

RPECnews

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

July — Aug — Sept, 2016



**It will be 15 years this fall
since the terrorist attacks of 9/11.
Our country has changed
in countless ways since then.**

The ACLU of Virginia and the Richmond Peace Education Center are planning a day-long community forum, “Reclaiming Our Democracy: 15 Years After 9/11,” to pause and reflect upon these changes. This event will feature local and nationally known speakers and explore how the events of 9/11, and the choices of decision-makers in its aftermath, have affected the trajectory of American society with respect to democracy, civil liberties and foreign policy. Among the speakers will be Col. Lasrence Wilkerson, chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The event will be on Saturday, September 17, in the Tyler Haynes Common at the University of Richmond.

Our hope is that “*Reclaiming Our Democracy*” will empower people who are informed and willing to speak out and work toward a freer, more peaceful and equitable country.

For full information on the forum turn to Pages 5-6.

‘Incredible!’ That’s the Word For RPEC’s Auction

The 2016 RPEC Auction, RPEC's biggest fundraiser of the year, is going to be incredible!

WHEN: Saturday, November 5, 5:30-9:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Crowne Plaza Hotel on 6th and Canal Streets in Richmond

WHAT: The silent auction, with hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and lots of socializing with RPEC friends followed by the bidding auction with a buffet dinner

HOW MUCH: \$50 for single tickets or \$400 for a table of eight. This is the same price as last year and includes two complimentary drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and dinner.

Every single dollar raised through bidding will go directly to support RPEC's programs, so in addition to being a fun night, the auction provides

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Tour of Richmond’s historic Jackson Ward, up for bid on Nov. 5.

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Reflection

Adria Scharf
RPEC Executive Director

Taking Stock of 9/11

You probably remember where you were on the morning of September 11, 2001.

I'd left Cambridge, Massachusetts, early that morning to drive with colleagues to Vermont to lead a training at a worker-owned company. When we arrived on site in the late morning, our host greeted us with: "The world has changed since you left Boston."

At the company, work had stopped. A television was on in the cafeteria. Workers and staff were gathered together watching the news play and replay the crashing of the planes into the twin towers. Two thousand nine hundred seventy six people died that day.

Our memories of dramatic and unexpected events are more vivid than ordinary memories. Memories of 9/11, like memories of where one was the day JFK was shot, are called "flashbulb" memories because they seem brighter. Their vividness is fueled by emotion, which heightens senses. Their vividness also has to do with the fact that memories like these carry meaning in the context of our society. They represent a moment when our own personal experience connects to the arc of history. "We remember the details of a flashbulb occasion, because those details are the links between our own history and History," wrote memory researcher Ulric Neisser.

* * * *

September 11 indeed marked an important moment our country's history, and that of the world. As much as the day itself left its mark in the minds and hearts of so many, its aftermath—the policy decisions that were made in response to the events—left a lasting mark on our society. They propelled our country down a policy path with tremendous consequences for human lives, and for the American experiment in constitutional democracy. Since that day, our country has never been the same.

We know that following 9/11, key players in the Bush administration exploited the event in ways that led to expansion of presidential power; the erosion of civil liberties, the projecting of U.S. power into the Middle East through military force and launching the "war on terror"...largely outside of public view.

Yes, when President Obama took office, there were certain course corrections—for example, he nullified the memos legalizing torture, and in time drew down the U.S. troops in Iraq. But much of the policy trajectory set in motion following 9/11 remains in motion—with deep repercussions for civil liberty, freedom and for peace, and particular repercussions for communities of color and immigrants.

To take stock of this significant period in our history, the Richmond Peace Education Center, with the ACLU of Virginia, has organized a day-long forum, *Reclaiming Our Democracy 15 Years After 9/11*, to take place on Saturday, September 17th, at the University of Richmond. Read the details in this RPECnews and join us at this important community event.

Auction — *Continued from Page 1*

crucial support for RPEC's entire array of work for peace and justice in Richmond and beyond.

How Can You Help the Auction?

First, buy a ticket. . . better yet, arrange a table with seven of your friends. Get your tickets here: <http://www.rpec.org/2016-dinner-auction> .

Second, if you can't come, buy a ticket or two anyway and donate them back to RPEC. We give donated tickets to RPEC youths allowing them to attend (and help out).

Third, be generous in your bidding. See the silent auction as an opportunity for doing some of your holiday shopping, or as an opportunity to treat your family and friends by grabbing a vacation getaway, or one of the unique events and services in the live auction.

Last, donate something special for the auction or collect donations from businesses you know or friends with special talents.

We are looking for restaurant gift certificates, home-made meals, vacation get-aways, and other special donations. Here are some of the treats that now await you,

New this year:

—A Jackson Ward Walking Tour by the Valentine, for 15 people.

—Grayhaven Winery Private Tasting and Cellar Tour with artisan cheese board for up to six guests.

—South Indian Cooking Class.

—Dinner for 15 with mindfulness presentation and Meditation.

—Visit with famed Sculptor Paul di Pasquale in his Studio.

Want to get away?

—The beach cottage in Duck, NC, or

— A Chincoteague Retreat on Chincoteague Island. Four bedrooms, sleeps 7, with water view.

Many other favorites are returning...including a truck-load of mulch delivered to your yard, culinary experiences from around the world, and soup of the month.

More items will be coming, and will be highlighted in further articles and on the auction webpage.

In the meantime, you can buy your tickets, and if you can help in soliciting items let the office know by mailing rpec@rpec.org or calling 232-1002.

Healing Workshop For Adults Nov. 11-13

The Healing And Rebuilding Our Communities [HROC] program will offer a 3-day Basic workshop for adults on Friday, Nov. 11 from 6-9, Saturday, Nov. 12 from 9-5, Sunday, Nov. 13 from 9-5. Location TBA.

Participants will gain tools to help themselves and others through the process of grieving, loss, and the transformation of hurt into healing.

RPEC trainers and educators Santa Sorenson and Ram Bhagat will lead the workshop.

The fee for this session is \$175. Partial scholarships are available.

To reserve a spot please send a \$25 non-refundable registration fee that will go toward the \$175 fee for the workshop. Please write HROC registration fee in the memo line of your check. The full fee deadline is November 4.

Workshops Given for Iraqi Students and African Scholars

In July, five Peace Center facilitators had the opportunity to present workshops to 25 Iraqi exchange students and 25 Mandela Washington Fellows from Africa. They were co-sponsored by the VCU Global Education Department and the Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. Both groups were here about six weeks.

The Iraqi students attended an intensive summer program at VCU that included leadership development, social networking, community service and an exploration in democracy.

Peace Center facilitators gave the students trust building and trauma-healing skills that would support them, and they in turn could support their families, friends and their communities. The depth of their passion for peace, tolerance for diversity and acceptance for all was the center of many conversations.

The Washington Mandela Fellows who have already accomplished positive change in their organizations, communities and countries came here through an initiative established by President Obama. They received leadership training, professional development and academic coursework. They will also have access to seed funding to support their ideas.

Our facilitators gave the fellows the opportunity to speak with one another about their passions, concerns and vision for their country and Africa. They discovered that all of them had basically the same mission, which created a great sense of community. They learned deep listening skills they could bring back to their countries and people that would support their missions and that would serve them well during difficult situations.

RVA Peace Festival Celebrates Diversity

The RVA Peace Festival will take place Saturday, September 10, at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Richmond, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Festival is a celebration of the diverse faith and cultural traditions that enrich our region. This year's Festival, the 12th annual, will feature new and exciting elements! Enjoy performances from Ezibu Muntu, the Latin Ballet of Virginia, Richmond Boys Choir, Sri Sai Dance Academy, and Falun Dafa Chinese Dancers. Children will enjoy Chalk for Peace by Art 180 and teen-led cooperative games. All will have the chance to walk through a meditation labyrinth and experience workshops.

Food will be available for purchase from La Milpa Mexican cuisine and Zainab's Middle Eastern Halal Delicacies.

There will also be a children's interfaith service and a mid-day panel discussion as part of the ongoing "Standing Together" program series.

The Festival will also include a special first-ever Mini Memoir Exhibit hosted by Chrysalis. People from all across the Richmond region will submit "six-word memoirs" about their lives over the course of this year. The Mini Memoirs will be displayed at the Festival as a visual tapestry of our interwoven personal stories. Submit your six-word memoir here: rvapeace.wordpress.com.

Mark your calendars now for September 10. Let's join together as we mark the 15th anniversary of 9/11, united in our diversity. The event is free and open to the public with exhibits to interest and inspire people of all ages!

The RVA Peace Festival is sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond, the Chrysalis Institute, Richmond Peace Education Center, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Center for Interfaith Reconciliation. It is supported by Suntrust. Web page: vapeace.wordpress.com.

Film Series Focuses On Social Justice

The Peace Center is proud to partner with the Virginia Historical Society in the Created Equal Film Series in Honor of Rev. Grady W. Powell. This quarterly film series features films that focus on themes related to civil rights, human rights, and social justice in American history.

The next film, "Rosenwald," will be shown Thursday, September 1 at 6 p.m.

The last film in the 2016 series, "Chisholm '72—Unbought & Unbossed," will be screened on Thursday, Oct. 20 at 6 p.m., at the Virginia Historical Society, 428 N. Boulevard, Richmond.

Workplace Campaign Can Aid RPEC's Work

RPEC members and friends are urged to support the Peace Center by designating some or all of their United Way or Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) contribution to the Center.

Contributing this way is even easier this year. When you receive the giving request at your school, office or workplace, simply check the box at the bottom of the form (or online form) that indicates you want to designate a portion of your contribution. Just fill in the amount you choose to contribute, and name "Richmond Peace Education Center" as the recipient. That's all you need to do. There's no need to write in a numerical code this year.

Contributing in this way keeps the Peace Center eligible take part in United Way and CVC future campaigns.

Apply Now for RYPP Youth Leadership Opportunity

This fall the Peace Center will hold two weekend workshops to train the newest group of Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP) teen leaders. The trainings are open to rising 8th graders and older who want to learn conflict resolution and facilitation skills, earn community service credit, and become leaders for peace and justice in their schools and communities.

Workshops are scheduled for the weekends of September 24-25 and October 15-16. Both sessions will be held at the Richmond YWCA, 6 N. Fifth St., from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The workshops are FREE, and we provide lunch and snacks. Each participant also receives a training manual full of workshop activities.

Teen participants will take part in a variety of fun, interactive conflict resolution activities and games, and also practice group leadership skills. Successfully completing the 15-hour training will make participants eligible to become members of the RYPP leadership team. They will then have opportunities to present workshops to other groups of young people in local schools, community centers and congregations, under the guidance of the Peace Center's experienced adult facilitators. Participants will earn 15 hours of community service credit.

Teens can apply to participate by filling out a short on-line application form at <http://goo.gl/forms/LA20LZT8qq> or by emailing rypp@rpec.org for additional information.

Reclaiming Our Democracy 15 Years After 9/11

The Richmond Peace Education Center and the ACLU of Virginia invite members of our community to join us in a day-long forum to pause and reflect upon the many changes affecting our society resulting from the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.



RPEC and ACLU Invite You
Saturday, September 17, 2016

Tyler Haynes Commons
University of Richmond
28 Westhampton Way

Register now at www.rpec.org

Cost: \$25, includes lunch
Limited number of scholarships available.

The Agenda:

8:45 - 9:30 a.m.: Registration tables open

9:30 - 10 a.m.: Gathering and Welcome

10 - 11:30 a.m.: Morning Plenary Session, "What We Have Lost; Why It Matters; What We Can Do"

11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.: Lunch, "Sharing Lived Experiences"

1 - 2:30 p.m. and 2:45 - 4:15 p.m.: Concurrent workshops (each participant can attend two workshops)

- * The Militarization of Police in Our Communities
- * The Growth of Government Surveillance and the threat to privacy
- * Rethinking the Global War on Terror and Exploring Alternatives
- * The Color of Terror and the Psychology of Hate

4:15 - 5 p.m.: Closing Plenary Session, "Taking Action"

Outstanding Speakers Will Share Perspectives

Col Lawrence Wilkerson, chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell and now a professor at the College of William and Mary, is one of an outstanding group of experts who will speak at the forum.

Talat Hamdani, a speaker coming to Richmond from New York, 9/11 can report a terrible personal loss. Her eldest son, Mohammad Salman Hamdani, a New York Police Department cadet who had trained as a first responder, spontaneously made his way to help at the

World Trade Center only to die when the buildings collapsed and later to be investigated as a suspect. She will describe how she found her voice as a Muslim-American mother of a 9/11 victim, speaking out whenever leaders used 9/11 to stoke fear of "the other" and divide us.

The speakers roster continues on Page 6.



Virginia Muslim Coalition for Public Affairs

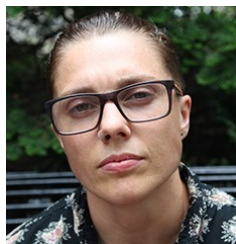


Reclaiming Our Democracy — the Pathfinders

Lecia Brooks is Outreach Director for the Southern Poverty Law Center and director of the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery, Ala. Previously, Lecia worked for 12 years in many capacities for the National Conference for Community and Justice in Los Angeles office.



Brooks



Crockford

Kade Crockford is Director of the Technology for Liberty Program at ACLU of Massachusetts. Kade works to protect and expand core First and Fourth Amendment rights and civil liberties in the digital 21st century, focusing on how systems of surveillance and control impact not just society in general but their primary targets – people of color, Muslims, immigrants and dissidents.

Kate Gould is the Legislative Representative for Middle East Policy at Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker lobby fielding the largest team of registered peace lobbyists in Washington, D.C. Kate also serves on the board of Churches for Middle East Peace, and is a political partner with Truman National Security Project.



Gould



Hamdani

Talat Hamdani is a Pakistani-born American who became a commentator after her son, Mohammad Salman Hamdani, a New York Police cadet and paramedic, died in the attacks of 9/11. Her son was investigated following the attacks. In 2010 Talat’s support of the building of the “ground zero mosque” was widely reported.

Dr. Wornie Reed is professor of sociology and Africana Studies and Director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center at Virginia Tech, teaching courses in health care, criminal justice, and Africana studies. Among his books are *African Americans: Essential Perspectives* (2003) and *Blacks in Tennessee* (2008).



Reed



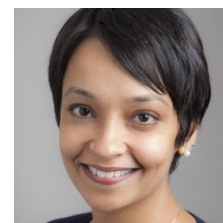
Schirch

Dr. Lisa Schirch is North American Research Director for the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, and Research Professor at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. She has participated conflict assessments and peacebuilding planning in over 20 countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Indonesia.

Hina Shamsi, director of ACLU’s National Security Project, has litigated cases upholding the freedoms of speech and association, and challenging targeted killing, torture, unlawful detention, and post-9/11 discrimination against racial and religious minorities.

Larry Syverson is a Richmond resident whose three sons have served multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Phillip Thompson, Esq., is President of the Loudoun Branch NAACP.



Shamsi



Wilkerson

Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson is Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy at William and Mary. After retiring from active duty in 1997, Col. Wilkerson served as assistant to General Colin Powell and as Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Powell. Col. Wilkerson also served as Associate Director of the State Department’s Policy and Planning Staff and as staff member for East Asia and the Pacific, political-military and legislative affairs.

Adam Bates is a policy analyst with Cato’s Project on Criminal Justice. His research interests include the War on Drugs, the War on Terror, police militarization, and over-criminalization.

The Trump Effect

How children mirror the behavior of politicians

By Jennifer Garvin-Sanchez

While visiting family last Christmas, my brother-in-law relayed the story of a child he observed in NOVA where he works at a non-profit. An Asian child taunted a Latino child: “If Trump gets elected, you will get deported!” An adult laughed and said, “If Trump gets elected, you’ll get deported, too!” This may be funny to adults, but to a child who lives with the fear of night raids for the undocumented under the Obama administration, this idea can be terrifying and the banter of children malicious.

The Southern Poverty Law Center recently published a report, called “The Trump Effect” (see <https://www.splcenter.org/20160413/trump-effect-impact-presidential-campaign-our-nations-schools>) in which they elicited responses from teachers in an informal online survey conducted from March 23 to April 2, 2016. Almost 2000 teachers responded to questions including whether they agreed with the following statements:

“There has been an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment at my school since the 2016 presidential campaign began.”

“I have heard an increase in uncivil political discourse at my school since the 2016 presidential campaign began.”

“My students have expressed concern about what might happen to them or their families after the election.”

The “report found that the campaign is producing an alarming level of fear and anxiety among children of color and inflaming racial and ethnic tensions in the classroom. Many students worry about being deported.”

The report went on, “other students have been emboldened by the divi-

sive, often juvenile rhetoric in the campaign. Teachers have noted an increase in bullying, harassment and intimidation of students whose races, religions or nationalities have been the verbal targets of candidates on the campaign trail.”

This past semester, in my college class, an older Muslim student reported that her high school age students are depressed and terrified. I am not surprised because before the campaign I have had Muslim students who have told stories of harassment and bullying growing up in Virginia, so I can only imagine how it is now that this kind of behavior has been “sanctioned” by political leaders.

Every fourth year teachers across the country have used the national election as a teaching tool to explain the political process to students. Now, some teachers have foregone this lesson plan altogether.

Here are the highlights of the survey:

- —More than two-thirds of the teachers reported that students—mainly immigrants, children of immigrants and Muslims—have expressed concerns or fears about what might happen to them or their families after the election.

- —More than half have seen an increase in uncivil political discourse.

- —More than one-third have observed an increase in anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant sentiment.

- —More than 40 percent are hesitant to teach about the election.

The survey itself did not mention candidates by name, but of 5,000 comments, more than 1000 mentioned Donald Trump by name and less than 200 mentioned the other

candidates by name. Of course, Trump has spoken of deporting millions of Latino immigrants, building a wall between the United States and Mexico, banning Muslim immigrants and even killing the families of Islamist terrorists. He has also called Mexican immigrants “rapists” and drug dealers, made fun of a disabled reporter and made many sexist comments to female reporters and routinely calls other candidates names, like “crooked Hillary.”

At the Richmond Peace Education Center, we teach children how to listen to each other, how to respect each other’s opinions and how to value ethnic and religious diversity. When politicians behave in ways that children should not, and are not allowed to, they either become confused, or disillusioned with adults and the political process. The only way to overcome this is to have open and honest conversations with children not only about the important issues facing our country, but also modeling behavior about how to have civil political discourse.

Depending on the age of the child, they may lack the context to understand the complexities of the issues, but children do understand compassion and empathy for those suffering from injustices. And children are also incredibly aware of what the adults in their lives believe and how they model how we should treat others.