

A SUMMARY OF WNPJ'S ACTIVITIES

1991

February 23 As Jeff Pieterick, Waterloo, our first newsletter editor wrote, February 23, 1991, "marked the escalation of two initiatives, one for war, the other for peace." On that day, more than 350 people representing more than 60 communities throughout the state crowded into the Assembly Chambers of the State Capitol to gather strength from one another in their frustration and concern about the Gulf War. On that day, the ground war began.

March 16 Steering Committee meeting. Steve Braunginn and Nan Cheney, both from Madison, were elected Co-Chairs. The April 1991 newsletter quoted Joyce Reynolds Kurth, a WNPJ-Marathon County member who wrote reflecting on the Feb. 23 Conference, "My overriding concern is that we once again begin to drift . . . If we always allow the government to define our areas of concentration, we may never get in front of the process . . . Many of us express concern that once the war had ended, we would go back to sleep. That possibility remains real. The choice is up to each of us."

May 11 The By-laws were adopted after hours and weeks of deliberation and WNPJ was incorporated as a WI non-profit organization.

June 8 A second conference, entitled "The Persian Gulf: Truth and Consequences" was held in the Assembly Chamber. Midge Miller moderated, speakers included Mervet Enc, Roger Quindel, and Robert Kimbrough. Twelve workshops including topics such as the family farm, the Ladysmith mine, energy, communication skills, Arab contributions to the world, educator activists, Father Bob Bossie's Eyewitness Account from Iraq, calculating military costs, videos, media responsibility, and the economic impact of the military on labor.

October 18 The Energy Taskforce presented 700 signatures on a petition to the Legislature in support of a Clean Energy initiative.

November 13 A WNPJ Conference organized by Jobs With Peace representative Larry Moore entitled "Reinvest in our Communities" was held in the Local Transit Union Hall in Milwaukee. Burt Glass, a staffer with national SANE/Freeze was the keynoter. Workshops centered on a peace economy, energy, campaign reform and effective political action, and a universal health plan. Nick Berigan, Wausau, was elected our new chair.

1992

June 5-7 A WNPJ conference with a national focus was held in Madison. Coordinated by Robert Kimbrough, the conference was entitled "We Hold These Truths in Common." Alex Molnar, Manning Marable, Marion Anderson and Ann Wilson were keynote speakers. Twenty three workshops included topics such as a peace economy, coping with the media, the Canadian New Democratic Party, lessons from South America, co-ops in conversion, election reform, community organizing, the environment, Native Americans, fair trade not free trade, the family farm, non-violent resistance, peace studies, the urban holocaust, veterans for peace, and more. The conference concluded with a forum concerning "Inside/Outside Political Strategies for Achieving Electoral Change." It was a MAJOR production!

August 5 Pete Blankenheim coordinated a lively public forum on Yugoslavia.

October 24 The Fall Assembly was held at the Senior Center in Madison. Mary Rasmussen, Boyceville, and Jeff Pieterick, Waterloo, were elected co-chairs and Al Geddicks, WI Resources Protection Council, spoke about mining in Wisconsin, a continuing concern of the Network.

1993

January 21 Jane Ragsdale organized a WNPJ forum "Options for Somalia."

February 10 Representatives from Inter Religious Voice for Peace and Justice and WNPJ met with recently elected Senator Russ Feingold to introduce ourselves and to set up a line of communication.

March Lance Green takes over as Editor of the WNPJ Newsletter.

October 9 Assembly '93, staffed by Jane Ragsdale, was held at Bundy Hall in Menomonie. Kristin Dawkins, Senior Fellow and Director of Research at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis and Glen Rosselli, Policy Director for the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, and David Leeper, a mediator and attorney dedicated to practicing law as a healing art, directed their remarks to "Weaving Peaceful Communities: Converting to an Economy with a Conscience." NAFTA and GATT treaties were the special focus. Workshops included: Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Economic Development; Creating our own TV: Public Access to Cable TV; Big Problems/Little People: Overcoming Powerlessness; Nonviolence, a Viable Way of Life; Singing & Empowerment; Men & Women: Learning to Get Along.

1994

October 22 Assembly '94, again staffed by Jane Ragsdale, was held at the St. Benedict Conference Center in Middleton. Entitled "WNPJ -- What WE Are Doing!" the conference highlighted activities of member organizations. Julie Enslow and Bill Sell from Milwaukee Mobilization for Survival spoke about the international arms trade, Sr. Miriam Brown, Sinsinawa Dominicans presented "Called and Crazy." Workshops included discussions of "Race Relations and the KKK in Rock County"; "Colombia"; "Bosnia in our Back Yard?"; "Women's Peace and Justice Treaty of the Americas"; "Lifting the Embargo in Cuba"; "The Comprehensive Test Ban and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties"; "the Information Superhighway"; "Perspectives of a World Citizen Living in the USA"; "Probable Impact of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on the Environment"; and "Rainforest Activism".

1995

October 14-15 Assembly '95, "Network at Work: Joining Forces, Gaining Ground," convened at the Cedar Valley Center in West Bend. It was staffed by Jane Ragsdale. Bruce Colburn, Secretary-Treasurer, Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO gave the keynote address, "Sustainable Milwaukee: Building Milwaukee from the Bottom Up." State Senator Gwen Moore gave the latchkey address. Plenary workshops included discussions of "Talk Radio", "Militias", and "Campaign Finance Reform." Nan Cheney was elected Chair a second time.

1996

On January 31 and February 1 The WNPJ Welfare Task Force, chaired by Dede Mayberry, organized a sit-in at the pillars in the Capital Rotunda in opposition to W-2 which was then being debated by the Legislature.

June WNPJ received its first outside grant -- \$3800 from the Wisconsin Community Fund to further our outreach effort, produce a directory of Wisconsin Peace and Justice Organizations, and to coordinate Assembly '96.

July 13 Steering Committee. "Peace and Justice and the '96 Elections." Room 225 NW State Capitol. Campaign '96 Training Session.

October 19 Assembly '96, staffed by Bonnie Block, took place at the St. Benedict Conference Center in Middleton. Entitled "Peacing the Puzzle," the conference focused on the increasing concentration of wealth and its impact on efforts toward justice and peace -- personally, organizationally, and nationally. Keynoters included WNPJ members Dr. Jane Anne Morris, of Democracy Unlimited, on "How Corporate Power Affects Peace and Justice"; Dr. Daniel Gomez-Ibanez, of the International Committee for the Peace Council, on "The International Campaign Against Land Mines and the Wisconsin Connection"; and Ed Garvey of Labor Strategies, Inc. on "Reclaiming our Democracy -- Economic and Political." Workshops included discussions on "Grant Writing", "Corporate Welfare and Our Taxes", "Military Spending and the Arms Race", "Economic Conversion", "The State of Working Wisconsin", and "Corporate Public Relations."

December 14 First meeting of the Corporate Power Task Group, the creation of which was approved at the '96 Assembly. The meeting was at the UW Union and Bonnie Block served as acting chair. The group decided to hold it's initial meetings on the same Saturdays as The Madison Institute series on Corporate Power.

Membership has grown to include some 50 organizations and more than 200 individuals. Our mailing list numbers 1039. We welcome new members -- it's the collective voices for peace and justice that will amplify the work of each of us.

Compiled by Nan Cheney

1997

February A petition was inserted in the Newsletter to "Stop the Supermax Prison Before It Starts." The petition with over 400 signatures was delivered to the Governor.

April 12 Steering Committee. "Update on Campaign Financing Reform in Wisconsin", a luncheon and panel discussion in the Alumnae Room at the Wisconsin Center, noon until 3 pm. Panel members included Rep. Tammy Baldwin, State Assembly; Prof. Carin Clauss, a member of the Citizens Commission on Campaign Finance Reform; Atty. Ed Garvey, organizer of Clean Elections Option; and Ms. Gail Shea, Executive Director of WI Democracy Campaign. The forum was moderated by Midge Miller, founder of The Madison Institute.

September 27 Assembly '97, again staffed by Bonnie Block, on "The Growing Divide: The Rich and the Rest of Us." Keynote speaker was Chuck Collins, Co-director of United for a Fair Economy who spoke on the huge economic gap between the top 10% and other 90%. Besides the regular Reports from the Field the following workshops were held: 1) Alternative Economic Organizations; Campaign Financing Reform; W-2 Update; Worker Justice Issues; and the Saga of the Exxon Mine in WI. Tammy Johnson of Progressive Wisconsin gave a luncheon address on "Organizing for Peace and Justice." Erik Gustafson and Mike Miles showed slides of their trip to Iraq. Bonnie Block and Julie Enslow were elected co-chairs.

September 28 A day long training at Pres House was held for about 30 people to facilitate "Growing Divide" workshops using UFE materials and led by Chuck Collins

December WNPJ coordinated the WI segment of the Landmine Ban Bus Tour and events were held in Madison and Janesville.

1998

Spring WNPJ member organizations took to the streets again to protest the possibility of expanding the war in Iraq. Demonstrations took place in Milwaukee, Madison, the Fox Valley, Oshkosh, and Superior-Duluth. The Corporate Power Task Group, chaired by Ann Fleischli, decided to continue work on campaign finance reform and facilitate discussion on the citizen ballot initiatives.

April Publication of the 1st annual WNPJ Directory with 67 member organizations listed.

April, 18 Steering Committee at the Madison Public Library. “Spring Peace Fling, Let’s Reclaim Democracy.” Panel on Citizen Initiative and Referendum.

September 26 Assembly '98, with planning committee co-chaired by Betty Ann Fischer and Ann Fleischli, was at St. Benedict’s Center, Middleton. Theme was “Confronting Corporate America and the Decline of Democracy.” Keynoters were Zoltan Grossman, Midwest Treaty Network, who spoke on “Taking it to the Top: Grassroots Organizing in the New Corporate Era” and Robert McChesney, UW School of Journalism, on “Corporate Media and the Decline of Democracy.” Panel with Margo Robb and Norm Stockwell, on “How Do We Get the Word Out.” Town Meeting Conclusion on “Where Do We Go From Here?”

1999

February WNPJ members circulated petitions against the sanctions in Iraq and for Abolition 2000: A Call for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Newsletter reported that 43% of WNPJ’s mailing list was from small towns (under 25,000) and rural areas.

May In response to the NATO bombing of Kosovo, the Dane County Peace Coalition was formed by Madison area WNPJ member organizations. DCPC organized or co-sponsored a demonstration, teach-in, public hearing and Lanterns for Peace with about 500 people in attendance at these events.

April 10 Steering Committee, “Exposing the Military Budget—Corporate Greed vs Human Need.” Panel with Sam Day, Nukewatch; Julie Enslow & Tom Seery, Peace Action; and Bob Reuschlein, Peace Economics at the UCC Conference Center in DeForest. Leila Pine reported the Corporate Power Task Force priorities were campaign financing, corporate welfare, and privatization of government agencies.

April Publication of the 2nd annual WNPJ Directory which showed 77 organizational members.

August Newsletter editor Lance Green goes on leave and Bonnie Block, Charlie Brown and Bonnie Block form an editorial committee to take over that task and Ernie Moll does the layout.

September WNPJ moves to an office at 122 State Street, Madison. It is Room 404 and shared with the Wisconsin Women's Network. WNPJ's files, records are now in one place.

October 2 Assembly '99 was on "Privatizing Wisconsin" at St Benedict Center, Middleton. Keynoter was Gordon Clark, Director of National Peace Action. There were four workshops on Privatization in... 1) the Prison System by Kit McNally of the Benedict Center, 2) the Welfare System with Jennifer Grondin of AFSCME, 3) the Public School System with Bob Peterson of Rethinking Schools, and 4) in Third World Countries with Jim Barrett, of Pledge of Resistance. This was followed by Q & A and a wine and cheese reception. Judith Williams did music. Bonnie Block was elected chair.

2000

March WNPJ hires a part time office manager, Carol Kiemel, to work 10-15 hours a week. Bill Braham begins developing WNPJ's website at [www. mindspring.com](http://www.mindspring.com) and Lance Green returns from leave as Newsletter editor.

April 1 Steering Committee at the UCC Conference Center in De Forest with the theme "Globalization of Power---and Poverty: Wisconsin Responds." Panelists were Miriam Brown, Churches Center for Land and People; Jim Carpenter, WI Fair Trade Campaign, Bob Glaser, Steelworkers Union and Nieves de la Rosa, Congregation of St. Agnes. Corporate Power Task Force Co-Chairs, Frances Bartelt and John E. Peck reported on CATG work along with the regular Reports from the Field by member organizations.

April Publication of the 3rd annual WNPJ Directory with 75 member organizations listed.

July WNPJ announces it will make annual Wisconsin Peacemaker of the Year awards in three age categories and asks for nominations. Corporate Power Task Force renamed Corporate Accountability Task Group (CATG). It begins a series of brochures plans workshops in various parts of the state.

October 6-7 WNPJ's 10th Anniversary Assembly on "Creating A Culture of Peace" with planning committee chaired by Ginger Long. Keynoters on "Creating a Culture of Peace for Our Children" were Steve Braunginn, Director of the Urban League of Madison and Ada Deer, UW Dept of Native American Studies. Song leader was Judith Williams. Panels on "Teaching Nonviolence" with Connie Mudore, Sauk Prairie High School, and Roger Williams, UW Madison Boys to Men Project and "Organizing for Economic Justice" with Frances Bartelt and John Peck, co-chairs of CATG. Latchnote address was by Mike Miles, Anathoth, on "Models for a Culture of Peace." After a wine and cheese reception and dinner, WNPJ made the first Peacemakers of the Year awards.

2000 Wisconsin Peacemakers of the Year were Sam Day (Lifetime Award), Jan Provost (over 65), Steve

Watrous (25-65) and Michael Rebholz (under 25). Presentation of the awards was by Frank Boyle, WNPJ founder, and Barb Hoffman, Fox Valley FOR, did special music.

November CATG published the first three brochures on “How the Corporatization of Health Care Hurts Us All, Corporate Military Power and How Corporate Agribusiness Threatens Wisconsin. They are mailed to the entire membership with funding for the series of six provided by a grant from the Wisconsin Community Fund.

November 16 Organizing Meeting for the new Nonviolence Education and Training Task Group (NETTG) which was created at the 2000 Assembly. Mike Miles, Luck, and Sue Nelson, Brodhead are co-chairs.

2001

Fridays in February CATG members Bonnie Block and John Peck do three “Making Corporate Accountability a Reality for WI” workshops in Appleton, La Crosse, and Stevens Point.

April 7 Steering Committee “From Anger to Action—A Consultation for Activists at the UCC Conference Center in De Forest. Three panelists told their stories: Gerhard Fisher, SOA Watch; Bonnie Urfer, Nukewatch and Silence Trident, and Judith Williams, SOA Watch. This was followed by an afternoon of nonviolence training for the organizational representatives present.

April Publication of the 4th annual WNPJ Directory with 87 member organizations listed.

May Ilana Caplan succeeds Carol Kiemel as office manager.

September WNPJ issues “A Call for Peace With Justice in Responding to Terrorism” signed by the Executive Committee, and dozens of member organizations and many individuals. In October the NETTG publishes a brochure titled “*What’s a Peace Maker to Do?*”

October 20 Assembly ’01 “Globalization for Peace Not Profit” at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Madison. Keynote speaker was Njoki Njehu of the 50 Years is Enough Campaign. Two panels were also held. One on “Globalization and War—Case Studies” with Mike Boehm, Peacework Vietnam, Cecilia Zarate-Laun, Colombia Support Network, Dan Rodman, WI Coordinating Council on Nicaragua; and Joe Elder, UW Southeast Asian Studies. The other was “Examples of the People’s Movement for a Just Globalization” with Mary Bottari, Public Citizen’s Trade Watch Campaign, Val Carrol, UW Madison Anti-Sweatshop Coalition; and Bill Lange, Faith Community for Worker Justice.

2001 Wisconsin Peacemakers of the Year are Everett Refior (over 65), Bonnie Urfer (25-65) and Dana Churness (under 25) WI Rep and WNPJ member Mark Miller presented the awards as candles were lit represented each member organization.

2002

January 31 A 100-page Resource Packet on Corporate Accountability was published and distributed with

funding from the Social Justice Council of First Unitarian, Madison. The Packet was compiled by Karen Erkiison.

February/March The CATG published the next three in its series of brochures on corporate accountability. They are titled: 1) *Free Trade or Fair Trade?; How Corporate Sweatshops Threaten WI*; 2) *Corporate Welfare in WI—Time to Reform*; and 3) *Corporate Control of the Mass Media—A Threat to our Democracy?*

April Publication of the 4th annual WNPJ Directory with 99 member organizations listed.

April 6 Steering Committee at the Sun Prairie Public Library with a panel on “Is Military Spending Killing Us?” Panelists were Jim Carpenter, Peace Action and Bob Reuschlein, Peace Economics. The annual Reports from the Field energized participants and the day ended with the Madison Universal Flyers—social change activists are often told to “go fly a kite” so we did!

WNPJ also obtains and urges member groups to use “A Force More Powerful” video series which tells six stories of nonviolent movements that worked.

April 16 & 18 Bonnie Block and John Peck did corporate accountability workshops in Baraboo and Fond du Lac.

June 16-22 First Annual Walk for Peace and Justice from Madison to Milwaukee. Tom Rusch was the Walk organizer and Mike Miles drove the “Peace Bus.”

September Hidegard Dorrer, Waunakee, takes over as Newsletter Editor and Jack Tiffany replaces Mike Miles as co-chair of NETTG. A second brochure is published by NETTG titled “*9-11: An Anniversary for Peacemakers to Remember.*”

October 4 WNPJ Reception for Rita Lasar a founder of September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows at First Unitarian.

October 5 Assembly '02 theme was “Future of Hope” in the Watertown Senior & Community Center. Keynote speaker was Rita Lasar speaking on “A Future of Hope.” Panels included: 1) The Case Against a U.S. Invasion of Iraq with Mike Miles, Tom Seery, and Rae Voegeler; 2) Programs That Work for Young People with Rebecca Fox-Blair, Marilyn Levin, and Natalie Nienhuis; 3) Organizing Together Against a Wider War in Iraq—and Elsewhere facilitated by George Martin, Peace Action; and 4) Combating Ageism—How Young and Old Can Work Together facilitated by Amelia Kuklewicz (WNPJ student intern who helped plan the Assembly) and Marilyn Levin.

The Assembly also adopted a 2003 budget of \$43,400 which is double the 2002 budget and reflected the

decision to hire a part time director by the end of year to replace the staff work done by Chair Bonnie Block. Alfred Meyer is elected as new WNPJ chair, Tricia Denker as Co-chair of NETTG to replace Sue Nelson and Aaron Ellringer as co-chair of the CATG to replace Frances Bartelt who resigned in 2001.

2002 Wisconsin Peacemakers of the Year are Clarence Kailin and Frank Zeidler (Lifetime awards), Lee Brown (over 65), Mike Miles (25-65) and Angela Rose (under 25). Presentations were made by Nan Cheney, past chair.

October 8-10 As a result of the discussion in the Panel on Organizing Against A War in Iraq, WNPJ coordinated a sit-in at the five WI offices of Sen. Herb Kohl to urge him to vote against the “use of force” resolution in Congress.

October WNPJ begins its Yard Signs for Peace project at Fighting Bob Fest by selling over 100 yard signs. In the months ahead during the build-up to Gulf War II in Iraq 10,000 signs are printed with three different colors, designs, and wording. They are sold (\$5 each) all over WI and the Midwest. One is even sent to a US military base in Germany

October John Graf, Janesville, becomes the new office manager but for personal reasons resigns after six weeks. Judy Miner is hired to replace him and begins work on December 6.

2003

January Dana Churness starts work as half time WNPJ Director on January 6.

March 6-7 Consultation for Nonviolence Trainers with Marilyn Levin facilitating. Funding was provided by grants from the Madison Mennonite Church and the Madison Friends Meeting. Thirty nonviolence practitioners gathered at St. Benedict Center to talk about how to increase the level and type of nonviolence training. Five sub-groups are formed and plans for follow-up were made.

March Invasion of Iraq by the US. Newsletter lists the time and location for 38 Wisconsin communities holding regular vigils against the war in Iraq. Nonviolent civil disobedience actions take place at Truax, the home of the Air National Guard, Senator Kohl’s office, and at the Federal Center in Milwaukee.

April 5 Steering Committee at the Sun Prairie Public Library with the theme of “The Money and the Media.” A panel presentation on raising money and using the media was led by Betsy Lawrence, WI Community Fund; Judith Siers-Poisson, Domestic Abuse Intervention Center, and Sanhita SimhaRoy, Progressive Media Project. After lunch hour we were entertained by the Sauk Prairie Peace and Justice Players with a variety of hilarious skits and then heard Reports from the Field. Marco, of Casa Maria in Milwaukee, closed the day with music.

June 15-21 2nd Annual Walk for Peace and Justice from the State Capitol to the Lake Michigan Shore. Mike Miles again drives the Peace Bus.

September A sub-group of the NETTG develops an on-line, ten page resource packet titled “Cultivating Nonviolence” specifically for the approximately 6000 congregations in WI.

October 3-4 Assembly '03 was held in multiple venues in Stevens Point. It began Friday afternoon by joining the weekly peace vigil of the Concerned Citizens of Stevens Point. The evening program was five “Paths to Peace” Affinity Groups followed by a benefit concert.

On Saturday, an interactive keynote was done by David Leeper, Earlham College Peace Studies Program on “Peace Building, Peace, Studies, Peacemakers: Where are we headed?” A lunch of locally grown organic food was provided by the Newman University Parish House. In the afternoon there were reports from the five affinity group discussions: Anti-racist Organizing, Corporate Accountability, Nonviolence Education and Training, Community Grassroots Organizing, and Spirituality Integration. Mike Miles did music. Peacemaker awards closed the Assembly.

Alfred Meyer continues as Chair for WNPJ.

2003 Wisconsin Peacemaker Awards were given to James Missey (Lifetime Award), June Kjome (over 65), Lynn Larson (25-65) and Emily Siekierski (under 25—actually Emily is 13 the youngest awardee ever)

Compiled by Bonnie Block

Dec 5 "A Force More Powerful" Retirement Event for Bonnie Block - First Unitarian Society meeting house - Madison.

2004

March 19 WNPJ Fundraising Event "In Our Name" - First Unitarian Society - as we send off members Marion Stuenkel and Fred Brancel to Iraq as part of the Christian Peacemakers Team

March 20 Statewide Gathering in Stevens Point to Protest the 1 Year Occupation of Iraq. Dana Churness is no

longer with WNPJ. Judy Miner continues part-time as the WNPJ staff.

April 3 WNPJ Steering Committee Meeting - Cedar Community Learning Center, West Bend. Introduction of computerized version of the Member Directory, 7th edition with 124 member groups, plus a discussion of the new personnel policy and staffing at WNPJ.

April 15 WNPJ statewide tax-action day, to highlight the tax breaks WI banks receive. WNPJ moves its accounts to the Credit Union, after the protest.

May WNPJ receives anonymous \$10,000 grant as a membership matching grant

June 20 Walk for Peace (9.2 miles) at the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair - Custer - "No Blood for Oil"

July - Aug First editions of the bi-monthly Net-Works News bulletins, alternating with the newsletter

October 1-2 WNPJ Assembly "Dialogue toward a Global Community" and Silent Auction - Madison. First Unitarian Society Meeting House. Friday night presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards for Nan Cheney and Midge Miller. Alfred Meyer continues as Chair for WNPJ.

Peacemakers of the Year: Bob Poeschl (Oshkosh), Gail Vaughn (LaCrosse), and Tom Arbogast (Sauk)

Dec. 11 - WNPJ Celebration of the work of John Peck - Madison. Pres House.

2005

Jan Received \$15,000 A.J. Miller Foundation Grant plus a \$2,000 membership match grant from an anonymous source

Feb. WNPJ joins United for Peace and Justice, to work with a national group.

March 19 2nd Anniversary Protests of the Invasion of Iraq, coordinated statewide by WNPJ. Wisconsin had over 36 communities organize events throughout the state this day.

April 2 WNPJ Steering Committee Meeting - Pine Lake United Methodist Camp near Westfield. Introduction of the Peace Plan and planks. 8th Annual Member Directory presented to member groups, with 136 groups listed.

May 26 Steve Burns hired as part-time Program Coordinator for WNPJ

June 19 WNPJ's Walk for Peace (1.2 miles) at the Midwest Energy Association fair - Custer
WNPJ goes "live" with new computer system, developed by Steve Ringwood and Bill Braham.

July 14 First organization meeting of Bring the Troops Home Coalition - Madison. Goal is to get a Referendum question on the April 4th, 2006, ballot across the state. Coordinated by Steve Burns and Ann Batiza in Madison. Steve is also coordinating statewide Referendum efforts with publicity and website management as over 30 communities work toward this Referendum goal.

Aug. Received \$15,000 A.J. Miller Foundation Grant.

Aug. 6 - 8 Coordinated over 20 statewide Hiroshima/Nagasaki Vigils, in conjunction with UFPJ.

Aug 12-13 WNPJ Executive Committee Retreat, at the Barn of Henk Newenhouse in Gotham. Peace Plan discussion, and Speakers Bureau work.

Sept 9 - 11 Camp LaFollette, in Wisconsin Dells, organized by WNPJ with Hiroshi Kanno and Tricia Denker to coordinate activities with Fighting BobFest in baraboo.

Sept 30 WNPJ now has 150 member groups, as Driftless Community Radio of Viroqua joins WNPJ.

Oct. 8 WNPJ 15th Annual Assembly - Watertown. Collaborative meeting with Madison-area Urban Ministry focusing on Returning Prisoners and participants had a chance to join in a simulation. Alfred Meyer continues as Chair of WNPJ. Cecil Findley Vice Chair – Sheila Spear Treasurer and Abby Adams, Secretary.

Peacemakers of the Year: Sarah Santiago and Elise Muldrow(East High School - Madison), Guy Wolf (LaCrosse) and Andy Anderson (Superior/Duluth).

Nov. 11th 18,911 referendum signatures turned into the Madison City Clerk's office to Bring the Troops Home Now, coordinated by Steve Burns

Dec. 6 Lifetime Achievement Award presentation/fundraiser for Maureen McDonnell, O.P. at Edgewood College in Madison

2006

152 Member Groups – 350 individual members

Feb – May WNPJ initiates Work-Study program through UW, employing Ben Ratliffe to work on In the News

and the Speakers Bureau; Dan Miner-Nordstrom to work on the website; and Monique McDougal to work on the Fair Trade Directory. Judy Miner and Steve Burns continue staffing the office at 20/hrs a week each.

March 24- 26 Regional Meeting of WNPJ staff and the member groups of the Northwest in Brule

April 1 Executive Committee Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting in Brookfield, in collaboration with the Candlelight Coalition Peace Conference with Kathy Kelly.

April 4 Bring Our Troops Home Wins in 24 of 32 WI communities, with Steve Burns coordinating the Referendum, giving WNPJ international and national press coverage

April 20 \$500 Special Opportunity Grant received from WI Community Fund for the Work-study new program and Fair Trade Directory

May Quick Books installed by Steve Hingle, accountant, to facilitate payroll and tax preparation

May 16. Fair Trade & Local Food Directory ready for publication.

June – WNPJ Tables at MREA Energy Fair in Custer – participates in a Breakfast Fundraiser and leads a Walk for Peace.

August – EC retreat at Henk Newenhouse's farm in Gotham (Judy takes leave of absence for the Fall, as she travels to Ukraine) Ilana Caplan fills in at the office, 10 hrs/week through the fall.

October – 16th Annual Assembly – La Crosse. Peace for All Ages, with Educator for Peace, Kathy Sullivan as featured speaker. Organized by Mary Beth Schlagheck. New officers – Alf Meyer, Chair; Janet Parker Vice-chair; Stefania San, treasurer; and Barb Boehme, sec. Peacemakers: Xiong Xong, Janet Parker and Dell Schwaller/Fred Brancel. \$500 WCF SOG awarded to support the the speakers fees.

Dec. 9 – Lifetime Achievement Event for George Martin in Milwaukee.

2007

152 member groups and 450 individual members.

Jan – Ben Ratliffe hired as Outreach Coordinator for 5 hours week; Steve Burns is now working for 15 hrs/week and Judy Miner returns from Ukraine.

Jan 24th – Wisconsin sends 7 buses of activists to Washington DC for antiwar work and lobbying. 2nd edition of the Fair Trade Directory published with 94 pages.

Feb. 24th – EC meeting when Alfred Meyer resigns, moving to Washington DC – and Janet Parker and John Peck are selected as new co-chairs. Peacemakers Celebration for the work of Alfred Meyer, Cecil Findley and Sheila Spear the Red Gym in Madison (in a blizzard!)

March 20th – over 30 anti-war events organized across WI to Bring Our Troops Home on the 4th Anniversary.
March 26, submitted a grant to the Muste Foundation for \$2,000 for Speakers Bureau

April – Spring Steering Committee Meeting in the Capitol – Bev Speer of WI Democracy Campaign, George Martin of Peace Action WI, and Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, lead the discussion of how to translate grassroots activism into legislative change.

June - Steve Burns and Judy Miner attend the national conference for United for Peace and Justice, and Steve is elected to the national steering committee.

Summer 2007 – Impeachment summer; orange everywhere as Dane County passes a resolution to Impeach Bush and Cheney. WNPj attains our \$2,000 anonymous membership grant MATCH in August.

Aug 17-18 Executive Committee Retreat at Sheila Spears home in Oregon – with a presentation by Groundwork on racial justice. WNPJ will expand focus of work to immigrant rights and prison justice. WNPJ staff change: Ben Ratliffe goes back to school – current staff is now Steve Burns (15 hrs) and Judy Miner (20 hrs).

Sept. Staffing change: Steve drops to 10 hours/wk and Todd Dennis comes on as a Fall work-study student, supervised by Steve on anti-war work.

Oct. Fall Assembly in Racine – with Keynote by Simon Harak of Peacemaking Center of Marquette University, on The Corporate Interest in War. Peacemaker Awards to Sarah Quinn, Fr. Jim Murphy and Sue Ruggles. Lifetime Award to John LaForge. Board co-chairs continue with Janet Parker and John Peck, with the key components of WNPJ work being anti-war, immigrant rights and prison justice – with racial diversity being key to all areas. Stefania Sani continues as treasurer, and Dennis Bergren as Secretary.

October 27, 2007 – Chicago Regional Anti-war UFPJ Rally. WNPJ coordinates 17 buses traveling from our state/region, including 4 WNPj buses captained by Mary Beth Schlagheck Judy Miner, Connie Threinen and Todd Kummer.

Dec. Board meeting in Madison.

2008

156 member groups and 427 individual members

3 Spring interns/ UW-work-study students hired at WNPJ – Todd Dennis, Jhoselis Briosos (immigration issues) and Brett Preuss (grant-writing). Brett writes a successful Resist! Grant for \$1,500 for general support.

March 1st Board meeting, followed by a Fundraising Celebration for all who Vigil for Peace across our state, organized by Mary Beth Schlagheck. Held at the Pres House – attended by nearly 100 participants – including a potluck, vigil accounts, a power-point show and music by the Raging Grannies and Baba Ghanooj of Waupaca. And the Gospelairees with Will and Dot Williams.

Steering Committee Meeting in Prairie du Sac in April - “Its the Media” with keynote Diane Farsetta, and workshops with Gil Halsted of WPR and the Progressive staff – and doing leaflets/flyers with Steve Burns. Kathy Kelly is a guest, too – talking about the upcoming Witness Against War' walk planned for the summer of 2008.

June – Pancakes for Peace and Walk at the MREA Energy Fair– organized by Cham Nusz (8 ½ months pregnant). Co-sponsored by People for Peace, Waupaca. Todd continues his work-study position this summer.

July- August – WNPJ groups and members host the WAW Walk across our state and region. - for 12 core Voices for Creative Nonviolence walkers led by Dan Pearson - and many day-walkers. 13 are arrested at Ft. McCoy on Aug. 10th, protesting the use of the National Guard in wars abroad.

August 15th - 16th Board Retreat on Diversity and Racial Justice #2 – at Artha Sustainable Living Center near Amherst, host Cham Nusz. Workshops led by Marilyn Miller, Groundwork, and the Diversity Circle trainers from Wausa (Tom McGrath, Carol Lukens and Barb Munson) . The Budget for 2009 and Slate for the new Board approved. Discussion on WNPj position on Afghanistan war and occupation – with final positions to be discussed at our Fall Assembly, scheduled for Oct 4th in Milwaukee.

Fall work study students hired are Sarah Quinn, prison justice work – and Todd Dennis continues with anti-war work. Politics in the air – with the presidential election coming up this Fall.

Sept. 6th Fighting Bobfest tabling

Oct. 4th Fall Assembly in Milwaukee, hosted by Marquette University Peacemaking Center. Speakers: Dan Kenney and Patricia Isasa talking of SOA and Private Security Firm: Blackwater. New Board (23 members) approved and budget for 2009. Peacemakers '08: Sr.Lillia Langreck, Cassandra Dixon, Karen Drydyk and Paul Melling. Steve cuts down to 5/hrs. Week.

Nov. 4th – Barack Obama elected.

Nov. 16th WNPJ Board meeting in Madison, with Bill Christofferson and Cham Nusz co-chairing. Directions and work groups for 2009 include anti-war work, immigrant rights, prison justice and a new proposal for environmental justice. A decision was made to offer Todd Dennis a 20-hour staff position starting in January, to work on Guard Home Campaign and counter-recruitment around the state.

Dec. 12 – 14 Steve Burns and Judy Miner attend the National UFPJ conference in Chicago. Steve Carlson of Trego is elected to represent WNPJ on the national steering committee.

Dec. 29th – Cassandra Dixon, Gail Vaughn and Bonnie Urfer (all WNPj Peacemakers of the Year) arrested at Ft. McCoy – as they protest the use of the WI National Guard for the continuing war in Iraq – and now Afghanistan.

Dec. 31st – protests throughout the state about the bombing of Gaza by the Israeli government.

Dec. Wreath sales! Thanks to Janet and Seth and Stefania and crew for making 75 peace wreaths to sell/ ~ \$50 each!

2009

165 member groups and 430 individual members

Todd Dennis hired as part-time staff, (20 hrs/wk) – along with Judy Miner (20 hrs/wk) and Steve burns (5 hrs/wk).

January 6th – protests erupt across the WNPJ region, following the bombing of Gaza by Israel. 150 march in Madison, with petitions to our national representatives – and 150 in Milwaukee.

Jan. 11th. Fundraising Event at the Harmony Bar and Grill – for Todd Dennis position - for statewide outreach work with the Guard Home Campaign and counter-recruitment.

March – Steering Committee Meeting in Plover, WI – on counter-recruitment; with Eagle River peace teacher, Deb Foster and UW-Madison professor, Carl Strafstrom, presenters.

June – Pancakes for Peace at the Midwest Renewable energy Fair in Custer, followed by our third board meeting.

August – Board retreat and anti-racism training III at Artha Sustainable Living Center. Nan Cheney and Bonnie Block participated in a strategic planning session looking at where we've come from....and then John Peck

facilitated more discussion on where WNPJ is going. WNPJ will coordinate a Guard Home Campaign this fall, Carbon Free Nuclear Free Campaign this fall and winter, work on plans for a summer peace camp for youth, work on media throughout the next year, finding ways to better spread the news of all WNPJ does – and plan outreach trips by staff to visit member groups across the state.

Sept – WNPJ was accepted into Community Shares of Wisconsin – and the Board approved membership, which includes an annual audit. Michaela Machicote and Emily Nelson join WNPJ as work study students from UW-Madison. They developed a special social justice film screening, for UW-Madison students for the Spring.

Oct. 3rd – Annual Fall Assembly, in Madison WI. 70 people attended the day-long conference on “Connecting the Dots” with panelists Guy Wolf, Pablo Ruiz, Renee Crawford and Jennifer Nordstrom. The 2010 Budget was approved, the slate of Board members accepted, with Monica Adams nominated from the floor. And the state of the Network was presented by co-chairs Bill Christofferson and Cham Nusz. The Raging Grannies and Gospelaire sang to a crowd twice that size during the Peacemaker of the Year presentation that afternoon, when 7 were honored for their peace and justice work: Don Hoffman, Will Williams, Elaine Kinch, Josh Bartz, Jason Moon, Dartanian Lewis and Jannet Arenas. Lifetime Award recipients are professors Joe Elder and Esther Heffernan, OP – and we celebrated with them at a reception, emceed by John Nichols that evening, all at the Goodman Community Center.

Nov.- Diane Farsetta joins WNPJ staff, working 10 hrs/wk on the Carbon Free Nuclear Free Campaign, on a 6-month contract. Todd Dennis leaves WNPJ, finding full-time employment with Porchlight, Inc in Madison.

2010

164 member groups and 388 individual members

Jan 16th – First Board meeting of the year, held in Madison.

Feb. 14th

15 WNPJ Volunteers helped make a collaborative Pancakes for Peace breakfast a success. We worked with our member group Madison Hours on this project.

Feb 23

Diane Farsetta coordinated the Carbon Free Nuclear Free Lobby Day at the Capitol on behalf of WNPJ, with 40 people attending to say 'take nuclear language out of the proposed Clean Energy bill.

March WNPJ approached by the WI Historical Society to have our photos, files and campaign notes archived in the State files for all to use.

March 9th Hearing before the Veterans Affairs Committee at the Capitol in support of the Safeguard the Guard bill. Here is a list of [news reports](#), along with a [photo gallery](#), WNPJ's own [report on the hearing](#), and [written testimony](#) of some of those testifying. This modest and reasonable bill is part of a long-term campaign against the powerful forces that push us towards Executive rule by a President who will be able to send our troops anywhere in the world at a moment's notice for unlimited and ill-defined missions. Success over those powerful forces isn't going to come easily or quickly, but all involved with this work of WNPJ deserve credit for being willing to give us a push in the right direction here in Wisconsin. - campaign led by Jim Draeger and Steve Burns.

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March of 2003, Wisconsin has often led states many times its size in the number and variety of pro-peace events held on the invasion's anniversary, and 2010, which marks the seventh year of the Iraq war and occupation, is no exception. Nineteen Wisconsin communities, from Chippewa Falls to Waupaca, have plans for events that call for peace and mark the seventh anniversary, with roadside vigils, teach-ins, marches and public prayers. Read the complete list [here...](#)

March 20th – 7th anniversary of the Iraq war. In Madison, this is commemorated by an Iraq and Afghanistan Teach-In at UW-Madison, organized by Joe Elder and Adam Schesch. Special note: All panelists at this event are WNPJ members.

April 29th “Kick-off” event leading up to WNPJ's 20th year – in Milwaukee, with speakers Kathy Kelly, Matt Rothschild and founder, Frank Boyle. A phone-tree was initiated contacting WNPJ members (outside of the Madison area) to become sponsors of this event.

May – Steering Committee Meeting – at the Oneida Sustainable Farm – in NE Wisconsin, near Green Bay.

June 2010 – another Pancakes for Peace event at the MREA Fair, followed by our Board meeting

August 1st - Diane Farsetta begins her position of Executive Director of WNPJ; Judy Miner resumes her office coordinator position, and Steve Burns continues as Program coordinator. 1 FTE total for staffing.

mid-August Board Retreat, at the Farley Center, near Verona. Marilyn Miller, Liz Klainot and Barb Munson coordinate our 4th annual anti-racism workshop.

Sept 1 - Marie Russo begins work at WNPJ as a UW_Madison work study student.

Oct. 2nd. Fall Assembly at the River Arts Center in Prairie du Sac – with key notes Chip Berlet and Christine Neumann-Ortiz – Immigration and hate groups. Peacemaker awards to Ed Steichen, Christine Neumann-Ortiz and the Prescott 11 – for their high school work – shining the light on the stereotypes of Indian ascots in sports. The Assembly work was followed by the *2010 Lifetime Achievement recognition of the Madison Raging Grannies*, em-ceed by Stacy Harbaugh. The Budget and new slate of WNPJ Board members accepted by consensus.

Oct. 21st - 2nd annual audit, by Johnson and Block, Inc – with Judy Miner, Diane Farsetta and new treasurer, Jennifer First.

Throughout November – WNPJ makes 75 Holiday Peace Wreaths for the Madison community.

Dec. 4th – WNPJ tables at the Fair Trade Holiday Fair and the Madison HOURS Fair.

Dec. 5th - First BOARD meeting for the year, in Madison – coordinated by Diane Farsetta, and facilitated by Jim Draeger. Plans in place for promoting the 20th anniversary events for WNPJ, Feb. 19th and 23rd, in 2011. Sponsorship calls begin this month, with a goal of raising \$10,000.

2011

164 member groups and 398 individual members

Staff

- Diane Farsetta – director, Judy Miner - office, Steve Burns – program (staff positions sharing one full-time position); Steve Books (VFP liason) and Ilana Caplan (newsletter layout) continuing in their respective roles, as LTE's.
- Chris Reeder has worked on the Solidarity Sing-Along since March, 2011! WNPJ has been able to compensate him for some of his time, from Sing-Along donations, button and T-shirt sales and one grant for the Sing-Along. He's been paid at 10 hours / week July through November, when the group became 'independent', joining WNPJ as a member group.
- Work / study - Marie Russo did great work, putting in 5 hours / week (Sept 2010 - May 2011), including updating our media list, helping with our first statewide candidates survey, and designing leaflets for the Carbon Free, Nuclear Free campaign. **Carl Sack joined the WNPJ staff as our intern/work study student in September 2011 – working on the mining issue.**
- Volunteers - Regular office volunteers include Fei Ma, who continues to help with website

postings, and Sally Paul, who put in 10 hours / week over the past summer, helping greatly during Steve's absence (he spent ~5 weeks in Nicaragua, while on unpaid leave) by putting out WNPJ's action alerts. Kathy Walsh joined in as a regular volunteer in the Fall. Barb Boehme took over as WNPJ's representative to Community Shares of Wisconsin, from Sheila Spear (who continues to serve as our excellent newsletter editor!).

- Board officers, Board members and active committees make WNPJ what it is! Active committees over the year include 20th anniversary planning, Fundraising, Steering committee and Member assembly planning.
- Board continued its commitment to anti-racism with retreat at Farley Center, discussion led by Groundwork volunteers (and proposed WNPJ Board members) Eva Shulte and Liz Bruno
- **Program**
 - 20th anniversary included a multi-issue lobby day that addressed nuclear / clean energy, drone facility, earned release prison programs and anti-immigrant Arizona-like bill
 - Fall Assembly in Madison, Oct. 8th – with Winona LaDuke as the keynote, and celebration honoring Fred Risser, with a Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Active work groups on anti-militarism, immigrant rights, prison justice, and the environment
- Anti-militarism work against proposed drone facility - and vigils for peace supported across the state.
- Immigrant rights - meetings with legislators, active member of new Wisconsin Network on Immigrant and Refugee Rights (convened by Voces)
- Environment - continuing to educate state legislators on nuclear issues with a September lit drop and coalition-building with Carbon Free, Nuclear Free WI partners; active member of Penoquee support group against mining in northern WI, also focus of both Assembly and Awards Reception today
- Prison reform - last newsletter focused on prison issues; coordinated a meeting with MUM and Gil Halsted on “earned release” -
- **Events**
 - Spring steering committee meeting in Mauston focused on drones, featuring Kathy Kelly
- Renewable Energy Fair - Pancakes for Peace, Board meeting and info meeting on mining proposal, featuring Frank Koehn of Save the Water's Edge and proposed WNPJ Board member Kelly Westlund
- Also tabled at BobFest, Madison Farmer's Market, Lanterns for Peace, Madison Fair Trade Holiday Fair – selling our Peace Wreaths!

On anti-militarism issues, WNPJ has mounted an active education and outreach campaign around the drone aircraft training facility proposed for the Wisconsin National Guard. In April, we held our annual spring meeting in Mauston, a community neighboring the proposed facility. The featured speaker, international human rights activist Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, spoke movingly of her experiences visiting families in Afghanistan and Pakistan who are terrorized by U.S. drone bombings.

Coordinated an organizational letter against the drone facility. Forty organizations from across the state signed onto the letter, which we sent to the Governor, all state legislators, the Building Commission and state military leaders. We continue to collect individuals' signatures on online and print petitions against the drone facility, and recently designed a brochure on it and problems with drone warfare in general, for tabling at upcoming events. We also drafted and organized a letter to Representative Ron Kind, whose district includes the proposed facility, encouraging him to oppose federal funding for it.

In May and June, WNPJ supported the "war money home" campaign led by CODEPINK. We alerted our members to a resolution at the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in June, which urged Congress to end the

occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and direct more resources towards struggling communities at home. We entered into a dialogue with Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, which led to his co-sponsoring and promoting the war money home resolution. Another Wisconsin mayor, John Dickert of Racine, also supported it.

On environmental issues, WNPJ continues to engage members of the public and policymakers on the dangers of nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons. In April, nuclear power industry executive John Rowe was the keynote speaker at the UW Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies annual Earth Day Conference. WNPJ designed an anti-nuclear leaflet for the event and organized an informational protest outside it. In July, we organized media interviews and speaking events for Dr. Tad Daley, a writing fellow with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the author of "Apocalypse Never: Forging the Path to a Nuclear-Free World." We helped organize and promoted Lanterns for Peace events across the state, which commemorate the anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in early August. WNPJ is also working with the Carbon Free, Nuclear Free Wisconsin coalition on an informational packet on the dangers of nuclear power, for state legislators.

WNPJ is supporting environmentalists in northern Wisconsin, and helping build coalitions statewide, to stop a new push to strip mine iron in the Penokee Hills and Bad River Watershed of Iron and Ashland Counties, which is part of the Lake Superior basin. In June, WNPJ organized an informational session on the mining push at the Midwest Energy Fair, which drew dozens of activists from around the state. WNPJ is also helping establish an anti-mining coalition, called "Madison for the Penokees," to support and complement the good education, research and advocacy by northern Wisconsin activists. In October, we're excited to be welcoming Winona LaDuke as the keynote speaker at our Fall Member Assembly, which will focus on the mining threat.

On immigrant rights, WNPJ follows the lead of two strong member groups, Voces de la Frontera and Union de Trabajadores Immigrantes. Sadly, there are four anti-immigrant bills currently before the state legislature, including one based on Arizona's infamous SB1070. WNPJ officially took a stance against this heinous bill, sending a statement to media outlets and activating our membership on the issue. Over the past year, our immigrant rights work group has challenged the disinformation and racism behind such measures via letters to the editor. Since the legislature is likely to take up these bills in the fall, we are currently working with our member groups and allies to educate the public and meet with legislators.

To support workers' rights, WNPJ continues to organize and support the Solidarity Sing-Along, a daily protest where up to hundreds of people sing labor, civil rights and new Wisconsin-specific protest songs in the state Capitol over the noon hour. This simple yet powerful protest - now in its 22nd week! - is the only regular, ongoing and publicly visible manifestation of resistance to the recent removal of public workers' collective bargaining rights, as well as other extreme policies championed by the governor and many legislators.

The Sing-Along has drawn in people beyond the usual suspects, with its participatory, positive and family-friendly tone. It's also a gathering and information sharing opportunity for activists, and provides an opportunity for high-profile visitors - including musicians Michelle Shocked and Arlo Guthrie - to express their support for the Wisconsin struggle by joining the Solidarity Sing-Along.

These activities are all in addition to WNPJ's role as a grassroots activist communications and resource-sharing hub. We send out events bulletin and action alert emails weekly; maintain a frequently-updated website, along with presences on Facebook and Twitter; organize meetings in the spring and fall which are major informational, networking and planning opportunities for activists from across the state; and regularly assist member groups with policy issues and media and public outreach.

January 2012 – 158 member groups and 382 individual members

Feb. 19th – WNPJ's 21st Birthday – we celebrated with a Madison community event, Growing the Seeds of Peace and Justice – potluck, art projects for kids and a seed exchange.

June 10th – Pancakes for Peace and Solidarity at the Wilmar Center, Madison. Judy Miner retires from WNPJ office coordinator position after almost 10 years in the office. Many folks joined us that day including the Madison Raging Grannies, Medea Benjamin, Senator Mark Miller and Daithi Wolfe and the Solidarity Singers – to wish her well.

June 19th – Pancakes for Peace at the MREA Renewable Energy Fair. WNPJ hosts two workshops during this weekend as well – Bring our War \$\$ Home, and a Mining workshop.

July 31st. Steve Burns' last day at WNPJ, as he has a new position as faculty in the math department of MATC. August 1st. Page Metcalf is hired as new staff, office coordination, 5 hours/week.

Special edition of the History of WNPJ's lawn sign project

Researched and submitted by Bonnie Block Oct. 2010

A Short History of Yard Signs for Peace

IRVP

In August of 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait resulting in UN sanctions upon Iraq along with a January 15, 1991 deadline for withdrawal. In response, a group of concerned people of faith (Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Quakers, and Unitarians) began gathering to oppose war against Iraq. They called themselves the Inter-Religious Voice for Peace (IRVP) and held teach-ins at Edgewood College, demonstrations in various locations and vigils—the largest being a peace prayer vigil on January 15th at St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Madison with over 1000 people in attendance between the hours of 5 and 10 pm. People were always urged to contact their elected officials to call for a negotiated settlement rather than war.

To fund its work its work IRVP created the Yard Signs for Peace project. The yard signs were like those used during political campaigns. The first sign was a red and white one with two lines of text: *“Take Time for Peace, No Mid East War.”* After the US started the aerial bombing of Iraq on January 17, 1991, the signs were changed to read: *“It's Time for Peace, Stop the War.”* Hundreds, if not thousands, of them were sold for \$5 each. The pick-up place for signs was the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Monona where Fr. Jim Murphy was the priest.

Another yard sign was created by an ad hoc group of young people living on the east side of Madison. They created a red, white, and blue yard sign that said *“United for Peace”* with an American flag morphing into a peace dove.

After the ceasefire was declared by the U.S. on February 28, 1991 the sale of yard signs declined. IRVP changed its name to the Inter-Religious Voice for Peace and Justice and worked to end the continued bombing in the no fly zones of Iraq and the drastic economic sanctions against Iraq that ultimately resulted in the deaths of half a million children. Work was also begun to focus on issues of racism and militarism.

On February 10, 1993 representatives from IRVPJ and the newly formed Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice met with recently elected Senator Russ Feingold “to introduce ourselves and to set up a line of communication.” However, when key leaders Pauline Lippman and Rico Gutstein moved out of state and there was the usual return to everyday life that occurs when our country is no longer at war the result was that IRVPJ disbanded. The left over yard signs were stored at the home of Marian Fredal.

WNPJ

A parallel effort to oppose the Gulf War was begun on February 23, 1991 with a hearing in the State Capitol called by Rep. Frank Boyle and organized by his staffer, Nan Cheney. (Ironically that was the same day that the ground assault against Iraq began.) From this gathering of 350 people from all over the state the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice was formed. For a longer history of WNPJ see

<http://www.wnpj.org/pdf/history07.pdf>

The Yard Signs for Peace project was renewed in 2002 as a response to the drumbeat for war another war in Iraq. Bonnie Block, who had been a member of IRVP and was now Chair of WNPJ, tracked down the stored "*It's Time for Peace*" yard signs and took them to Baraboo for the first Fighting Bob Fest in September of that year. Close to one hundred signs were sold and this provided the seed money to revive this project by allowing individuals to publically campaign for peace.

In addition, the group that sold the "*United for Peace*" signs contacted WNPJ and said they had ordered more yard signs but couldn't afford to pay for them and asked if WNPJ would like to take over the production and sale of that red, white and blue sign as well. WNPJ did so.

As it looked more and more likely that the US would invade Iraq, a third yard sign was designed and began distribution on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday in January of 2003. It was a blue and white sign with a peace dove and King's words from his "*A Time to Break Silence*" speech against the Vietnam War; "*War is Not the Answer.*" Bumper stickers of the same kind were also produced and sold for one dollar.

During the months immediately before and after the beginning of the 2nd Iraq War on March 20, 2003, about 10,000 of these yard signs were sold all over Wisconsin. WNPJ member organizations such as Lakeshore Peacemakers in Manitowoc, Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross in Green Bay, Congregation of St. Agnes in Fond du Lac, the La Crosse Interfaith Justice and Peace Network, and Peace Action in Milwaukee distributed the signs. In addition, individuals in Omro, Platteville, Janesville, Madison, Milwaukee, West Bend, Sauk Prairie and elsewhere sold signs to folks they knew. Some signs were distributed in Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa and South Dakota. One was even shipped to Germany to a family member of someone serving on a military base there.

As the war turned into the extended U.S. occupation of Iraq, sales of these Yard Signs for Peace dwindled though another 1,000 were produced as replacement signs for those who continued to have them in their front yards or windows and for people seeing them for the first time at events where WNPJ had an information table.

Beginning in 2009, the yard signs had a new twist linking war and our country's desire for oil. This was a result of WNPJ expanding its focus to energy and environment issues and holding an annual Pancakes for Peace breakfast at the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair in Amherst. The new signs have the same blue and white colors and the phrase "*War is Not the Answer*" on one side. The other side says "*The Answer is Blowing on the Wind*" with a windmill graphic or "*The Answer Rises Every Morning*" with a graphic of the sun. These new signs are seen in front yards through out Madison and other parts of the state.

It's hard to evaluate the impact of the twenty-year "Yard Signs for Peace" project. Certainly it gave individuals the ability to publicly express their opinion against the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan and it helped provide funding for at least two peace organizations. It may have also helped to bring people together so that during the height of the Iraq War there were weekly peace vigils in sixty communities all over the state. See WNPJ's on-going Peace and Justice Calendar at www.wnpj.org for current vigils.

It might have also influenced the success of the spring 2006 effort led by WNPJ that had "Bring Our Troops Home" referendums on the ballot in 32 Wisconsin communities (it won in 24 of them) and the

2009 “Bring the Guard Home” initiative to pass legislation that would enact legal safeguards to protect the members of the Wisconsin National Guard from unlawful deployments.

Whatever else the project accomplished may never be known, but it is one citizen effort to reach the long term goal to abolish war.



