

United States Nonviolent Peaceforce Chapter Association (USNPCA) Annual Gathering  
June 21-24, 2007

*This report is compiled from detailed minutes recorded by Jenelle VanEynde (Western Washington). It can barely touch on some of the highlights from our busy and informative 4 days. If you have any questions, or would like more details about our gathering, please email [cc@usnpca.org](mailto:cc@usnpca.org). Include your phone number(s) if you would like to be called. Someone from the USNPCA coordinating committee will be in touch.*

The historic village of Burlington, New Jersey, outside of Philadelphia, was the setting for the second annual meeting of the U.S. NP Chapters Association hosted by members of three Philadelphia-area chapters who did an amazing job. Almost 30 people from Massachusetts, California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Washington and Arizona gathered for four days of community building among Chapters, re-energizing USNPCA, and exploring the successes, challenges and vision for the rapidly growing Nonviolent Peaceforce.

For the Chapters, it was a time to share stories, successes, concerns and support. The energy level lifted us to exciting discussions and plans for the future. We explored how our Association could create a network of support to help us in our work. One step in that direction was a decision to focus our energies on specific committees.

We realized that to build stronger and more numerous Chapters, we first needed a strong Mentoring Committee to help us do that. Additionally, the “Youth Resources Contacts” working group created itself with the goal of inspiring younger people to become chapter members. If you’re interested in any aspect of the Mentoring Committee, please contact Tom Moore, at [c3moore@hotmail.com](mailto:c3moore@hotmail.com)

We also decided to focus on the Nonviolent Conflict Intervention training as a valuable recruitment tool. San Diego recently held a very successful Training for Trainers, and Carroll Boone’s report showed that there is great potential to expand Chapters through offering this training. If you’re interested in being a part of the Training Committee to support this program, please contact Carroll Boone, [carrollboone@yahoo.com](mailto:carrollboone@yahoo.com)

The Communications Committee continues to produce the USNPCA newsletter and website. If you’re interested in this committee, contact Paul Christian, [psc1@cox.net](mailto:psc1@cox.net)

A FUNdraising working group was formed to help us all put the FUN in inviting supporters to help NP grow financially. If you are interested in this critical project, please contact Sherry Zitter, [sherryzitter@sherryzitter.org](mailto:sherryzitter@sherryzitter.org)

Finally, a new Coordinating Committee was elected. This committee has one representative from each of the regular committees. New members are: Jenelle VanEynde (Western Washington); Carroll Boone (San Diego); Paul Christian (Tucson); Nancy Wrenn (Boston). Two former coordinating committee members will stay on for part of the next year: Faith Edman (Tucson) and Dave Berrian (Western Washington). To contact the Coordinating Committee, please email [cc@usnpca.org](mailto:cc@usnpca.org)

Even if you were not able to attend the gathering, we hope you will consider joining one of the committees. The USNPCA community needs you as we work together to strengthen NP.

During the weekend we were very fortunate to have several NP staffers and volunteers present who shared the latest news of NP's current and potential projects.

Mel Duncan, Executive Director, told us how word of NP's work has spread, and that much less persuasion is needed in his discussions about the value of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. This year the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) granted NP consultative status. This will allow NP to offer input to the General Assembly.

We also learned that a new U.S. Communications Director has been hired and will start in August. Her name is Karen Louise Brooks, and she has an extensive background in communications for nonprofits.

David Grant, Strategic Relations Director, explained the complexity of creating and maintaining relationships with large organizations such as the UN, the African Union, and other multilateral organizations. He spoke in depth about the challenges of NP's developing projects, giving us insight to issues we had never before considered.

Joan Bernstein, North America Region Coordinator, spoke about NP Member Organizations, and the importance of MOs working together. She encouraged USNPCA to reach out to members of other North American MOs, developing ideas and plans to assist NP reach its goals identified in the new Strategic Plan. She also discussed a new project being developed to help us educate our elected officials in Washington about NP. This is an exciting new venture, and if you are interested in being a part of it, please contact Joan at [db3@usa.net](mailto:db3@usa.net)

Donna Howard, International Governance Council co-chair, gave us an intensive overview of the structure and function of the IGC. The IGC sets broad policies and provides oversight to NP, and is made up of five committees: Executive, Program, Strategy & Planning; Capacity Building, and Management. Members are elected from each region by the MOs at the International Assembly.

Faith Edman, Tucson chapter and USNPCA coordinating committee member, was invited to make herself available as a North America nominee to the IGC. Chapter attendees agreed to nominate her. Dave Berrian, Western Washington, will write the nomination letter.

Mary Lou Ott is co-chair of the International Assembly organizing committee, as well as one of our NP staff liaisons (along with Natalie Brenner.) Mary Lou asked that the Chapters fundraise to send delegates to the International Assembly in Nairobi in September. USNPCA is sending two representatives to Nairobi – Carol Miller of Bucks County, and Faith Edman, Tucson -- and it's hoped that the Chapters can fundraise for part of the cost of sending them. But more importantly, Mary Lou pointed out that an international assembly isn't one if not everyone can attend, and there are Member Organizations in the Global South who cannot afford to send even one representative. The gathering attendees agreed to support fundraising efforts for those representatives. For more info about this, please contact Sherry Zitter, [sherryzitter@sherryzitter.org](mailto:sherryzitter@sherryzitter.org)

Natalie Brenner, NP “Every Donor” coordinator, described the mass mailing that has gone out to thousands of potential new supporters. The mailing was created with the help of two international experts on direct mail fundraising, and to date the results are encouraging. Earlier, Advocate Team Member Helena Halperin told us how the ATMs raise funds for NP. She made it sound like there truly is FUN in fundraising.

On our last evening, we were privileged to participate in a conference call with Atif Hameed, the coordinator of the Mindanao project. There are currently 6 peacekeepers deployed in this new project, and Atif inspired us and encouraged us to stay in touch with him and the other Mindanao field team members.

From Atif, we learned that the Mindanao team office is located on the “fault line” which is a direct demonstration of the “safe space” concept. Other organizations are often outside of the conflict areas, but NP is right in the middle of it, where “we” need to be, where we commit to be.

As Dave Berrian summarized at the end of our Gathering, we made new friends and colleagues from across the country. We enjoyed each other, our spirited “light and livelies” and rituals, the fabulous meals, and having baby Greta (Mariana Garrettson’s 6-month old) in our circle. And together we strengthened our commitment to the practice of nonviolence, to USNPCA and to Nonviolent Peaceforce.

---Report compiled by Jenelle VanEynde, Nancy Wrenn, Paul Christian, Faith Edman