

U.S. Nonviolent Peaceforce Local Chapter Association Newsletter Summer 2006

Hello to everyone from a most soggy Tucson desert,

Yes, it has been flooding in the land of no rain, clearly demonstrating that one little drop of water, joined by more and more drops, can change what seems to be unchangeable. And so shall we.

Work-a-Day for Peace is the star of this newsletter. Please respond to Sherry's request to let her know who in your chapter is the contact for Work-a-Day. Also, Dave Berrian has cotton cloth woven in India for your events, and there are many plans to inspire us...Let's create our own flood of thousands signing the nonviolence resolution!

Forget umbrellas, jump in!

Faith Edman, newsletter coordinator

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Missive from Minneapolis

The United States Local Chapter yearly meeting was held in St. Paul MN in early June. And as I reflect back on the experience I am amazed that my memories are so vivid; when I think about our time together I can't help smiling as I remember those days. Yet I am having trouble condensing our 3 1/2 days into a few paragraphs. So bear with me as I share a few highlights.

Our first day was spent experiencing the NP Training being developed. This one day training will be available through the Local Chapters in all areas of the country when we are able to secure the necessary funds to conduct a Training of Trainers. Joan Bernstein and Sherry Zitter will have more information for us.

Friday morning we met with the Minneapolis NP staff beginning with Mel Duncan giving an overview of NP global mission, support of the field team members and the topic of non-partisanship. Other staff people talked about their individual work, including fund raising, outreach, PR, development, building new chapters, and the relationship between Local Chapters and the NP staff, primarily the Minneapolis office.

From Friday noon through Sunday noon our agenda was focused on the topics suggested by the local chapters, including our chapter formation "stories, problems of how to spread the word, finding more members, dilemmas, successes, current projects. And of course the process of becoming a Member Organization (MO) of NP. The agreement came out of much discussion & clarifying our roles and responsibilities. New committees formed from these discussions -- committees we are encouraging each of you to join. They are: Training-Fundraising -Internal Communications- Coordinating-Outreach- Speakers Bureau- Mentoring new groups, including groups asking to form in other countries. We will send a Local Chapter Issue with reports from each committee on purpose, hopes and plans and how you can become involved.

Before I end this I must tell you that interspersed in our work and discussions was so much love, fun and laughter. We parted feeling sad to leave yet knowing we are, as USNPCA, becoming a united force willing to take responsibility with each other to grow NP in the US and wherever possible world-wide. Sorry you could not be with us, we missed you all!!!

Blessings,

Mary Lou Ott, Mott@nonviolentpeaceforce.org

WORK-A-DAY FOR PEACE events - the best way to help NP right now!!

As most of you know, Sept. 11 2006 is the 100th anniversary of Gandhi's launching the Satyagraha (Truth-Force) movement. This anniversary will be in the news, and many NP chapters, as well as member organizations, have pledged to hold Work-a-Day for Peace events between 9-11-06 and 9-21-06 (the UN Int'l day of Peace). *****See newsflash below for extended date*****

We are asking each chapter to hold an event (or more than one) on OR WITHIN 10 DAYS OF 9-11-06, to raise visibility and money for NP. Please check out the excellent materials (brochure, event guide, invitation, etc. - see list below) on the NP website (workadayforpeace.org) to learn the endless possibilities for such an event. There is also a document there entitled "Requests of Groups Hosting Events." These materials truly walk you through planning and holding the event, even if you haven't done much event-planning or facilitating before. It's easy and fun - but takes some chapter leadership in the next few weeks to set a place and date, and start spreading the word.

You could hold one in someone's living room, in a church or synagogue or meetinghouse, in a park, in a town hall or library space, or a college or university.

Chapters are also encouraged to provide many other local groups with this material, who we hope will do their own "100th anniversary" events as they commemorate the 5th anniversary of 9/11/2001. The objective is NOT

necessarily to get as many people as possible to your own event, it is to spread the knowledge of NP, to get on-line signatures to the resolution, and to get other groups to do events (where they raise money both for themselves and the NP).

Please let us know ASAP (at sherry@sherryzitter.org or 978-562-1801) who in your chapter might take the lead on this, and we will give you technical and inspirational support through the process -- Sept. 11th is only a bit over a month away!

The <http://workadayforpeace.org> homepage has the following link: Work a Day for Peace 'Toolkit' - Click here for leaflet template, Gathering Guide, and other downloadable resources you can duplicate locally to help you to hold your own 100th Anniversary event.

When you (or any local organization) click this, you will see:

“Here are some of resources to help you to hold your own 100th Anniversary event.

- Work a Day for Peace Brochure
- Work a Day for Peace September 11 Gathering Guide
- A Brief History of Satyagraha - Sept 11, 1906 (PDF)
- Magazine Article about NP Work in Sri Lanka (PDF)
- Work a Day for Peace event flyer template individual or NP chapter
- Work a Day for Peace event flyer template sponsoring organization
- NP Requests of Work a Day for Peace Event Hosts (PDF)
- Press Release Template
- Sep 11 - Letter to the Editor Template (coming soon)”

Please make extensive use of these materials -- and call or email me at sherry@sherryzitter.org or 978-562-3372 if you are thinking of doing this but feel nervous or don't know how to begin. Together, we can spread the word about NP in this innovative way!

--Sherry Zitter and Mike Corrie, for the fundraising committee, sherry@sherryzitter.org

Newsflash! The 100th anniversary/Work a Day campaign has been extended through November 11th, (the anniversary of the end of World War I), to allow more range of organizing time and in response from requests from some other countries to allow their use of dates that may have more local cultural significance. Also, the “Register Your Event” and “Make a Donation” features on the workadayforpeace.org website are being repaired. Watch for an email letting us know that everything is working.

Calendar Your Event!

Please check out our new website at usnpca.org. We're still working on it, but we've got plenty of resources for you to use, and a calendar on which you can schedule your NP-related events so that everyone can see what you're doing, and maybe come too! If you would like to add an event to the calendar, but have lost your instructions and password or need help, please email Faith at usnpca@usnpca.org.

The 2006 Boston Tea Party: No 20% Back!

The Greater Boston chapter steering committee decided to ask NP NOT to send us back our usual 20% of funds raised (through Peace Bonds, tabling, etc.) until the NP budget situation gets better. We have enough members who are willing to chip in \$10 or \$20 as seed or copying money for now (even those who can't attend meetings). We urge any chapter who can do so to follow suit.

Since our Earth Day collaboration with the Peace Abbey (a celebration of the lives of two local conscientious objectors), we have focused on the following projects: -getting 2 representatives to the USNPCA meeting in MN (Nancy and Sherry)

-finalizing our program of the Wisdom of Gandhi (not QUITE finalized, but we are hoping for next week!), the packet we gave out in draft form in MN in June. Our chapter premiered this program at a study group in late June, and has made several revisions since that time, based on member feedback. The final version (for now) will be available to all chapters soon via email, to be used as part of a Work-a-Day program or at any time. We are using it as a follow-up to our 9-11 Work-a-Day event to offer folks a different event for 9-21, the UN Int'l Day of Peace. We are sending out emails and flyers encouraging local community and church groups and colleges to offer this program.

-doing outreach for our 9-11 Work-a-Day event (again, cosponsored with and at the Peace Abbey). We hoped for 2 events, one in Cambridge or Boston close to public transit, but we don't have the person-power or time this summer to do 2 events well on 9-11. Maybe next year... -a joint meeting with the Cambridge Peace Commission, one of 3 municipal peace commissions in the US (Berkeley and New Haven are the others currently, although 2 or 3 other Mass. towns are working toward one). This was a truly inspiring meeting, hearing about the work of a mature institution (est. 1982), which has 15 Peace commissioners elected periodically so all citizens who vote are aware of the PC. It does wonderful local work in high schools with students, faculty and administrators about nonviolent intervention skills and restorative justice. It is involved with the Peace Messenger Cities and Mayors for Peace.

And guess what??!! -- the staff person and head of the Cambridge PC, Cathy and Betty, had just returned from the NP Training of Trainers in Thailand!! So they are big supporters of NP globally, with a deep understanding of our mission. We see several fruitful areas of future collaboration.

-We also collected money for a Peace Bond to give to our founding member and mentor, Elise Boulding, for her 86th birthday this month - we tried for a \$100 bond and ended up with enough contributions to buy her a \$250 Bond!! Elise was delighted, and so was Natalie! (or as they say in Massachusetts, "so wasn't Natalie..."). This is a great way to celebrate occasions in one's chapter and give a gift to NP simultaneously.

Future ideas include:

-possible tabling at the Amer. Public Health Ass'n conference in Nov. in Boston - a table costs \$1500 for 4 days, rather daunting, but Clarkson has a contact with their Peace Caucus which he has shared with me (thank you, Clarkson!) and we are hoping to arrange something far cheaper.

-watching for other good tabling locations/events
-asking a former Christian Peace team member and colleague of Tom Fox to give a talk as a benefit for NP
-approaching a large int'l computer company with a home base in MA but factories in Israel and Ireland for a contribution to NP; Clarence White (grantsperson) will help us with this.

That's enough (we hope not more than enough!) for now!

--Sherry Zitter, for NPGB, sherry@sherryzitter.org

"Why Peace Teams Risk Their Lives" in San Diego

On July 20, 2006, our Chapter arranged for Linda Dunn, Nonviolent Peaceforce Advocate team Member, to present photos in a power point presentation "Why Peace Teams Risk Their Lives" from her Insight Trip to Sri Lanka at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego in conjunction with their Peace and Democracy Action Group. After her talk, Chapter members introduced themselves and talked of our activities and Peace Bonds. Of the approximately 50 people there, many expressed interest in Nonviolent Peaceforce, Peace Bonds and our Chapter. The Church later sent NP a check for \$900 in donations and Peace Bond purchases. This will be matched by the special grant for faith-based groups.

Also in July, the San Diego Church of the Brethren took a collection for Nonviolent Peaceforce. We don't yet know the total amount donated.

On September 9, 2006, St. David's Episcopal Church will have an Open House from 1-6 pm to celebrate the completion of its new Mission Center. The church's

Outreach Commission has adopted Nonviolent Peaceforce as one of its ministries, and our Chapter will be selling Peace Bonds and distributing NP information during the Open House.

We hope to join forces with other San Diego area Peace groups to sponsor an event/fundraiser for Satyagraha/Work a Day for Peace some time this fall.
--Debby Park, rayandeb@gmail.com

Philadelphia Area Planting Seeds and Chapters

We met April 11 at a new location, Kennett Square. This time, however, we did not get new participants from that neighborhood even though several are on our mailing list. We heard about the Advocates Meeting near Pittsburgh from our member Anne Moore, and about development of support for NP in the Quadrangle retirement community near Haverford PA. Seeds for that had been planted last December when Erika Shatz and Rajiv Vora made a presentation there.

We decided that Mariana Garrettson would be our chapter's participant at the June Meeting in St. Paul of the NP Chapters Association.

Some of our members are also members of the Chester County Peace Movement. The latter persuaded a local breakfast-and-lunch restaurant, the Market Street Grill in West Chester, to have a benefit day when 5% of proceeds would be donated to the Nonviolent Peaceforce, and NP literature distributed. This happened April 28, and patronage was good, as I observed myself.

On June 27 we participated in a joint meeting with the new Haverford chapter. After the NP DVD, our members shared ideas on how to support NP and enjoyed the new energy that was evident among the couple of dozen participants.

On July 11 we joined a session sponsored by the Crosslands Friends Worship Group to learn about NP from the DVD and from Mariana Garrettson, reporting based on the USNP Local Chapters conference. This was well received by a group of over 30. Our chapter hopes for a more extensive report some time when Mariana can make another visit to the Philadelphia area.

We plan to meet August 22 at Friends Center, Philadelphia, in advance of possible Sept. 11 observances and to consider web page possibilities.
--Clarkson Palmer, ctpalmer@aol.com

U.S. Green Party Endorses NP – Tucson Greener

The Tucson chapter spent the spring getting to know each other, and reading “Soul Force”, a collection of Gandhi’s writings placed in historical context. We also tabled at the Tucson Peace Fair, plus worked on several NP-related projects including the USNPCA website, and the NCI training project.

The U.S. Green Party held its national convention in Tucson July 27-29. Thanks to the efforts of Jody Grage, a Seattle GP member & NP supporter, the GP-US has officially endorsed Nonviolent Peaceforce. Then, thanks to Dave Berrian’s coordination, the Tucson chapter was invited to table at the convention for the weekend. I was also given ten minutes to speak at the plenary session, and NP brochures and info were given to each of the 200 delegates. Folks seemed open and excited about NP. We were very grateful to be invited to be a part of their busy convention.

Our chapter has temporarily lost a person, as Paula Wilk, who attended the chapter gathering in MN, went to Nicaragua to learn Spanish, and is traveling slowly back home by way of Guatemala, living in collectives and meeting wonderful people. The four of us left here are planning a 9/11 event which will be open to the Tucson community. Details to follow.

--Faith Edman

nonviolent_peaceforce_tucson@yahoo.com

Bay Area Brings Home the Bacon

Members of the Bay Area attended the USNPCA conference, which proved to be a highly refreshing and motivational experience, on top of just being a whole lot of fun! Veronika Safarova, the Bay Area’s newest active chapter member, started as an intern in the youth program directed by Hindolo Pokawa. She represented the Bay Area at the USNPCA conference, and then attended the North America Regional M.O. meeting the following weekend, co-representing the USNPCA with Faith Edman from the Tucson chapter.

In May and June, Veronika organized, promoted, and hosted 4 benefit concerts as fundraisers for Nonviolent Peaceforce, which featured local rock bands from the Bay Area. They were very successful, bringing in over \$2,000 for NP and educating the public, who ranged from young teens to senior adults. She is also excited to attend the Minneapolis Youth Conference August 18-20th, 2006.

The Bay Area also hosted a public event for Eli Sasaran and Daniel Spelce, who were two of the 36 International Election Observers sent by the Nonviolent Peaceforce to the Palestinian Legislative Council Election on January 25th. It was great to have a discussion with two election

monitors about what was successful and what could have been done differently at the elections.

We are also planning to have a picnic on September 9th as part of the Work A Day for Peace campaign to educate people about Gandhi’s September 11th, 1906 and raise funds for Nonviolent Peaceforce.

--Veronika Safarova, veronika.safarova@gmail.com

Western Washington Awash in Connections

The Western Washington chapter is working on three main efforts right now:

(1) Veterans for Peace will be holding their national convention in Seattle on August 10 thru 12. We’ll have an information table at the convention during this time. Also we are fortunate to have Thomas Brinson, a Vietnam vet and one of the first team members of the Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka, attending the convention and at its conclusion (Sunday, August 13) will be giving a public presentation (organized by us) on “Becoming a Warrior for Peace * with an Introduction to the Nonviolent Peaceforce.”

(2) We are modifying the Work-a-Day-for-Peace campaign somewhat for the Greater Seattle area so that it becomes much more of a collaborative effort among the many groups that work for peace, justice, and nonviolence. We are emphasizing that during the period from 9/11 thru 9/21 we take special time to understand the choices we face during difficult times in how to respond * do we choose the path of retaliation and violence or the path of nonviolence and a determination not to give up our inherent humanity? In promoting “September 11th IS a Choice * Choosing the Path of Nonviolence” we are building a special website that will provide a calendar of all special activities and events commemorating this choice with descriptions of all the organizations sponsoring the events. Also we’ll be printing “Satyagraha Pledge of Nonviolence” cards that people can sign and that will have a detachable postcard where they can ask to be sent additional information on the practice of nonviolence [these cards will come to our chapter, but will be shared with other sponsoring organizations]. **Along with that for people willing to sign the pledge we’ll have a plain, white cotton wrist band they can wear to remind themselves of their commitment and to provide a subtle sign to others of how important the practice of nonviolence is to them.** Rajiv Vora, NP Asian Regional Coordinator, has been very helpful in locating woven cotton suitable for the bands. We’ve ordered 2,000 meters (enough for at least 6,000 bands) which is a bit more than we think we’ll use this year; if **your chapter would like some of the cotton material we could send you some at cost.**

(3) For the past two years our chapter (and advocate team) has sponsored a major fund raising dinner in early

December. We'll do that again this year, but probably on a somewhat smaller scale. We are also looking at other fund raising efforts also for that time of year. Right now we're a bit challenged to find leadership for organizing these fund raising efforts.

--David Berrian, dberrian@earthlink.net

Oregon Has "Skirmish for Buddha's Birthday"

The Oregon Chapter has been working on several projects. One member of our group who is a writer, has developed a script representative of the Buddha Statue incident in Sri Lanka. It was recently read by young people in the local Friends' Meeting and we are looking for ways to produce and publicize the play as a teaching and organizing tool for NP and to develop interest in the Third Party Intervention Nonviolence Trainings that are being prepared for our U.S. community. At this point the working title is simply "Skirmish For Buddha's Birthday".

Our group is small, typically running only 4 to 7, only ten if everyone were to be present. Therefore, our efforts are increasingly mindful of the need to increase our membership numbers and diversity to be more representative of our community in terms of culture and age range. To that end we have networked and offered workshops at a State level peace activist event in late February, have begun to get ourselves known by progressive church congregations, and other natural allies.

Our group has enthusiasm about the possibilities inherent in the developing Nonviolence Training from NP and we are giving thought to how this might function in our State as an organizing tool for NP as well as to serve the needs of our communities for alternative methods and responses to conflict.

Finally, we have been strongly affected by the sudden illness with cancer and subsequent death of one of our number, Charles Gray, long-time activist and former economics professor. We miss him and his cogent contributions. We are working to re-group and reconstitute ourselves in his absence.

--Mark Siemens, marksiemens@yahoo.com

North America Member Organizations Meet

Faith Edman (Tucson) and Veronika Safarova (Bay Area) attended the North American MO meeting in Berkeley June 15-18 as representatives of the U.S. NP Chapters Association. As soon as the minutes are finalized, you'll receive a copy. Due to newsletter space limitations, here are just a few highlights:

Joan Bernstein, NP North America regional coordinator, organized a wonderful gathering of representatives from twelve organizations, as well as 3 members of the International Governing Council, Sherry Wander, Donna Howard, and Lyn Adamson (who temporarily stepped down to head up Capacity Building). We were also fortunate to have several NP staffers with us for part of the time, including NP co-founder David Hartsough, NP Strategic Relations Director David Grant, and former Sri Lanka team manager Jan Passion & Ellen Furnari, Jan's wife and NPSL volunteer.

We learned about each others' organizations, and it was moving to me that these folks would spend so much time learning more about NP and thinking about, as Donna put it, "how we can help and enhance both our missions." One conclusion is that local NP chapters can reach out to local chapters of the member organizations, and work in partnership in fundraising and public awareness events.

I wish all of you could have time with Jan Passion and Ellen Furnari to truly understand the work that NP does.

Jan feels that Sri Lanka is an ideal project. The teams had time to feel their way on how best to do their work, at least until the rebel split in March 2004. He described their work as often "soft facilitation"...bringing people together so they can build peace at a community/grass roots level.

He stressed the importance of the team members building relationships with everyone...that 40 field team members (this was before current levels of violence) would be ideal --"you can't show up in a huge clump" because you can't build relationships that way. You need to move in slowly, learn, and not foist a message on people.

Several of us asked about the concept of nonpartisanship. He said it was more transcending...more "multi-partisan...partisan on behalf of the process, but not the outcome" --which I found very helpful. And David Grant said "we are partisan for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

On our last day, we each talked about what we would take back to our own organizations. So here it is: We are not alone. We have wonderful partners we can work with. All we have to do is reach out.

Peace and safety to all, Faith Edman