grant Park in 1968 and consequent triumph of the yahoos to the ecstasy in Grant Park victory celebration of 2008) has left a legacy of institutionalized violence and oppression. And economic collapse threatens to choke the trickle of funding that has supported groups like the Alaska Peace Center and FCNL. While FCNL celebrated new opportunities, declines in income forced it to separate nearly a quarter of the staff, with pay cuts for those remaining.

From a pragmatic approach, Executive Director Joe Volk suggested we were in the happy position of being able to consider a positive legislative agenda for Congress, rather than the position we have become used to of trying to ward off catastrophic new laws. A more sobering reflection was offered at the very conclusion of our meeting, which could be our refrain: *“Well, good, now it’s all done but the work.”*

As an Alaskan, I was of course asked repeatedly to further describe or “explain” our reality-challenged Governor and our felonious Senator. I took these requests as opportunities to describe the broader context of Alaska’s unique cultures, geography,

and politics. People seemed genuinely interested; if nothing else, the attention to Alaska has raised the level of understanding of – if not sympathy for – our state and its problems.

Walking on the National Mall after the conclusion of the FCNL meeting I encountered members of Veterans for Peace who had commandeered the construction scaffolding on the front of the National Archives. They had dropped their banners several hours before, and expected to eventually be peacefully arrested. But what a sight on the building that houses the Declaration of Independence!



Veterans for Peace protest at the National Archives, Washington DC, November 2008

\* \* \*

## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TURNS 60!



Dignity and justice for all of us

**O**n December 10, 1948, 60 years ago, the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The logo of the anniversary campaign “depicts a human shape standing with arms wide open. The yellow and red symbol represents liberation and equality. The yellow is a sign of peace and warmth. The symbol is set on a solid block which represents the foundation of human rights. The earthy red colour of the block reinforces human rights as a foundation stone and as humankind’s common heritage.”

More information at <http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/index.shtml>

## REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES

### An Evening of Songs and Music at APC

Jesse Buckwalter

*...the storm can't grind the mountain down, it can only shift the stones. There was everything your mouth says that your lips don't understand, and every shape inside your head that you can't carve with your hands...*

Danny Schmidt sang these words on the evening of September 16 at the Alaska Peace Center during an informal joint concert/discussion with him and fellow songwriter Esther Golton, and they were words that fit well with the spirit of that evening. Danny and Esther played guitar and dulcimer, sang songs, we listened, and we all discussed the music and topics ranging from politics to intentional communities. The evening was a welcome opportunity to explore the musical, the intangible, the spiritual; to be with other souls involved in work for Peace and Justice and to nourish that work together. That's the thing about Danny's and Esther's music: It comes from two lives at work in the real world. It is music not preoccupied with stardom, but music entwined with vocation. It is not contrived music grasping at trends, but carefully crafted music that communicates and celebrates life. Some of it, such as Schmidt's Circus of Clowns, is openly (though metaphorically) political in likening the Bush administration to a circus of

clowns, and some enunciates a clear message as in Golton's All the Room I Need: "I have all the room I need. My bed is wide enough for three...I have all the light I need. It's dark outside but I can read. One small flame will let me gaze upon your face. That always was enough for this old human race. I have all the light I need." There are these telling glimpses of the artists' allegiances, beliefs, projects, etc. but never any in-your-face, objective 'let me tell you how it is' moments that would separate the listener from the singer.

I had heard Danny Schmidt several times before and had tried to connect with him whenever he came to Alaska from his home in Austin, TX, which he did frequently to tour and to work with Esther on her internet radio station *Whole Wheat Radio* in Talkeetna. His name came immediately to my mind during an event-planning session at the Peace Center, and he just happened to be touring the state at the time, even coming to Fairbanks to play at the College Coffeehouse with Esther. Neither of them hesitated to take the Peace Center gig, and it continued to happen organically from there.

The turnout was not as broad as we had hoped for—Most of the Peace Center regulars turned up, with only one fellow from the broader community—but it did help to spread the word of two exceptional singer-songwriters and to get folks excited for a very well-attended concert at the College Coffeehouse the following day. I am confident that their music will continue to spread organically (and through their websites: [dannyschmidt.com](http://dannyschmidt.com) and [esthergolton.com](http://esthergolton.com)) and that it will, in the same way, continue to be a part of constantly growing communities of peace, justice and love.



*Ester Golton and Danny Schmidt at the Peace Center, September 16, 2008*

# Representing Soldiers Who Can No Longer Serve

Paul B. Eaglin

Seven Fairbanks attorneys and five G.I. Rights Hotline counselors came together on Saturday, October 4, 2008 at the Alaska Peace Center for a valuable continuing education session, "Representing Soldiers Who Can No Longer Serve." A panel of attorney instructors was provided by the Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild.



*Fairbanks attorneys Robert John (left) and Paul Ewers (right) attending military law training.*

As continuing legal education in an area of law that is unfamiliar to me and probably to most attorneys, I found the training helpful and enlightening. While my law practice has included service to veterans, that service has related to matters involving the Veterans Administration, its benefits programs, and appeals by veterans through administrative processes of the VA, or to the D.C.-based U. S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. So this session offered training that one does not usually encounter.

Major topic areas covered in the day-long program included Ethics, administrative options for termination of military service, and working with military lawyers (such as Judge Advocate General Corps Defense Counsel) in those instances in which a soldier becomes subjected to court martial. Professional ethics is paramount always, and it was the lead-off topic at the training. The session provided an interesting, lively discussion-format of varied ethics scenarios that were realistic in conception as well as routine in likelihood of occurrence. The diversity of situations

was excellent. The constructs ranged from ethical considerations in the initial encounters of attorneys with soldiers, to the course of representation in either a court-martial setting or an administrative proceeding to terminate service.

James Branum, a national authority and G.I. rights attorney, was the featured presenter on some of the central topics relating to court martial proceedings, administrative proceedings, as well as relations between civilian counsel and a JAG Corps Defense Service lawyer (who serves a soldier). Branum offered a comprehensive survey of judicial as well as administrative proceedings by which the military reacts to a soldier whose conscience has led to a decision to terminate military service. Branum's presentation also informed us of the resources available through the national organizations, Military Law Task Force and GI Rights Hotline.

The participants at our training were diverse. Their backgrounds with the military varied widely. Some were civilians who had never been in the military. Some were like me and had served, but did so many years ago. Significantly, we were fortunate to have a participant with recent, active-duty service in the JAG Corps as both Trial Counsel (prosecution) as well as Defense Service (trial defense service for soldiers) who offered insightful, up to date, remarks about the military's response to soldiers who find themselves involved in formal proceedings as a result of their decision to act on their conscience.

The training was useful in terms of preparation for service to soldiers of conscience. It was helpful as a means of preparing to provide useful pro bono service through the Alaska Peace Center's GI Rights Hotline to client soldiers. And it was important as well simply to apprise oneself of an important aspect of interaction between an individual who chooses to stand on conscience against the military and the government to which that soldier objects on principle.

Paul B. Eaglin can be reached in Fairbanks at: (907) 374-4744 or by email: [eaglin@alaska.com](mailto:eaglin@alaska.com)

# CALL FOR ACTION

## Homeless Teens of Fairbanks

Suzy Fenner

I wasn't able to attend the Candlelight Vigil over 2 weeks ago for the homeless teens in Fairbanks, coordinated by Sarah Finnell, the Outreach Coordinator of Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption (FCA). I did, however, want to do something. I sent out an email to the Quakers and to the Alaska Peace Center urging them to take action and support Sarah's efforts. I have a sense of outrage for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. We live in the wealthiest nation on the planet, and I am embarrassed that 500 or more adolescents in Fairbanks are homeless, hungry and desperate for so much, yet trust adults so little.

At the weekly luncheon at Gulliver's Bookstore this past Monday, I spoke of their need, and asked quietly, just once, if anyone was interested in donating some money to purchase a few food items, socks and underwear. I was humbled and astonished at the generosity of my acquaintances and friends when I later unfolded the bills and found that the amount totaled \$68.00. I had provided the briefest of explanations to my lunch companions, who were stunned at the high number of homeless youth I quoted. Since then, I've acquired a total of \$190.00, and Sarah stated that the greatest need was not actually clothing and food, but a space for homeless youth.

Community awareness and education is so essential for success – in helping our youth, elders, families, be it for any cause. People are surprisingly ignorant and would help if they could, if they only knew... It is in our community's best interest to support, care for and assist these teenagers in working for a healthier, happier and safer future. The goal of Sarah Finnell of FCA is to provide the homeless teens with a shelter, a safe place where they could sleep, eat, and work towards attaining their GED's. If young people are our future and our legacy, it is an economic advantage to educate and guide them for future employment and business leadership. It is our

social obligation and moral responsibility not to close our minds and hearts to their need but to respond with compassion and reach out to them. These young people, our homeless sons and daughters, deserve a life of dignity and respect. By law, they have committed a crime just for not being with an adult or guardian. By right, they seek freedom from an unhealthy home life, sometimes abusive, often unhappy and unstable. Current programs exist, such as the Rescue Mission and the Center for Non-violent Living which are excellent resources; there is also the Presbyterian Hospitality House (456-6445, Drenda Tigner, Executive Director), and the emergency shelter house (456-6421, Leona Daniels is the house mom).

This population of homeless teens has unique developmental needs and emotional scars, in addition to mistrust of adults, programs and the social service system. Something just for them is needed; a refuge, a safe haven for opportunities and resources to be presented in a way that will resonate with their culture and maturity level. Sarah Finnell (FCA) has earned their trust. Support for her efforts needs to happen, and immediately. 500 teens are in crisis. This is headline news. They should be in our prayers, in our water-cooler conversations and in our thoughts as we put away leftovers from dinner, and prepare for sleep in our warm beds.

The Alaska Peace Center has expressed an interest in supporting Sarah Finnell's efforts, and some members, with myself, would like to meet with the Homeless Youth Summit, the group Sarah Finnell was working with last year. I will be in contact with them to arrange a meeting in January.

Sarah stated in an email to me that they are going to start renting some space next door to Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption, off Barnette Street in the old domestic violence shelter, for at least 6 months until they can solidify funding -- a place where we might help. She described this space as a "drop-in center

with a kitchen, showers, a group room, 2 offices, and eventually laundry." Potentially, with enough funds, it would become a shelter. These are the long term plans in the works, just at the beginning stages.

If anyone is interested in participating in this effort of developing a partnership with FCA and re-

lationships with homeless teens, please contact me, Suzy Fenner, at 479-5395 or by email at [polarsolar@gmail.com](mailto:polarsolar@gmail.com).

Thank you

## HOLIDAY SEASON

### Another option for Holiday Gift-giving...

Suzy Fenner

You can help give the gift of self-sufficiency through Heifer International. Here's how it works: When you make a contribution of a minimum of \$10.00, you are buying a share of a gift, a live animal -- say one of a trio of rabbits, or part of a goat, cow or some other animal or a set of honeybees or chicks, which would be given to a needy family, with a trainer sent to some part of the world -- Romania, Thailand, Arizona, or wherever. The appropriate animal is matched to the climate and conditions, and the family learns about animal care and breeding and how to market the products, say wool, milk, meat or eggs. Sharing the animal's offspring with one's community is part of the mission. The food produced is nutrition for the children, the produce sold is income -- a way out of poverty. For more information, look at [www.heifer.org/catalog](http://www.heifer.org/catalog) or call (800) 698-2511.

There is an opportunity to teach elementary school children about the problems of hunger and poverty by ordering heifer's new Global Resource Education Kit, which include lesson plans, video documentaries, stories, and ideas for activities, at [www.heifereducation.org](http://www.heifereducation.org). Please spread the word.

Heifer International helps to provide a means for people to rise out of poverty, poor health and hunger. People can live more sustainably, reduce environmental degradation and offset the carbon footprint of imported foods or supplies with local agricultural practices. Heifer's unique community development model assisted more than 150,000 families last year with gifts of animals, training and passing on

the gift. In addition, members of more than 250,000 additional families received special training in sustainable farming techniques. Heifer International is a 501 (c) (3) organization. Many faith-based communities here in Fairbanks have combined funds for a larger gift or donation, such as a Milk Menagerie or Ark.

Anything is possible -- let's work on creating a miracle this holiday season! Please don't hesitate to call me to start something locally -- Suzy Fenner 479-5395

\* \* \*

### Joyful Gift Giving

David Bantz

Two years ago my wife and I gave each other goats for Christmas. The American Friends Service Committee arranged for the goats to be given to a family in Haiti as part of our effort toward a holiday more about joyful sharing and less about frenzied commerce. You might imagine, since the goats weren't under the tree or around the house that we would miss some of the pleasure of gift-giving, but we have found ourselves thinking fondly of those goats and the family that is, we trust, finding them a help to their household economy. On the other hand, other gifts from two years ago cannot be called to memory.

If you might consider such alternatives to gift-giving, Heifer International <http://www.heifer.org/> is one group well-known for arranging your modest donation to be converted into goats, llamas, water buffalo, heifer, geese or other domestic farm or work animals for use by families to whom such gifts are a means to self-sufficiency. Larger donations (perhaps

pooled from family and friends) can fund pairs of animals up to an “ark” of 15 pairs of animals to help support a subsistence community. Oxfam, the Britain-based organization that fights hunger <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop>, has a wide array of such animal gifts and others with special concern for the environment (bicycles, solar panels, or rainwater collection devices to be donated where they are needed), education (school books, library books, or radios for people in poor communities), or community development (building materials or a loo!).

For tangible gifts you can wrap that nevertheless support peace and fair trade better than the usual discount store stocking-stuffers, you might consider food items such as fair-traded sustainably harvested olive oil from Palestine <http://www.zatoun.com/> or coffee, tea or chocolate sustainably produced and sold by worker-owned coops <http://www.equalexchange.coop/>.

Not everyone is pleased with these efforts to harness gift-giving to support poor, generally rural third-world, people. Sadhavi Sharma, in “Why these patronizing gifts get my goat,” excoriates these efforts as making minimal improvement in people’s lives, postponing needed modern development, and ultimately, perpetuating impoverished communities rather than relieving poverty and dependence. “Instead of demanding better lifestyles and more material wealth in developing countries, charities have actually accepted low horizons as an end goal.” Sharma likes better her organization’s (WORLDwrite) shipment of computers to schools in Ghana.

One person with whom I discussed this concern aptly wrote “For our particular purpose with our grandchildren I will selfishly admit that it is very simple. Our only purpose is to instill in them some sense of giving and that many people have very little...and that our grandchildren don’t need more than they have.”

## → PAST & UP-COMING EVENTS →

### Summer and Fall 2008

#### June 2008

• 06/06: First Friday at APC. Landscape from Alaska, Australia and California. Exhibit of Paintings and drawings by local artist and APC board member Ann Mallard. Exhibit shown through June during Open Hours, Tuesday & Thursday 4-8 pm.

#### August 2008

• 08/01 to 08/09: Tanana Valley State Fair This year again, APC had booth at the Fair



Right to left:  
Anne Mallard,  
Stan Read &  
Claire Alix in  
front of the  
Alaska Peace  
Center Booth  
at the Tanana  
Valley State  
Fair...

#### September 2008

• 09/16: Open house and Potluck, Concert with Singers and song writers Danny Schmidt and Esther Golton

#### October 2008

• 10/03: in Anchorage and 10/04 in Fairbanks, G.I. Rights Attorney Training

• 10/10 Potluck, film, & Discussion with the Filmmaker Danielle Bernstein director of When Clouds Clear

#### December 2008

• 12/04: Talk on and book signing of “Not One Drop” by author Riki Ott. An co-sponsored event between the APC and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

### Winter and Spring 2009

In the works: Journalist **Dahr Jamail** and Peace activist **Anne Wright** are scheduled to be Fairbanks sometimes in May 2009. Both have been in Fairbanks before but they will be coming back with more stories and news of

the Peace movement and the Veterans and active duty soldiers resistance movement. For more information visit Dahr's website at <http://dahrjamilraq.com/>  
If you want to help with planning these events

or have ideas you would like to share, please come to our meetings: 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month, 5.30pm, at the Alaska Peace Center, 507 Gaffney...

## → OTHER PEACE & JUSTICE NEWS →

### The Right Livelihood Award

For outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people...  
(More complete information at <http://www.rightlivelihood.org/>)

The Right Livelihood Award was established in 1980 to honour and support those "offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today". It is often referred to as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize'. This year's four laureates (see below and photo) received their prize in Stockholm, on December 8, 2008, in the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament.

#### Krishnammal and her husband

*Sankaralingam Jagannathan*, and their organisation LAFTI (Land for the Tillers' Freedom) (India) are awarded "for two long lifetimes of work dedicated to realizing in practice the Gandhian vision of social justice and sus-



From left to right: Asha Hagi, Amy Goodman, Krishnammal Jagannathan and Monika Hauser

tainable human development, for which they have been referred to as 'India's soul'."

*Amy Goodman* (USA), founder and award-winning host of Democracy Now!, a daily grassroots, global tv/radio news hour, is honored "for developing an innovative model of truly independent political journalism that brings to millions of people the alternative voices that are often excluded by the mainstream media."

*Asha Hagi* (Somalia) is honoured "for continuing to lead at great personal risk the female participation in the peace and reconciliation process in her war-ravaged country."

*Monika Hauser* (Germany), gynaecologist and founder of medica mondiale, receives an Award "for her tireless commitment to working with women who have experienced the most horrific sexualized violence in some of the most dangerous countries in the world, and campaigning for them to receive social recognition and compensation."

#### ALASKA PEACE CENTER PLEDGE FORM

Name: .....

Address: .....

City/St ate/ZI P: .....

Phone: .....

e-mail: .....

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

I am interested in volunteering two hours a month 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.



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 Tuesdays of each month (7 pm).

**Board Members and Officers:**

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



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