Despite the fact our nation is weary after 13 years of post-9/11 wars, we are embroiled in yet another war, this time on the so-called Islamic State. And though our bombs produced neither peace nor stability in Iraq and Afghanistan, but rather unleashed a firestorm of tribal and sectarian violence and a flood of arms circulating in that region, we are being led into doing it all over again.

Our homeland has not been pillaged or bombed, nor have we lost hundreds of thousands of our citizens to the ensuing violence, hunger, and lack of water and health care that inevitably follow warfare. Large segments of our population have not been forced into refugee camps. Even so, Americans are beginning to understand that 13 years of war cost us dearly. But those most addicted to war, and those who profit from it, continue to wage it and refuse to recognize the effects of their addiction upon others.

Here at home, military personnel bear the brunt of the physical and psychological effects of these “Wars on Terror.” Of the 2.5 million combat troops deployed, over 50% suffer chronic pain, 20% wrestle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or depression, and another 20% suffer from Traumatic Brain Injury sustained in battle. These signature injuries translate to a suicide rate of one active service member and 22 veterans each and every day. Since our Wars on Terror began, more than 6,800 American troops (and 6,780 private contractors) have died, and 970,000 new disability claims are pending before the VA.

Economically, the effects of these wars have been staggering. While Congress trims programs for basic human needs, our costs of post-9/11 wars -- including future veteran care -- stand at $4.4 trillion. In the same period, we spent $7.6 trillion on defense and homeland security. Our Pentagon, Homeland Security, and other military spending now exceeds almost all other nations combined.

Yet, research shows that spending those same dollars on peaceful industry: education, health care, infrastructure, and renewable energy -- produces more and, in most cases, better paying jobs.

War does not make us safer. It creates more enemies and extends the battlefield worldwide. The Islamic State uses our bombing to recruit new members, while our use of torture and weaponized drones tarnishes our moral image.

War is destroying our planet. Our Pentagon is the largest institutional consumer of oil and biggest producer of toxic waste, dumping more pesticides, defoliants, solvents, petroleum, lead, mercury, and depleted uranium than the five biggest American chemical corporations combined. According to Oil Change International, “If the war were ranked as a country in terms of annual emissions, it would emit more carbon dioxide than 60 percent of all countries on the planet.”

In Memoriam and Appreciation for long-time friend, collaborator, and NC Peace Action printer, Gary Cappy of Grass Roots Press

In this Issue

| Breaking Our War Addiction | 1, 2 |
| Peace is This Moment | 2 |
| From Bull Run to Basra | 3, |
| Celebrating 400 Months | 4 |
| “Friendly Folks” Exhibit | 5 |
| Peacemakers in Asheville | 5 |
| Poetry for Peace | 5 |
| Peace & Peacemakers in Raleigh | 6, 7 |
| Peace Facts You Should Know | 7 |
Continuing to ignore these negative consequences of war points to an addiction over which we seem to have no control. As with any addiction, breaking free is neither simple nor cost-free. War profiteers will see their profits dwindle and will need to transition to new industry. Young people will need to find other ways to challenge themselves to “be all that they can be.” Politicians will need to find other ways to look strong and win votes. So, what is proposed will likely be met with skepticism and resistance until more of us are sufficiently disenchanted with wars to “break clean.”

1. **Acknowledge our addiction and limitations.** Admit we are addicted to war, and war makes us less—not more—safe and secure. As powerful as we are, we cannot bend others to our will by bombing and occupying their homelands.

2. **Recognize the higher power of our theological and moral leaders** and call upon them to form a “coalition of the willing,” condemning war and promoting human rights for all.

3. **Examine past errors in using war as a tool of foreign policy,** errors that have brought grave harm to millions of people including our own citizens, and make amends to those who have suffered.

4. **Learn new ways of dealing with nations that abuse human rights,** or that harbor the resources we desire, using a new code of international conduct. Work through the United Nations and the International Court, rather than acting unilaterally to advance our own interests.

5. **Help others suffering from the same addiction** by halting the sale and stockpiling of weapons while finding new avenues for economic growth that will not destroy our planet.

---

**Curt A. Torell of Carrboro is board treasurer for Quaker House in Fayetteville. Originally printed as an op-ed for the News & Observer, November 23, 2014. Article re-printed with Mr. Torell’s permission.**

---

“World peace through nonviolent means is neither absurd nor unattainable. All other methods have failed. Thus we must begin anew. Nonviolence is a good starting point. Those of us who believe in this method can be voices of reason, sanity, and understanding amid the voices of violence, hatred, and emotion. We can very well set a mood of peace out of which a system of peace can be built.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr., December 1964

---

**Peace is this moment without judgment**

Do you think peace requires an end to war or tigers only eating vegetable? Does peace require an absence from your boss, your spouse, yourself? Do you think peace will come from some other place than here? Some other time than now? In some other heart than yours? Peace is this moment without judgment. That is all.

This moment in the heart-space where everything that is, is welcome. Peace is this moment without thinking that is should be some other way. That you should feel some other thing. That your life should unfold according to your plans. Peace is this moment without judgment. This moment in the heart-space where everything that is, is welcome.

Poem by Dorothy Hunt, find more of her poetry at [http://www.dorothyhunt.org/](http://www.dorothyhunt.org/)
In 2011, I received a call from NC Peace Action Director, Betsy Crites, describing a Durham Herald-Sun Op-Ed submitted by WW II veteran, Sam Winstead. Sam shared both the first name and birthdate, May 22, with his grandson, a NC National Guardsman serving his 2nd tour in Iraq. Young Sam wrote about his distress, “We don’t want to be here, the people don’t want us here, we’re tearing this beautiful country apart!”

The WW II vet had a unique perspective. Not only did his own father serve in WW I, but his grandfather was a veteran of the Civil War, while he himself had fought in some of the most ferocious battles of WW II on the Pacific islands of Okinawa and Peleliu. Sam could hear the cries echoing through the generations, in what struck him as a host of Winstead family trials reflecting a world gone mad.

Sam didn’t know how to respond to his grandson’s plea, but he knew he had to do something. He finally decided on a bicycle ride from Raleigh to Washington, DC, a 350 mile 7-day Ride for Peace. It’s not like Sam was a bicycle rider. In fact, Sam hadn’t ridden a bicycle more than 5 miles since his 16th birthday in 1941. But the idea struck Sam as something the retired farmer from Person County could do. He wanted to get some attention from our leaders in Washington DC.

Fast forward to 2015, and Sam has now made 4 Rides for Peace, all supported by both NC Peace Action and Veterans For Peace. Meanwhile, Sam launched a new group “Americans for Peace” which he thought would have broader appeal than either NC Peace Action or Veterans For Peace. His colleagues thought so too, especially our new friends from Canada, China, Egypt, the UK and Iran. What was happening to Sam’s Ride for Peace was also happening to other peace groups. Veterans For Peace, originally founded in 1985 with one chapter in Maine had become a group with over 150 chapters world wide, adding more international chapters in London, Dublin, Vietnam, and Tijuana. The organization World Beyond War was launched in 2013, and already has co-signers from over 128 different nations! We are frequently reminded of the T-shirt sporting the familiar peace symbol and the phrase: “Back, by Popular Demand!”

February 15, 2003 saw the world’s largest ever global peace protest with tens of millions of global citizens marching in dozens of cities on every continent. Phyllis Bennis described these events in her book Challenging Empire How People, Governments and the U.N. Defy U.S. Power.

While those February, 2003 protests failed to halt the march toward war in Iraq, they did signify a potential for mass international organization that later emerged during the Arab Spring, World Social Forum and Occupy Movements. The 2015 Ride for Peace represented a quantum leap from a handful of riders to several dozen. The coordination of friends David Swanson, George Ripley, Ahmed Selim and Films for World Peace, Folk Musician Andrew McKnight, The Grayhaven Winery in Gum Spring, VA; the Glen-Ora Farm in The Plains and KD Kidders’ Photoworks studio in Leesburg, VA; the Goose Creek Friends Meeting and Lincoln Elementary in Lincoln, VA, reinforced a hospitality for Sam’s Ride for Peace that has great potential to spread to other communities.

Sam made other quantum leaps in 2014, as he gained international recognition. Sam had already been invited to address the 2013 Rotary International Peace Forum in Hiroshima, Japan by Rotary International President Sakuji Tanaka, where Sam spoke to 2,600 delegates from over 50 nations. This year he has already received invitations to join peace rides in Russia and Japan. Since Sam has already restored good relations with veterans from Japan, Veterans For Peace are working to restore cordial collaborations with teams of veterans from Canada and Russia, that existed back in the late 1980’s.

At a time when US-Russian tensions are more severe than at any time since the fall of the USSR, what better opportunity exists than to support veterans’ partnerships to build a culture of peace in 2016? But we need your help! As a project of NC Peace Action, Sam’s Ride for Peace needs many kinds of support. Sam will be building his own website and has received his 501(c)(3) not for profit tax exempt IRS status to receive tax exempt contributions to recruit riders and help with ride logistics, travel and hospitality.

Stay tuned for the launch of www.samsrideforpeace.com coming soon, as well as updates for the ride scheduled May 14—21, 2016.
The Committee to Reverse the Arms Race

MAY 1982 - SEPTEMBER 2015

CELEBRATING 400 MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS VIGILS FOR PEACE

The year was 1982. I’m not quite sure exactly how our group originated. Suffice it to say that the idea occurred during a discussion involving Lloyd Tyler, Phyllis Tyler, my wife, Pat and me. Working for peace by educating others about the huge amount of money spent for armaments was our goal, and we chose a silent vigil as our instrument to do so. We selected the downtown post office on Fayetteville Street Mall because it housed offices of the Federal government, and there was considerable traffic around the noon hour, and we decided to do so from noon until 1:00 on the first Monday of each month. To inform ourselves of constitutional issues relating to vigiling, we met with Bill Van Alstyne one Sunday morning, probably in February or March, in his office at Duke Law School. Following that meeting, we decided we would try to schedule our first vigil on the first Monday of April.

So far, so good. Next we applied to the police for a permit. We were told that there were several blocks on the mall, including the one in front of the post office, that required not only a permit from the police, but also from the newly-established Mall Commission, that we would have to give 48 hours notice (rather than 24 hour as required in other parts of the city); and that we would have to pay a fee each time, the amount depending on the number of people in the vigil and/or the size of the area we would be occupying. This seemed an unconstitutional requirement, and so we sought and received representation from the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union. Charles Case was the ACLU Cooperating Attorney, and within a few weeks he and Raleigh City attorney, Tom McCormick, had negotiated a change in the ordinance which eliminated the fee requirement. It also changed the notice requirement from 48 to 24 hours.

We had our first vigil on Monday May 3, 1982. And we have, I believe, met monthly ever since, though after a few months, the day was changed from the first Monday to the first Wednesday. The average number of people recently has been around ten. Over the years vigil attendance has ranged from one to perhaps as many as 20. Originally, we decided that we would each wear an armband (STOP THE ARMS RACE) the entire day of the vigil, but that practice was soon set aside. Throughout these 33 years, we have had excellent cooperation from the Police Department and excellent support from our fellow vigilers.

Postscript:
In addition to the yearly birthday celebration on the first Wednesday of May with lunch at a local restaurant and a birthday cake, in September, 2015 we celebrated 400 continuous months of faithfully vigiling for peace. We observe a moment of silence to remember those who have stood with us—Jim Berry, Marge Eckels, Bill Fililator, Eleanor Henry, Jim Hunt, Carolyn King, Cy King, Mary Leuba, Evelyn Mattern, Charlie Mulholland, Paul Stewart, Lloyd Tyler and Phyllis Tyler. In 2015 we’ve sadly added memories of faithful Duane Adkinson and founder Slater Newman.

Slater and Cy King collaborated on the decision-making for the group from early on and Cy (who knew everybody in Raleigh) was the spokesperson for the group handing out information to passersby and through the mail to non-passersby such as congresspersons, governors, and presidents. His favorite quote to hand to those on Fayetteville Street was by Dwight Eisenhower: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children…This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

As the group carries on without some of our most faithful members, we take turns on a monthly basis writing a letter to a political leader in which we share our concerns. The letter is signed by those who vigil that day. Leo and Judy Occhetti Klohr are now carrying on the effort of coordinators and time keepers—in the tradition of Slater—we do not stop vigiling until 1 PM—no matter how cold or hot or rainy—we stay the course. Sue Cottle is our faithful ‘sign keeper’ and she always arrives early with the bag of signs from which we select. Visitors are always welcome and can pick a sign from our collection. In Slater’s words We “keep on keepin’ on and WE SHALL OVERCOME.” Come join us if you find you are available on the first Wednesday of the month at noon.

History prepared by Slater E. Newman

Postscript by Sandy Irving (information supplied by Slater)

(Slightly-revised version of “Twenty-five Years in Five Minutes: A Brief History of the Committee to Reverse the Arms Race.” prepared in May, 2007).
“Friendly Folks” Exhibit

**Location:** Raleigh-Durham International Airport, Terminal 2, Bag Claim 1 (open to the public)

**Artist:** Jane Filer

**Installation:** February 2011

This 45-foot mural was commissioned by the Triangle Area Sister Cities to celebrate the Research Triangle Region’s 13 international sister cities. Created by Carrboro-based artist Jane Filer, it features images of smiling, happy figures mixed with images from various countries and North Carolina symbols. The theme of the painting is Sister Cities International’s slogan, “World Peace: One Friend, One Community at a Time.”

NC Peace Action encourages Governor McCrory to view the mural before issuing his next statement on welcoming refugees to NC.

---

Poetry for Peace

As I was getting ready to go to work the other day, I happened to have the radio tuned to 90.7 WNPR in Charlotte, NC. I had been working on the NC International Day of Peace Festival at the International House, for September 20, and this poem seemed to speak volumes to what mere conversation cannot convey. It was written by the Poet Laureate of the U.S., Juan Felipe Herrera. I share its message now:

**Poem by Poem**

Poem by poem we can end the violence
Every day after
Every other day
9 killed in Charleston, SC
They are not 9 they
Are each one
Alive
We do not know

You have a poem to offer
It is made of action-you must
Search for it, run outside and give your life to it
When you find it walk it
Back-blow upon it
Carry it taller Thank the city where you live
When the blood come down
Do not ask if
It is your blood it is made of
9 drops
Honor them
Wash them stop them
From falling


The poem was written the next day.

---

Peacemakers in Asheville

NC Peace Action sponsored two days of peace celebrations in Asheville, including the **People’s Peace Festival** on Sunday, September 20 at the French Broad Food Coop, and the **International Day of Peace Celebration** on Monday, September 21 in front of Asheville’s City Building. This year, in addition to Asheville and Buncombe County Commission issuing Proclamations for Peace Day, the town of Black Mountain and our Buncombe County State Delegates also issued Proclamations, with Black Mountain declaring itself a Peace Zone, and decrying the expenditures on war weaponry at the expense of necessary expenditures needed locally. Asheville this year was also certified as an International Day of Peace.

*By Rachael Bliss*

---

*Shared by Carol Ann Lawler*
Peace & Peacemakers in Raleigh:
The 2015 Peacemaker Award Dinner & First Annual Peace Week

Raleigh, NC held its First Annual Peace Week September 18-26. During that time, faith communities throughout the area worked together to celebrate and support “Building a Culture of Non-Violence”. On Saturday, Sept. 19, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church hosted a Peace Festival which offered activities, workshops, and events that highlighted peace, justice, and environmental activism and activists.

On Monday, Sept. 21, Raleigh joined communities large and small, near and far, to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Throughout the world, the International Day of Peace is a day of celebration and reflection. On Monday evening, Highland Memorial United Methodist Church was also a place to reflect on peace and to celebrate peacemakers.

NC Peace Action Chair, David Harris, gave the Call to Order Prayer. He then invited all to enjoy the excellent dinner buffet provided by Nation’s Catering. Dani Nation and crew served a feast of aromatic za’atar chicken, couscous, salads, and grilled vegetables. Dessert was a rich ricotta cheesecake with fresh pomegranate topping. It was deliciously obvious why Nation’s Catering is a favorite of area foodies.

Joe Burton, NC Peace Action Treasurer, welcomed attendees to its 2015 Peacemaker Award Dinner and Celebration of the International Day of Peace. Joe remembered Bill Towe*, former NC PA Director and longtime supporter of NC and National Peace Action. Bill observed, “Being a peacemaker requires a long-distance runner.” Treasurer Burton shared a South African proverb: “If you travel alone you can go fast. But if you travel together you can go far. He concluded, “I’m glad to have so many travelers together on this occasion.” Travelers greatly missed that evening, but present in the hearts and thoughts of many, were former NC PA Director, John Heuer, and his wife, Sue Merris. There were warm wishes for John’s speedy recovery from his recent surgery.

NC Peace Action Media Coordinator Mia Austin-Scoggins presented the 2015 Student Peacemaker Award to 8-year-old Fareed Selim, a 2nd grade student at Green Elementary School in Raleigh. After much applause for Fareed’s achievements, those at the dinner watched, “No Bullies, No War”—the film was created by Fareed in response to being bullied as a 1st grader on the school bus.

Fareed wrote, directed, and co-produced with his father, Ahmed Selim the short film. The video featured local artist, activist, & Veterans for Peace Associate Member Roger Ehrlich’s “Swords to Plowshares” Bell Tower. For the 2014 Armistice Day at the State Capitol, Fareed asked people to complete the statement, “The World Would Be a Better Place If…” “No Bullies, No War” won 1st place in the Primary Grades division in the National PTA’s “Reflections” competition at his school, 1st place in Wake County, and 1st place for Primary Grades in the state competition. “No Bullies, No War” received a national Honorable Mention award.

NC Peace Action Secretary, Anne Cassebaum, presented the 2015 Adult Peacemaker Award to the Peace Media Group. She noted that since its inception in 2012, Peace Media Group’s goal has been to have one letter a week appear in a Central North Carolina newspaper. The purpose of Peace Media Group’s letter writing campaign is to challenge prevailing attitudes that wars are inevitable, keep us safe, and preserve our prosperity. They have already surpassed that goal.

Peace Media Group’s Co-Coordinators, Betsy Crites, Vickie Ryder, and Curt Torell, accepted the Award on behalf of all the group’s volunteer letter writers. Betsy Crites helped form Witness for Peace in 1983, and Peace Media Group in 2012. Ms. Crites is a former Director of the Metta Center, and North Carolina Peace Action.

Vicki Ryder retired from a career as a mediator and conflict management/training specialist. At present she devotes her energy and talents to Veterans for Peace, NAACP’s Moral Monday Movement, Peace Media Group, and Triangle Raging Grannies.

Curt Torell is a specialist in educational and organizational development. Dr. Torell’s contributions include work with Fayetteville’s Quaker House, at Fort Bragg, NC Choices for Youth, which informs young people about alternatives to the military, and Peace Media Group.

In 2012, said Ms. Crites, members of Durham Peace Action initiated a letter writing campaign as the Peace Media Group. Their goal was to have one letter a week printed in a local newspaper. Peace Media Group has achieved and surpassed that goal. In the last year, 88 letters on peace topics were published. 90% of those were
from members of Peace Media Group. Letters have appeared in the Durham Herald Sun, the N&O, the Fayetteville Observer, the Greensboro News and Record, and Burlington’s Times News. Peace Media Group welcomes new writers for peace. Their meeting on the second Thursday of each month is an opportunity to share ideas and support. Peace Media Group has developed a workshop on writing for print media. Workshops are available for those who want to write on other issues.

Upon receiving the award, Ms. Crites concluded, “Our hope is to open minds and promote peace. It may be like water dripping on a stone of militarism, but perhaps gradually a crack will form from which flowers of peace can take root.”

Sandy Irving, NC Peace Action Vice-Chair, introduced the 2015 Peacemaker Award Dinner’s featured speaker, Mark Siljander. Mr. Siljander is a former Republican congressperson, Deputy Ambassador to the UN, and author of A Deadly Misunderstanding: A Quest to Bridge the Muslim-Christian Divide. Engaging and energetic, the author recounted life as an Evangelical Christian on his quest to be an instrument of peace in the Middle East. Respect and understanding between the two religions can bridge the Muslim-Christian divide. Otherwise, cautioned Mr. Siljander, “No matter which side of an armed conflict one supports, both sides are ultimately sponsors of the same end: destruction.” Mr. Siljander’s remarks received an enthusiastic response.

NCPA Chair David Harris facilitated a Q&A for the Speaker and Awardees. Attendees posed several questions and responded with a hearty round of applause for Mark Siljander, Fareed Selim, and Peace Media Group.

Chair David Harris offered final words of congratulations and appreciation on behalf of NC Peace Action. Mr. Harris especially thanked all those who contributed to make the evening memorable. Linda Burton’s placemats were themselves decorations. Crystalline notes graced and closed the evening as Peacemaker Vicki Ryder sang Ed McCurdy’s classic song of hope and peace,

“Last night I had the strangest dream I’ve ever dreamed before. I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war.”


* Proceeds from the Dinner are dedicated to the Bill and Betsy Jean Towe Peace Legacy Fund.

Account written by Mia Austin-Scoggins

**Facts NC Peace Action Wants Everyone to Know**

If you are working with NC Peace Action, you have facts in your head that you wish everyone on the planet knew. Enter one of your crucial facts for a list we will publish each issue. Please include the source and email to the Chair. Here are two examples.

1. We outspend all other nations with a military budget larger than the 9 next largest military budgets. International Institute for Strategic Studies
2. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany supply 78% of the world’s weapons. [USA 29%; Russia 27%; Germany 7%; China 6%; France 5%; UK 4%] War Resister’s League’s sources: SIPRI Fact Sheet, March 2014, “Trends in International Arms Transfers” 2009-13; Amnesty International, Arms Trade, amnestyusa.org.

Please share these facts in letters to the editor, tweets, social media posts, conversations…. !
NC Peace Action’s Board of Directors

- David Harris, Chair - Durham
- Sandy Irving, Vice Chair - Raleigh
- Joe Burton, Treasurer - Raleigh
- Anne Cassebaum, Secretary - Elon
- Mia Austin-Scoggins, Media Coordinator - Raleigh
- Rachael Bliss, Asheville
- Brenda Hines, Burlington
- Rukiya Dillahunt, Raleigh
- Khalilah Sabra, Raleigh
- Jenn MacCormack, Newsletter & Media - Carrboro
- Laura Eshelman, WNC Organizer - Asheville

NC Mayors for Peace Honor Roll

[www.mayorsforpeace.org]

- Bill Bell, Durham
- Mark Kleindschmidt, Chapel Hill
- Gavin Brown, Waynesville
- Lydia Lavelle, Carrboro
- Karl Pernell, Louisburg
- Darryl Moss, Creedmoor