

Newsletter



Alaska Peace Center

Issue 16

*Respectfully acknowledging that we are on
the unceded ancestral land of the first peoples of Alaska*

May 2022

Alaska Peace Center Activities, April 2021- May 2022

At the **8th Annual Peace Feast**, May 22, 2021, we heard presentations from:

- Alternatives to Violence / Hands of Peace
- Access Alaska
- Youth Congress/"Media Collab" and Lions Club Peace Poster Project: "the largest middle-school arts project on the topic of peace, which Lions Club has been doing 35 years."
- Green Star of Interior Alaska
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Veterans for Peace
- KWRK-LP 90.9FM

APC regretfully discontinued "Alaska Peace Center News and Opportunities for Action" May 2021, both email and radio, due to pressing family concerns.

APC joined the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, July 22, 2021

Tanana Valley State Fair, July 30-August 8, 2021

Renewable Energy Fair, Chena Hot Springs Resort, 15 August 2021, tabling

Armistice Day, November 11, 2021, with Fairbanks Peace Choir and Veterans For Peace, coverage by Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

"Peace Presence to End War in Ukraine", Geist Road and University Avenue, beginning February 26, 2022. Public presence for Peace.

Earth Day, April 23, 2022, tabling

Golden Heart Rotary, April 26, 2022, invitation to speak about APC

Arbor Day, May 16, 2022, dedicating a tree-planting to the people of Ukraine

Potlucks, presentations and discussions:

The Alaska Peace Center has resumed presentations and discussions again, mostly showing movies via Zoom.

Dec 10, '21 "The Beginning of the End of Nuclear Weapons" a film about the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, ICAN.

Feb 25, '22 "Militarism and Climate" a discussion with members of Veterans for Peace.

Mar 25, '22 "Ukraine on Fire" A documentary by Oliver Stone on the 2014 Maidan coup.... Note: this screening follows a previous presentation, with University Community Presbyterian Church, May 31, 2019, of "Winter on Fire:

"Ukraine's Fight for Freedom," a film from a different point of view. The Presbyterian Church USA had officially sponsored travel to Ukraine, April 22-May 6, 2019, to participate in a Peacemaking Travel Study Seminar in Ukraine and Russia.

Apr 29, '22 "The Nuns, the Priests, and the Bombs" a documentary film. Nuclear disarmament activists challenge the security and legality of America's nuclear weapons when they break into top- secret facilities, including the storage facility for radioactive elements at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

We gratefully continue to be informed and transformed by a March 29, 2019 potluck, presentation and discussion of the film, "The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code", presented with University Community Presbyterian Church, Native Movement, and Chena Ridge Friends Meeting (Quakers).

There is much work to do, to undo the toxic legacy of this and other brutal cultural factors.

A Special Big Thank You to All Advocates of Peace, Justice, and Sustainability!
Your generous support in this greatly disrupted time of the COVID-19 pandemic has permitted the Alaska Peace Center to carry out all the efforts listed on page 1 and described throughout.

We are working to revive Alaska Peace Center activities in coordination with ongoing public health concerns.

Meet The Board!

I'm Alan, APC treasurer and acting president. I'm a Viet Nam veteran. I was against the war at the outset, thrashed around trying to decide what to do about it for a while, but in the end allowed myself to get drafted. I had a pretty easy time of it: no one shot at me and I was never asked to shoot at anyone. I came home in 1969, shrugged it all off, and began chasing the Great Alaska Dream shortly thereafter. Meanwhile, many Viet Vets, religious leaders, college students, draft resistors and others worked long and hard, at great personal expense, to finally get our government to pull out of the war and to stop its share of all the death and destruction. In 2002 during the lead-up to the Iraq War I decided that it was my turn to try to work toward peace and stop wars.

I'm AJ, APC Vice President. I am 20 years old and I want peace because we should be able to travel without fear. We should be able to keep our doors unlocked any time. I really believe peace can be a thing if we would just love and respect each other. It may take some time and patience but if the community can come together then we can live a life of peace.

I'm Carrie, APC secretary. My desire to be a part of the APC comes from me being a Quaker. Quakers have been historically opposed to war. By working for peace in little and big ways, we can all spread peace and compassion. So, I am doing my small part in living (as best I can) into peace, justice, and sustainability in my own life and in the community as an APC Board Member.

I'm Maia. I began attending Quaker Meeting around 1970, on UAF campus, in the Eielson Building. I stepped up to activism and requested Quaker membership in 1991 because of the US response to the Iraq invasion of Kuwait. I was appalled by the environmental damage from the bombed oil wells, and by US arrogance and betrayal. The Quaker peace testimony helps guide my actions. Advocating for Peace, or trying to understand what is Peace, is difficult. But it is a worthwhile, challenging meditation and effort every day of the week. I believe we need to love the Earth so much that we do not damage it. Humans need to find their "way back to the Garden."

I'm Violet. I'm a single mom of 4 children (3 are with me here in Alaska). I am originally from Louisiana, but moved to Fairbanks almost 6 years ago. I joined the Peace Center about a year ago. Peace is important to me because of my life experience of my soldier husband. I got to see first-hand the destruction of our lives caused by war. After returning from his deployment, he was diagnosed with a host of mental disorders and started self-medicating culminating in a very hefty prison sentence. My children lost their father. I think that it is important to try to stop all this violent behavior so the next generation can do better and live healthier.

I'm Karl. I'm a veteran of the Vietnam War, who saw those who served to defend their country ill used for the benefit of a few "American Interests". I've been a peace activist for 50 years.

The Alaska Peace Center provides informational messaging and promotion for groups that support peace, justice and/or sustainability, such as: Alaska Center, Alaskans for Wildlife, Alternatives to Violence Project, Defend the Sacred Alaska, Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition, Fox Spring, GI Rights and Counter-Recruitment, International Friendship Day, KWRK-LP radio, NAACP, Native Movement, Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Our Children's Trust, Veterans For Peace, Who Decides Inc.

Financial Support Opportunity

If you already shop at Fred Meyer, please consider their Community Rewards Program. 1% of your purchase cost can be donated to the Alaska Peace Center without increasing your cost or reducing your rewards. To participate, go to fredmeyer.com, log on to your account, click on "Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program", search for "Alaska Peace Center" or enter our code YD172.



Bean Poll at Renewable Energy Fair



Arbor Day with Fairbanks Peace Choir



Earth Day at Alaskaland



Peace Presence

War does not determine who is right, only who is left.

The Alaska Peace Center is committed to nonviolent conflict resolution and to working for peace within ourselves, our communities and our world. APC opened in 2005. It is a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status.

Board members and officers:

Alan Batten, Carrie Farr, Ajaya Toney
Violet Toney, Karl Franke, Maia Genaux



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Fairbanks Open Radio
KWRK-LP 90.9 FM kwrk.org
By Anna Godduhn

Fairbanks' own all volunteer, corporate-free radio station, KWRK-LP 90.9 FM, continues to provide Fairbanks and online listeners with an eclectic blend of politics and culture, with mostly national and some local programming. Talk radio from a spectrum of progressive perspectives, interspersed with great music, is grounding in these stressful times. There has been some turnover among programmers, and new producers are always welcome, if you or someone you know has a radio show! Equipment upgrades will help keep us on the air and donations are greatly appreciated! Please tune in June 25th for the Fairbanks Folk Fest, LIVE noon-10pm KWRK-LP 90.9FM and thank you for listening!

Ringing Bells for Armistice Day!
by Alan Batten

Bell-ringing has been a traditional way of celebrating Armistice Day ever since the end of World War One (known at the time as "The Great War") 103 years ago. It signifies the relief and joy felt around the world when the Armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Bells were rung to celebrate peace and the end of four years of war that killed or wounded more than 21 million people. In the wake of so much carnage, it was then clear to millions of people that wars were not about valor or romantic ideals, but about empire, which benefits a few at the expense of many. A tradition of observing the anniversary of the Armistice by ringing bells to honor veterans and promote peace spread throughout the world.

Armistice Day became a legal holiday nationwide by an act of Congress in 1938, dedicated to the cause of world peace. In 1954 President Eisenhower changed Armistice Day to Veterans Day by presidential proclamation, admonishing us to "reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain." However, in contrast to Eisenhower's intention, rebranding Armistice Day as Veterans Day has led to a change from celebrating peace to celebrating the military and glorifying war. Armistice Day has been flipped from a day for peace into a day for displays of militarism.

The Alaska Peace Center, along with Veterans For Peace nationally and locally, celebrates the original intent of November 11th – as a day to rededicate ourselves to work toward finding peaceful solutions to the world's problems. Peace, not war, is the best way to honor the sacrifices of veterans. We want generations after us to never know the destruction war has wrought on people and the earth.



Armistice Day 2020



Alternatives To Violence Project By Carrie Farr

Since the pandemic began, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) has been largely silent. We volunteered mostly in a few state prisons, and we had to stop due to risk of COVID outbreaks in the prisons. So instead, we put out a newsletter, organized by Sharon Baring in Fairbanks, for AVP inmates in Wildwood Prison in Kenai, where we did most of our workshops. Sharon did a fantastic job! We were also able to offer an AVP

Basic workshop via Zoom. Although the adapting of the workshop for Zoom took a great deal of time and it had a different feel than an in-person workshop, it was quite well received. We are hoping to get back into the prisons soon and expand our number of facilitators so that we can offer workshops in more prisons in Alaska. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Carrie – chugny@yahoo.com



Fairbanks Peace Choir performs at Arbor Day 2022 By Suzanne Rich Osborn and Maia Genaux

The Fairbanks Peace Choir sang at an Arbor Day tree planting, May 16, in Griffin Park near the Chena River, downstream from the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center. This was the Peace Choir's first performance in two and a half years due to the COVID-19 virus. What a pleasure to get back with friends to sing! Thanks to Flyn Ludington who directed us as usual.

The Fairbanks Arbor Day Committee sponsored this occasion, highlighting the need to negotiate to end the war in Ukraine, and dedicating the planting ceremony to the people of Ukraine. The weather was perfect, and additional participants came from Alaska Peace Center, Cyberschool Homeschool, and Fairbanks North Star Borough, with media coverage by Fairbanks Daily News-Miner and Channel 13 KXDF-TV.

FNSB mayor Bryce Ward issued a proclamation for the day, on behalf of all the regional mayors. Ritchie Musick, of the Arbor Day Committee, spoke about the history of Arbor Day and the current celebration, which coincided with the 150th anniversary of the first Arbor Day. Everyone sang and clapped, as the Peace Choir sang three songs which all included trees and world peace!

Maia Genaux, of the Alaska Peace Center, delivered a brief dedication speech, and then the children helped the Arbor Day Committee plant the beautiful 8' white spruce tree.

The children and many adults wrote notes to Ukrainian refugee children on decorations which they hung with blue and yellow streamers on the tree. The messages were later collected to be sent to Ukrainian refugee children in Ireland. It was a fun ceremony, and a real pleasure for the Peace Choir to participate in world peace songs that included trees!

Discussions are being held about reconvening the Fairbanks Peace Choir in September. Help is needed to organize the choir. Any volunteers?

Summary of the 2021 BEAN POLL RESULTS for 2022 taxes By Maia Genaux

The Bean Poll was an opportunity, created by Heather Koponen, to designate how you would like your federal income tax dollars distributed, instead of as prescribed by the federal budget.

The question was: If you have 20 beans, representing the federal income tax you pay, how would you choose to distribute them among the 6 categories we offered, listed below.

We conducted this Bean Poll at the Tanana Valley State Fair, July 30-August 8, and also at the Renewable Energy Fair, August 15.

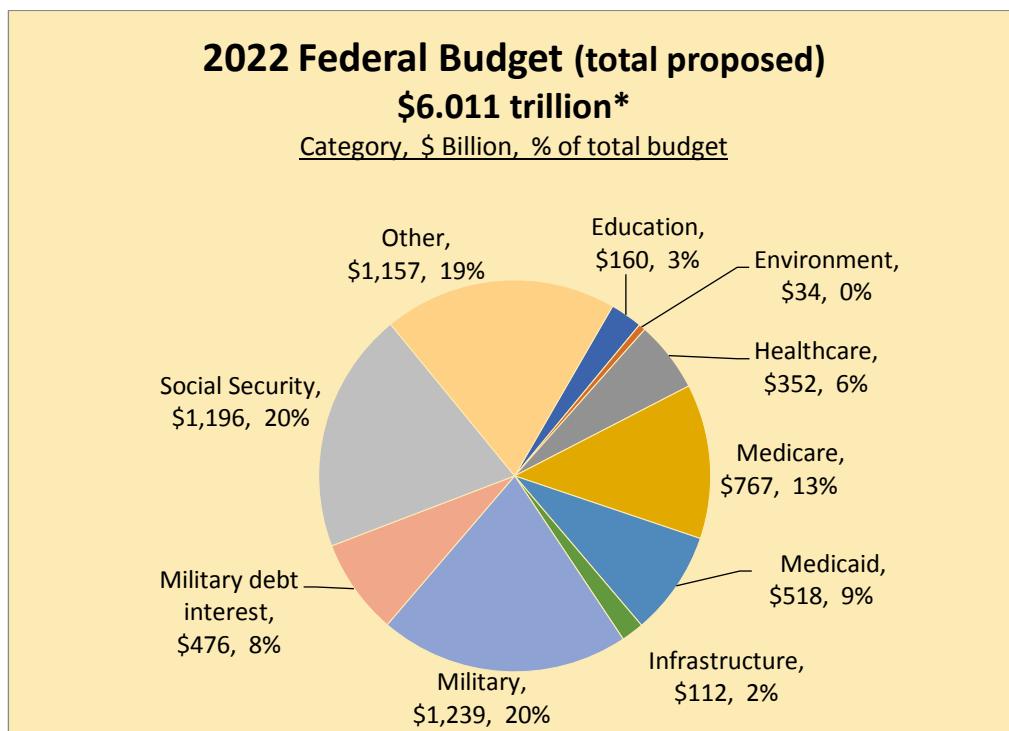
This is not a scientific poll! It was done out of informal curiosity and a desire to engage the public a bit. Nonetheless, the results are interesting, and I made an effort (moderately defensible) to understand the results, in the context of the actual proposed 2022 federal budget. A perilous task!

The cumulative results for 5,260 beans were:

- 1) Environment 23%
- 2) Healthcare 21%
- 3) Education 20%
- 4) Infrastructure 17%
- 5) Other 10%
- 6) Military 9%

A summary of the total proposed 2022 federal spending, by our categories could look like:

- 1) Other 39% (w/ Social Security)
- 2) Military 28% (w/ interest on debt)
- 3) Healthcare 28% (w/ Medicare and Medicaid)
- 4) Education 3%
- 5) Infrastructure 2%
- 6) Environment 0-1%



***Note:** The \$6 trillion budget shown here is what was proposed by President Biden in 2021. It includes a number of budget items to be funded for up to ten years, such as infrastructure.
Also: Income tax is about 1/2 of total revenue, and total revenue does not cover the total spending.

To see the complete report and sources, search “Bean Poll” at AlaskaPeace.org (August 29, 2021)

The War in Ukraine

By Alan Batten and Maia Genaux

"Every war eventually ends with diplomacy. The question is how long the killing goes on before the diplomats stop it." I don't know if this statement originated with Phyllis Bennis, who used it to cap off her op-ed about the Ukraine War (published in Populist Progressive 1 April 2022), but it encapsulates the approach to take to end this destructive and heart-breaking unnecessary war.

The Peace Center has been demonstrating every Saturday for an end to the war in Ukraine. The current Russian invasion of Ukraine is devastating and very complex. Depending on whether one prioritizes the Russian invasion or the preceding years of NATO provocation, one comes to different conclusions about an appropriate US/NATO role, about various culpabilities, etc. The issue has effectively divided the Peace Community. The Alaska Peace Center does not condone armed conflict. The challenges of how to protect life and well-being are enormous given that stance. We strongly advocate for negotiation instead of weaponry. And we recognize that this stance does not meet the approval of every individual affected by this terrible situation. We also acknowledge the overt racist aspect of the US population being strongly focused on the plight of the Ukrainians, while sitting back during ongoing devastation of Palestinian, Syrian, and so many African peoples, and others worldwide. Well-being anywhere depends on well-being everywhere.

Although Putin bears responsibility for initiating the war and all the horrors that ensue, we should not underestimate the role the United States has played in antagonizing and exacerbating tensions in eastern Europe: expanding NATO right up to Russia's borders, placing missiles in Romania and Poland just minutes away from Russian cities, orchestrating regime change within Ukraine itself in 2014, and dropping out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 - two vital nuclear treaties that had kept Europe stable for decades. Russia's claim that it has been facing a growing existential crisis over decades is not without legitimate arguments.

We should not underestimate the very grave danger we are all in from the potential for this war to escalate into a nuclear conflagration. This seems to be a danger that western leaders including President Biden are ignoring or downplaying. A number of times in the past one nuclear-armed power or another has had their warning systems mistakenly indicate an enemy attack. Fortunately, cool heads have prevailed (so far) and nuclear weapons have not been launched. But in a time of extreme tension, like what we have now, the commanders in charge of those weapons will have a greater incentive to launch first and check out the warning system software later, with disastrous results. With the development of "tactical" nuclear weapons there is also the possibility of incremental escalation climbing up the nuclear ladder. That is yet another reason among many compelling reasons why this war needs to end now.

Russia needs to cease military operations and pull its troops out of Ukraine. The United States, Western Europe, and Kyiv need to be prepared to listen honestly to Russia's security concerns and to make concessions. We should call on President Biden to begin good faith negotiations with all concerned parties, respecting each party's security concerns.

Peace, please.

An Arctic Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone

By Alan Batten

The events in Ukraine are a stark reminder that we are all living continuously under the threat of a nuclear holocaust that would certainly destroy civilization along with most life on the planet. It brings into focus how timely and important the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is and the critical importance of the work that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW) is doing to get all the nations of the world to sign on.

One step along the way is the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ). There are already five such zones throughout the world plus the International Antarctic Treaty. These are established by multi-national treaties and ban the development, manufacturing, control, possession, testing, stationing or transporting of nuclear weapons in a given area.

The end goal, as so aptly put by Nobel Prize winning Mexican diplomat Alfonso Garcia Robles, is to gradually increase the areas "from which nuclear weapons are prohibited to a point where the territories of the powers which possess these terrible weapons of mass destruction will be something like contaminated islets subject to quarantine". By isolating nuclear weapon states, NWFZs send the powerful message that there is a consensus against the presence of nuclear weapons and that this should be the norm of the entire world.

Supporters of an Arctic NWFZ include Canadian Pugwash, the InterAction Council (an independent international organization), the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Veterans For Peace (in the form of a resolution introduced by the Juneau Chapter), and President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. **Support for the Alaskan part of an Arctic NWFZ is already codified in Alaska law.** Alaska Statute Sec. 44.99.120. declares, in part, that it is the policy of the State of Alaska "to promote a mutual and verifiable freeze followed by reductions in nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems in order to halt the nuclear arms race and to reduce the risk of nuclear war."

The Juneau VFP group, with a coalition of supporters that includes the Alaska Peace Center, is continuing to work with a consultant to put short videos out on social media aimed to make Alaskan youth aware of the extreme and continuing danger of nuclear weapons and to engage them in the movement to create an Arctic NWFZ.

For further reading:

1) VFP Chapter 100 (Juneau) Arctic NWFZ website:

<https://www.akhopecongress.org/nwfz-arctic> (a lot of materials here)

2) Thomas S. Axworthy, "A Proposal for an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone."

<https://www.interactioncouncil.org/publications/proposal-arctic-nuclear-weapon-free-zone>
(this highly detailed proposal is clearly worth reading)

3) Canadian Pugwash Group: <https://arcticnwfz.ca/>

4) VFP Arctic NWFZ Resolution:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fMcQYceB_wfytZ2uq_VT0ANHJzXwnrxO/view

5) Alaska Statutes, Nuclear Freeze Policy:

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#44.99.115> (scroll down to Sections 120 and 125)



"War is a Racket" Book by Smedley Butler