rpecNEWS

The Newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center March 1999

We Stand on the Shoulders of Giants
Women's History Month

The U.S. Congress has declared March, ***Women's History Month.***

History is rich with the names of courageous women who have made a difference in today's world; however, the struggle for true liberation is only over when prevailing wisdom tells us that women and men are fully human and fully equal. Any actions or attitudes, which deny or diminish the full humanity of women, are counter to the goal of going beyond the differences between the sexes to their common humanity. Ultimately, women and men share one history and one condition.

We smile in appreciation when we hear the stories, of Mary and Martha, Ruth, and Lydia, from the Bible. Likewise, we are grateful to women of our time like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, Gloria Steinem, Sandra Day O'Conner, Leontine Kelly, and many other women whose lives and work have impacted our own. Our Image of these women is a modern day press picture of the presentation of accolades, everyone smiling and proud. The realties of the lives of most women who have garnered a place in history are quite different however. Most have risked their lives in some way. The story of the 50-year campaign for women's suffrage reveals imprisonment of protestors, starvation, public beatings, and solitary confinement under the harshest conditions. Changing the world is tough duty!

While -statistics from almost any source show that women are still at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts remarkable change has occurred. I would suggest that Women's History Month could be observed/ celebrated by a combination of 1. Recognition of women of significant accomplishment, and 2. Attention to areas needing further work if we are to achieve true equality.

- While we celebrate the success of the suffrage movement we must find ways for more women to participate fully in government. Can we be satisfied with women holding less than 10% of elected and appointed leadership in our country?
- Women have penetrated the corporate glass ceiling. Is it enough that less than 6% of the Fortune 500 companies have females in top leadership?
- What about the "stained glass ceiling?" Surely we celebrate the contributions of women to religious thought and practice. Most denominations now ordain women. Does this assure their inclusion? A recently published study entitled ClergyWomen: An Uphill Calling documents quite the opposite. While the rules of most systems have been changed, practice still reflects strong gender bias.

There is much to celebrate! There is much yet to do

When we celebrate March as **Women's History Month** we pay homage to our forebears and receive inspiration and a strength from that fine and long tradition of women's leadership. At the same time we claim our place in the history of today and tomorrow by claiming our part of the struggle for full humanity. If you would like help in planning activities around Women 's History Month resources are available in the public libraries and from most women's organizations both secular and religious.

* See page 2 for information on the Center for Women in Christian Leadership

Women's History Month

Written by Katheryne L. Goodman, Director, Center for Women in Christian Leadership.

The Center supports all women in life, worship, and mission so that the grace of God is actualized through the full inclusion of women in all areas of professional and lay ministry. To these ends, The Center for Women in Christian Leadership helps women reach their God given potential by confronting obstacles to inclusion, providing leadership development, encouraging and providing opportunity for theological research and scholarship, educating women and men in gender and justice issues, and communicating and cooperating with other women's groups. It is located on the campus of Union/ PSCE and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and can be reached at (804) 353-1233.

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WANTED

Executive Director For Private, Non-profit Organization

The Richmond Peace Education Center (RPEC) is seeking an Executive Director to manage and coordinate its activities.

RPEC advocates and educates for peace and justice locally, nationally and internationally. RPEC provides programs in the areas of violence prevention, conflict resolution, bias awareness, dismantling racism and sexism, and promotes cultural diversity and justice in international relations.

The Executive Director works with two part-time associates, a volunteer board, and committees. The salary is $22,200 plus modest benefits. Prior work experience with non-profit organizations is preferable. Letter of interest and a completed application must be postmarked by March 15, 1999. For an application packet, call Jane Hare, RPEC,(804) 358-1958.

Want to Join the Action?

Become active and join one of the many committees that make things happen. Call the Peace Center for information 359-1958.

BE IN THE KNOW

Get important announcements and action alerts ***fast*** right at home.

Send your email address to: rpec@infi.net or call us at (804) 358-1958

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The Richmond Peace Education Center is located at 14 North Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220. Phone: (804) 358-1958. Fax: (804)358-2213. E-mail: rpec@richmond.infi.net.

SPRING CONCERT

Mark you calendars for the annual Peace Center Spring Concert on May 8th. This year we will feature Ezibu Muntu for what promises to be an exiting evening of music and dancing. The place will be announced later.

Abolition Now!! The Gift of Time

By John Gallini

The following article is the seventh in our series taken from The Nation, which devoted its entire February 2/9 issue to an extensive analysis of nuclear weapons abolition. In this segment Schell explores "The Horizontal Path" via interviews with a number of policy analysts and military experts.

During the cold war, the number of nuclear weapons in U.S. and Soviet arsenals first grew exponentially and then, after reaching their high-water mark of some 60-80,000 warheads in the mid-eighties, began to drop. The success of nuclear arms control negotiations was measured, above all, in numbers of weapons. Nuclear disarmament of this kind may be called numerical, or vertical, disarmament. Abolition, obviously, occurs when the number falls to zero. But (for some) to go to zero would be to dissolve deterrence and thus dissolve security. In the land of the disarmed, according to deterrence theorists, the possessor of one nuclear bomb is king. If deterrence cannot countenance abolition, then some other strategic framework for disarmament seems to be needed.

So a younger generation of analysts has stepped forward to offer a new approach to nuclear disarmament that we might call the "horizontal path." De-alerting weapons, de-mating warheads from delivery vehicles, storing weapons at a distance from delivery vehicles or adulterating weapons-grade fissile materials are steps along the horizontal path. Vertical disarmament makes a catastrophe, should it occur, smaller. Horizontal disarmament makes a catastrophe of any size less likely to occur.

Here are two of the proponents of "horizontal disarmament":

Bruce Blair, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and former Air Force launch control officer, sees the "launch-on-warning" strategy as one principal weakness of deterrence, so that the most pressing need in nuclear arms negotiations is to step back from this strategy. He points out that, in spite of the end of the cold war, for both Russia and the U.S. "launch-on-warning" is still the dominant option. He calls for "global zero alert" and recalls that Bush and Gorbachev de-alerted a number of missiles, bombers and submarines.

When asked "what, concretely, was done?," he replied "The crews in the launch fields had their launch keys taken away. ... keys that you put in, and have to turn, as in the ignition of a car. And they went to the missile silo and put a pin into the motor of the rocket - into its ignition. In order to reverse that step, maintenance crews have to go back out to all the silos and pull the pins... it takes a long time, so a delay is built into the process." Additional steps could include separating warheads from delivery systems, and perhaps put them into storage under international monitoring. He points out that such steps could be required of all nuclear weapons states. A zero-alert plan, if it went deep enough, is tantamount to nuclear disarmament:

Michael Mazarr, the director of the New Millennium Project at CSIS, suggests an approach he calls "Virtual Nuclear Arsenals". This approach calls for disassembly of all nuclear weapons. The horizontal path, then, would begin with Blair's global-zero alert, proceed with further measures of disassembly and dismantlement, and end with a precisely quantified, internationally agreed upon, fully inspected array of "technical resources" that, while not constituting nuclear arsenal, would enable the country possessing them, in the event of breakout, to respond by returning to nuclear armament within a certain calculable period of time.

Schell concludes this section of his essay by citing Stansfield Turner (CIA Director under Carter) and Morton Halperin (National Security Council member under Nixon and Clinton). Turner proposes reducing nuclear weapons levels in each country to 200 warheads separated from 200 launch vehicles. Halperin's end point is 200 nuclear cores, each separated from the rest of the warhead and its delivery vehicle. Both propose international monitoring and a universal no-first-use treaty.

21 DAY RULE REPEAL REJECTED BY HOUSE

The Bill to repeal the 21 Day Rule was passed by the House Courts of Justice Committee, but rejected by the full House by a 46 to 54 vote - quite close. Please write to your representative and let them know that this bill is important to you, and that you are appreciative (or disappointed) in their vote.

In the Richmond area the votes were:
Voting For repeal: Rhodes, McEachin, Dwight Jones, Hargrove, Hall, and Baskerville
Voting against: Cantor, Cox, Dickenson, Nixon, Reid, Ware.

A PEACE AND HEALING CANDLE VIGIL

" Healing the Land and the people"

By Wes Hare

CPT in Richmond, VA takes a new first step in a thousand-mile journey for communities "Getting in the Way."

Richmond, VA experienced a drop in violent homicides in 1998 (96) as different from the previous year's toll of 140 (second per capita in the US). While there is much differing opinion on the whys and wherefores, the killing has not stopped!

Saturday evening (1/30/99) was clear and cold at the Ann Hardy Plaza in the Highland Park neighborhood of Richmond, VA as seventeen people gathered to remember the life and tragic death of Ms Bridgette Dodson, a young mother, who was shot and killed at this location on Sunday, 1/10/99. This Highland Park area is known as an area where drug sales and violence raise fear and threaten residents in this once quiet residential neighborhood.

As the circle gathered, a quiet recording of Taize music echoed through this park. Wes Hare, MVS/ CPT, organizer of this gathering with the support of Ms Dodson's Aunt, Ms Ann King, passed out candles and the healing service began with singing and introductions among the neighbors, and persons in the circle. After lighting the candles, introductions and a stirring solo by a neighbor, Brenda Irene Collins, Hare read a selection from a Service, which he had obtained from an ecumenical group in Indiana, which has a tradition of similar vigils where homicides have occurred. "All ground is holy ground - for the Spirit of God is present in all places. Yet even God's creation may be defiled by human hatred and violence. Peace on earth may be disrupted by acts of anger and destruction.

The sacredness of human life is ignored. The Commandment 'you shall not kill' is violated again and again. We come today to reclaim this place for the God of mercy and understanding. We come to seek comfort for those who mourn. We come to pray that God's spirit may bring healing to those whose hearts are broken. We come to commend to the Life Everlasting those whose lives are lost in violence. We come to pray that all who bring about violence may someday experience a genuine sense of remorse and compassion.

Our hearts are humble and contrite-for we too have sinned. We have committed violence in our hearts. We have been angry, selfish, and intolerant. We have ignored opportunities for compassion and service.

In this spirit, we rededicate this place to the glory of God. May all who come here experience a sense of peace inspired by the Divine Presence. May all who go forth from this place journey in the spirit of love."

Hare concluded: "We remember Bridgette Dodson at this gathering and invite all to share reflections."

The neighbors and family did offer their thoughts and Rev. Jean Page, Pastor at the Highland Park United Methodist Church and a former Highland Park resident, read a poem by Helen Steiner Rice on the open doorway of prayer. She then closed the service with a quiet prayer.

In addition to the neighbors and family, Rev Lee Smith, of the Richmond Peace Education Center (RPEC), Mr. Nidal Mahayhi, former RPEC Board member and school teacher, Ms Elizabeth Smith, Richmond Friends Meeting, Mason Krehbiel, Mennonite Volunteer, participated in this first healing vigil sponsored by the Richmond Project on Urban Peacemaking of CPT.

A passing young man commented as the service concluded, "God Bless you." Before leaving this place, we discussed the rising fear and reflected on the quiet, which was now present in this park, contrasted with the ever-present sense of fear. A friend of Ms Dodson noted: " while we are here, they (the dealers) are more afraid of us...but they will be back, after we leave."

Another young man, Damon Johnson was killed in this same Highland Park Neighborhood on 2/1/99 and another vigil is being developed at this time.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is an organization supported primarily by Mennonite, Brethren and Friends, but certainly not exclusively, which has its special focus on "Getting in the Way" in violent circumstances. CPT is very active in the West Bank in the Middle East and in Chiapas currently and has been active in Haiti during the period when President Aristide was in exile. Wes Hare is a full-time CPT'er working through the Mennonite Voluntary Service and is focusing on "Getting in the Way" in the local neighborhoods around Richmond. He and his wife Jane (RPEC Administrator) regularly walk in the Park Realty Apartments where they live and which surround the First Mennonite Church near Willow Lawn Mall.

These efforts involve some of the Mennonite Church members and apartment residents within the Park Realty Neighborhood Watch.

The candle vigils or "healing the land" services are open to all who wish to join in very local efforts to respond to the continuing killing and violence within this Richmond area. Call Wes @ 358-1056 or email CPTRichPUP@aol.com.

Join Richmond Sowers of Justice
for a 5:30pm beans & tortilla supper
and a 6:00pm dialogue on
Central America & Globilization
at St. Bridget's Church
at 7:00pm we will carpool to the University of Richmond
to attend the talk by Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez.

One Man's Vision for Peace

Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez
Nobel Peace Laureate

Tuesday - March 23, 1999 at 7:30 p.m.

Univ. of Richmond — Alice Jepson Theatre
Lecture is free and open to the public
Seating: first come, first served

Sure and swift collaborative action works. Death and destruction, unrest and uncertainty enveloped Central America when Dr. Arias took the oath of office as president of Costa Rica in 1986. Civil war raged in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. On the day of his inauguration, Arias met with nine Latin American presidents and demanded the liberties of democracy and free and fair elections.

In 1987, he drafted the Arias Peace Plan, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. With the Nobel Prize monies, he created the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress. Its mission is to (1) strengthen civil society in Central America, (2) promote equal opportunity for women, and (3) seek demilitarization and conflict resolution in the developing world.

As a chairman of human development, democracy and demilitarization, Dr. Arias has traveled the globe spreading a message of peace and applying lessons from the Central American Peace Process to issues of current global debate.

If you are coming for supper
please call us so that we can prepare enough food.

Call Elisa Montalvo at (804) 359-5661, ext. 204
to reserve your place at table

South Africa After Apartheid: Embracing the Power of Sankofa

by Ginnie Morrow

Sankofa is a West African word describing the process of retrieving the past in order to live in the present and shaping the future. Although this word was not spoken as part of the formal program at the Fifth Street Baptist Church on Jan 28, 1999, those present learned of this process in the birth of the "Rainbow Nation" of South Africa in 1994 and in its triumphs and struggles. Gayle Kaylor, the featured speaker, director of the Executive Training Division, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, graciously and eloquently led an attentive audience through 300 years of history to illuminate the soil from which the seedling of democracy has started to grow. She described the negotiated settlement ending apartheid as a miracle which allowed the country to form a new government inclusive of the NP, ANC, and IFP. Without any one group claiming victory over the others, an uneasy democracy is being created, with the next elections scheduled this year.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission seeks answers to the questions, “How to deal with the past?” and “How to come to terms with it?” As Ms. Kaylor sees it, the commission has fostered the building of community by allowing individuals to tell their stories publicly in the center of town. In this way the people are creating shared memories and recognition that everyone has had a measure of pain and suffering in the transformation of South Africa.

For years the White minority in South Africa ruled by dividing persons of color and fostering distrust and violence between Indians and Africans, who were exploited for their labor. Rural families were separated, with the men living in migrant quarters in the cities working to bring home meager wages to their families in the villages. The new nation, born in hope and faith in the power of people to change, is governed by a rights-based constitution, while the apartheid system is legislatively gone. Culturally and socially people of different skin color continue to live very separate and different lives--with much violence and the threat of violence bred by mistrust and fear, Pat Baxter, Ph.D. candidate at Union-PSCE on the panel, stated that "stability does not rest on laws only or on guns," but on the satisfaction of social and economic needs of the people. Thc panelists posed several provocative questions. Ms. Baxter posed the question "is there intimacy of significance among races?” In South Africa? In the U.S.?

The strategy of divestment, used by various companies pressured by boycotts in the eighties, has left the country without solid economic investments. Ms. Baxter suggested that perhaps a wiser strategy would have been to divest from companies benefiting from apartheid and invest in the Black-owned banks and other businesses in South Africa. Though she was an ally who worked for the liberation of South Africa and economic justice, she shared that all of her possessions were taken from her, that even her clothing was a gift from the United States. Ms. Baxter expressed concern, along with Ms. Kaylor, about the level of lawlessness and violence in the country which affects all South Africans.

This country, due to the exploitation/oppression of people of one color by those of another, faces escalating violence, poverty, and unemployment. For White South Africans, who have been 15% of the population holding 85% of the country’s resources, economic change is difficult. For the "haves" to release their hold on the resources for more equal distribution among the "have-nots" much work needs to be done, in the way of changing attitudes and working for nonviolent alternatives.Understandably, people who have been living in dire poverty, without means to basic needs such as safe, affordable housing, education, and employment, are impatient for economic justice. The panelists agreed that the root causes of violence must be addressed. Among these are the fact that 40% of males are unemployed and 2.3 million youth in their teens and twenties have never had gainful employment.

Ms. Kaylor is integrally involved in transforming South Africa by training various members of the country to take new roles in the society. Her efforts have assisted the police force in becoming the police service, by facilitating cultural dialogue and understanding among diverse staff members serving a diverse population. She shared a vision of South Africa as a "crippled giant" with the potential to follow Japan's successful example of using its resources for the advancement of its people.

One government goal is to improve housing. Nine million South Africans live in "informal housing" and hundreds of thousands are crowded in urban migrant housing, which was built for single men. According to Ms. Kaylor, prior to 1994 sixty-four-

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South Africa After Apartheid

(Continued from page 6)

percent of all Black South Africans were functionally illiterate. The government's present goal is to provide at least 10 years of public education for all, a uniform teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40 in grades K-6 and 1-35 in grades 7-12, and an increase in technical programs and college education. Panelist Yasar Ozcan, Director of International Development and Associate Professor of Health Administrations at VCU, supported the need for more managerial and health education in the country.

Since 1994, the government has expanded free and affordable health services by blending public and private services and coordinating efforts to provide clean water and sanitation with efforts to improve health care. Dr. Ozcan, who has visited South Africa as part of' in-kind assistance in health care improvement and training, expressed concern about the effects of the AIDS infection on the country's already stressed healthcare system. He also expressed concerns about cultural practices in the villages which put persons at risk for various health problems and wondered how best to advocate for change. Ms. Kaylor responded that efforts to educate people should be grounded in respect for the culture and strengths of the people with sensitivity to their views and appreciation for their experiences.

Thank you to all those responsible for providing this opportunity to learn about South Africa from such experienced talented and courageous individuals. Thus enlightened, we are invited to reflect on our own society's similar struggles for racial and economic justice -- past, present, and future, and to consider our actions as global citizens,

This was the first of a series of forums titled "Transitions to Democracy which is a collaborative effort of the University of Richmond, the VCU Center for International Programs, the Richmond Peace Education Center, and the World Affairs Council of Greater Richmond. For information call the Office of International Education at 289-8836.

*Writer's note- According to the Handbook for United States Labor Statistics, 2nd Edition, U.S. unemployment rates for Black males ages 16-19 years was 36.5% in 1997, compared to 14.3% for White males of the same age group. These figures illustrate some similarity in the struggles for justice which we share in the courageous work of dismantling racism and transforming our own society, while supporting work for justice in South Africa.

CENTRAL AMERICA UPDATE

by Tom Cleary

First and foremost we must speak about the "unspeakable" tragedy of hurricane Mitch. Honduras and Nicaragua were worst hit, but Guatemala and El Salvador were severely damaged also. I try to take in the immense destruction of people, animals, crops, topsoil, schools, roads and bridges and it overwhelms me. Add to that the hunger and disease that follow such death and destruction, and the possible 200 million in U.S. aid is very inadequate. Then, a few weeks later more money than that was used to attack Iraq. One area in Nicaragua, Posoltega, lost 2000 people buried in mud that covered 80 square kilometers. Both countries fear that much money will find its way into "deep pockets" and hope the countries can use the crisis to readjust priorities and build a more just society.

News from Panama indicates that enormous toxic waste is a disaster ready to happen due to careless practices during the U.S. control of the Canal and other military bases. Nothing is being done despite the fact that the U.S. will relinquish control in the year 2000.

In Mexico a severe banking crisis resulted in a large loan to the government secured by the U.S. government. Large sums of money disappeared into the hands of bankers and government officials. The persecution of indigenous people, especially in the State of Chiapas continues. At the end of 1997 a church full of men, women, and children were massacred in Acteal, Chiapas. Still, bands of paramilitary roam unpunished and unchecked in that State.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Program Committee

- The committee met on Jan. 5, 1999
- Articles for the February Newsletter were reviewed. This issue will include the 1999 Action Guide to Local Groups.
- Final arrangements were made for the South Africa program on January 27-28.
- The e-mail tree will be tested out for the January 20 Anti-Death Penalty Demonstration set for 11:00 at the State Capitol.
- A program called Safe Night USA was described. The Peace Center has been asked to provide conflict resolution training to persons who would then lead these activities for groups of youth.
- The Peace Essay Contest planning is underway.
- Next meeting is 2/2.

* * * * * * *

Fundraising Committee

- The meeting was held January 26, 1999
- Plans for the Spring Concert were discussed. Place and group are being finalized.
- The financial condition of the Peace Center was evaluated, and it was agreed that the proposed income budget which had been adopted by the board was too high. Revisions were suggested and will be relayed to the Board for response.
-Next meeting is March 30.

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Conflict Resolution Committee

- The meeting was held January 25, 1999.
- Facilitators were identified to participate in the Safe Night USA event.
- Ginnie Morrow agreed to chair the committee for the next six months.
- There was discussion and clarification of roles of the committee and staff.
- Requests for workshops were reviewed. Prospective trainers will contact Ginnie.
- A marketing brochure was distributed. Ideas were solicited.
- Next meeting is February 25--the fourth Thursday was established as a regular meeting time.
- A gathering for trainers is being planned. A date will be scheduled at the next meeting.

* * * * * * *

RPEC Board Minutes

- The meeting was held Feb. 8, 1999
- A revised budget was presented by the Fundraising Committee with a projected decrease of $6,000.
- The FRC proposed that a full-time executive director be hired; that Jane Hare's hours be increased; and position of program director be dropped. This was approved with an increase in the salary of the full-time director position.
- The agenda and arrangements for the Board's Spring Retreat was approved. It will be April 10 at the Clearing. Joe Szakos will be asked to facilitate.
- The Time Line, j
Job Description, Advertisement for the Executive Director, and Application were approved with revisions.
- Ginnie Morrow has agreed to chair the Conflict Resolution Committee which will meet on the 4th Thursday of each month.
- The Fundraising Committee announced that the Spring Concert is scheduled for Saturday, May 8 by Ezibu Muntu African Dance Company. Place will be announced later.
- The Program Committee reported good response to the program on South Africa at Fifth Baptist Church on Jan. 28.
- Lee Smith, Interim Director, reported on a successful AVP training, distributed draft copies of marketing brochures, noted a projected computer upgrade through VOP, and reported on contact with the national office of CCRC.
- The next meeting is Monday, March 8 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Richmond Education Building, 18th and Broad.

Letters

Another Life Destroyed?

Have you heard about Julie Hiett Steele, the Richmond woman who went to Kenneth Starr and told him she had lied in her testimony before the Grand Jury? She told him that her conscience would not let her do harm to President Clinton by lying for Kathleen Willey. Guess what she got for telling the truth? She has now been indicted on four counts in the Federal Court in Alexandria where she could get 35 years in prison. She has lost her job and is fearful of losing custody of the 8 year old Romanian child she has adopted. She will be tried on March 30th in the Federal Court in Alexandria. If you feel outraged at this turn of events, you can help by being present at the trial and also by contributing to her defense fund. Donations can be sent to Michael L. Gracik, CPA at the firm of Keiter Stephans, 4411 Dominion Blvd. Glen Allen, Va. 23060.

Thomas H. Cleary

The Richmond Peace Education Center presents:

The 1999 Peace Essay Contest

Theme: Playing for Peace
Sports and games are an important part of our lives. What lessons do sports and games teach about conflict and its resolution? How can individuals and nations use these lessons to handle conflicts and settle disputes?
First Prize -- $150
Second prize -- $50
Third prize -- $25
Five Honorable mentions - - $20
Prizes awarded in 4 different age divisions

* Open to any elementary, middle, or high school student in central Virginia,

* Prizes awarded at each school level: K-3, 4-5, middle, and high school.

* Entries judged on content, composition, style and grammar

* Deadline for entries: May 3, 1999. Submit two copies of each entry, along with an entry form (found on the reverse side).

* Each entry must represent the original work of the student author.

* Winners will be notified on or about June 1, 1999. Winners will also be invited to attend the Richmond Peace Education Center's annual dinner meeting in October, 1999.

The Richmond Peace Education Center works to build a peaceful world by
* helping people see the connections between injustice in its many forms and the violence in our neighborhoods and our world,
* promoting nonviolent means of conflict resolution.
* encouraging people to become involved in groups taking action on issues of justice and peace In our world, and supporting the work of such groups.

Send entries to: Essay Contest, Richmond Peace Education Center, 14 N. Laurel St. Richmond VA 23220 (804) 358-1958

1999 Peace Essay Contest Entry Form

Student Name _____

Home Address _____

City, State and Zip code _____

Telephone _____

School _____ Phone_____

Grade/level _____School division _____

We hereby certify that this entry to the 1999 Peace Essay Contest is the original work of the student

Student Signature _____

Signature of sponsoring
teacher, parent or guardian _____

Contest rules:
1. The contest is open to all elementary, middle, and high school students in the Richmond region.
2. Entries must be limited to 1000 words or less.
3. Essays will be judged and prizes awarded separately at each school level--primary (gr. K-3), elementary (gr. 4-5),-middle (gr. 6-8), and high school (gr. 9-12).
4. Submit two copies of each entry, and keep a copy for your records. Each entry must also include a completed entry.form (above). No entries will be returned.
5. The final essay must represent the original work of the student.
6. Primary (K-3) entries may include an original illustration.
7. Entries must be typed and double spaced, or neatly and legibly written. Each page must be numbered.
8. Submission of an entry grants permission for the Richmond Peace Education Center (RPEC) to print the essay or excerpts from it in its newsletter or other publications. Winning entrants will be invited to an award ceremony held as part of the RPEC annual meeting in October.
9. Essays will be judged on the basis of content style, composition, mechanics and usage. 'The decisions of the judges will be final.
10. Deadline for submissions is May 3, 1999. Winning entrants will be notified of the judges' decision by the week of June 1, 1999.

Send this entry form and two copies of the essay to: **Essay Contest, Richmond Peace Education Center, 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond VA 23220 (804) 358-1958**

March '99 CALENDAR

Meetings of Local Groups

Every Wed. **General Strike,** 8:00 PM. Call 355-6914 for details

Every 3rd Wed. **Amnesty International,** 7:00 PM at Friends Meeting. 4500 Kensington Ave. Call 320-9488

Every 2nd Thurs. **Virginians Against Handgun Violence,** 7:15 PM., Jewish Community Center, B. Phillips-Taylor, 737-2975

Every 3rd Friday **Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace,** 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901

Every Thurs. **Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY),** 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.

Every 3rd Sat. **Virginians for Justice,** 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.

Every 3rd Sun. **Richmond Community for Ethics and Meaning,** at First Unitarian. 1000 Blanton Ave., 5-8 PM, Susan at 784-4069.

Every 4th Mon. **RPEC's Reading Group on Racism** at Tuckahoe Library's Small Meeting Room, 1700 Parham Road, 7-8:30 PM, Regina 747-4011.

Every 4th Sat. **Pax Christi Peace Community -** Call Elaine Ogburn for details - 320-4514.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 1 **Transitions to Democracy Series: "Shock Therapy With Democracy in Eastern Europe",** Frank Kukbaski, 7:30 PM at U of R Jepson Auditorium, Room 118.

March 9 **Scheduled Execution date for George Quisenberry,** Vigil at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 8:30 PM

March 21 **Richmond Community for Ethics and Meaning,** at First Unitarian, 1000 Blanton Ave. 5-8:00 PM. Susan at 784-4069.

March 23 **Transitions to Democracy Series: "One Man's Vision of Peace."** Oscar Arias Sanchez, 7:30 PM, U of R Alice Jepson Theatre.

March 25 **Scheduled Execution date for David Fisher,** Vigil at Richmond Friends Meeting, 8:30 PM.

April 2 **Good Friday Stations of the Cross,** On Church Hill, 11:45-3:00 PM, meet at Patrick Henry Park (24th and Broad Streets).

RPEC World Wide Web Address:
http://www.rpec.org

VADP
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear Activist,

Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (VADP) is proud to announce its first Awards Banquet on Saturday evening May 1 in Charlottesville. Join Actor/Anti-Death Penalty Activist Mike Farrell and retired Federal District Judge Robert R. Merhige as we honor long time anti- death penalty activist Marie Deans and expert capital case litigator Gerald Zerkin with the Joseph M. Giarratano Award for "Truth in Action." Joe came within one day of being executed in 1991 for a crime that evidence shows he did not commit. The Governor commuted his sentence to life, with possibility of parole. The State refused to grant him a new trial and he is currently incarcerated in Virginia's newest Supermax prison. While incarcerated Joe became a "jailhouse lawyer" and created an "Alternatives to Violence" program in prison. He continues to uncover human rights abuses in the prisons.

You can send a message through the special commemorative program for $100/full page, $50/half page, and $25/quarter page. For more information, contact VADP at P.O. Box 4804, Charlottesville, VA 22905. Phone: (804)-263-8148, Fax: (804)-263-4431, e-mail: mail@vadp.org; website: www.vadp.org.

Contributor's Corner

A Good Way to Contribute to RPEC

The Thrifty Quaker, a thrift store which is a project of the Midlothian Friends Meeting, is located at Midlothian Station Shopping Center in the Village of Midlothian. Each month their proceeds go to an organization that promotes just, charitable and peaceful living. The Richmond Peace Education Center has been designated to receive funds from their March sales. Let's plan a big Thrifty Quaker shopping spree for March! For more information, call 794-7158.

Richmond Peace Education Center 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond, Va. 23220

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