



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

Nebraskans for Peace

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019 VOLUME 47, NO. 6

Eating for Human and Planetary Health

Nebraskans for Peace's "50th Anniversary Vision Statement for the Future" emphasizes the urgent need to reduce Americans' personal consumption if we hope to avert catastrophic climate disruption. With the average American eating a whopping 220 pounds of meat a year, shifting to a less carbon-intensive, plant-based diet is essential.

In the following article, Dr. Amanda McKinney, M.D., the founder and executive director of the Institute for Human and Planetary Health at Doane University, describes the intimate relationship between our food and the health of both humans and the planet.

On the heels of second annual "Symposium of the Institute for Human and Planetary Health" at Doane University November 1-2, 11,258 scientists in 153

countries released a report warning that the planet "clearly and unequivocally faces a climate emergency." Among the six policy goals that the authors state will be required to address the emergency is a shift to a mostly plant-based diet for all of us and the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices that sequester carbon in the soil. I would add that we also need to re-localize our food systems.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has informed us that, by 2030, we must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent. Consider what that means for your daily life... traveling half as much by all means other than walking or biking; buying half as much 'stuff' as we do now; heating and cooling our homes



Dr. Amanda McKinney, M.D.

half as much; cutting emissions from our diet in half... These are difficult to contemplate.

However, the fact that the human diet was included in the six policy goals demonstrates the fact that what we eat matters in the context of the environment, and it's one of the easiest factors for most of us to control. Of the 48 tons of greenhouse gases attributed to each U.S. household annually, food is responsible for 17 percent of the total (8 tons). Because livestock agriculture is estimated to be responsible for as much as 50 percent of total, global greenhouse gas emissions, eliminating animal foods from the diet can have a significant impact on your personal carbon footprint.

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Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

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Eating for Human and Planetary Health, *conclusion*

The reason this estimate is so high is because the carbon footprint of a hamburger includes all of the fossil fuels that went into producing the fertilizer and pumping the irrigation water to grow the corn that fed the cow, and may also include emissions that result from converting forest land to grazing land as well as the methane (a potent global warming gas) re-

of minimally processed foods close to nature... predominantly plants. (Katz, Meller. 2014)

What we eat impacts our health directly and indirectly through the health of the planet. Humans are completely dependent upon healthy ecosystems to feed, clothe, and house ourselves. As temperatures rise so, too, does sea level. These disruptions, along

on the table. Cultural norms and valid concerns for our economy and farmers' pocketbooks make it reasonable to use ruminant livestock as a way to regenerate the rapidly depleting soils while still providing an important revenue source for farmers.

While policy change will be needed, personal choice in this instance is powerful. It will require sacrifice but the simple truth is that change will occur one way or another. Either we will continue with 'business as usual' and realize runaway climate change leading to a complete dismantling of our civilization via food and water shortages and the accompanying civil strife, or we will face these issues with the sobriety and urgency that they deserve, mobilizing to make change and maintaining a habitable planet for ourselves and our children.

We have the opportunity to create policies that will get more farmers back on the land growing food in a regenerative way, helping to mitigate climate change and to create local, equitable

...If all Americans eliminated just one quarter-pound serving of beef per week, the reduction in global warming gas emissions would be equivalent to taking four to six million cars off the road.

leased from the animals' digestion and manure. These foods also often require extensive, energy-intensive processing and transport over long distances before landing on our plates.

The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that if all Americans eliminated just one quarter-pound serving of beef per week, the reduction in global warming gas emissions would be equivalent to taking four to six million cars off the road. Eliminating meat and dairy entirely, a vegan diet, has the lowest carbon footprint of all and can cut your personal carbon 'footprint' by more than half.

Likewise, diet is THE most important influence on health. Optimal eating increases life expectancy and dramatically reduces the lifetime risk of all chronic disease. Conversely, diets high in animal foods and highly refined carbohydrates are the leading causes of premature death and chronic disease. At the end of the day, the evidence strongly supports an overall pattern of healthful eating which includes lots

with more intense weather events, are changing what we can grow, where we can grow it, and how much of it we can grow. In the face of climate change and a degrading environment, our health

will suffer from extreme heat, agricultural failures leading to food shortages, issues with water quantity and quality, and emerging infectious diseases like the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

Eating a predominantly plant-based diet will likely not be a popular idea with the majority of Americans. Success and upward mobility has long been measured by the amount of meat

food systems that provide health-promoting, whole-plant foods. In other words, we can realize the vision of the Institute of Human and Planetary Health... "a world in which human activity supports the health of the planet on which human health depends."

It's time to seize those opportunities.

The question remains: "Will we?"

...Eliminating meat and dairy entirely, a vegan diet, has the lowest carbon footprint of all and can cut your personal carbon 'footprint' by more than half.

OPPD Board Members Made History!



By Mark Welsch, NFP's Omaha Co-ordinator and Co-Leader of Citizens' Climate Lobby—Omaha Chapter

Thanks to all of you who helped us win with the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD)! We are now winning with cleaner energy every day. OPPD's Board of Directors voted unanimously to commit to net-zero carbon use by 2050! This will likely cause OPPD to stop burning all fossil fuels by 2050. OPPD management has exceeded every other goal the Board has set for reducing their use of fossil fuels. I think they will reach this new goal much earlier than 2050.

Our second big win with OPPD was when they voted to start a process that will build one of the largest solar farms in the nation. This is another huge step in the right direction.

These are huge wins for Nebraskans for Peace, Citizens Climate Lobby's Omaha and Bellevue Chapters and other groups we have worked with to make Nebraska 100 percent clean energy. This action shows that our lobbying efforts work! The people who contacted the Board members and management are essential to our efforts.

We need new, cheaper zero-carbon technology that can replace the planned and existing peaker plants. We need OPPD's help to encourage business entrepreneurs to create this technology.

To help OPPD's leadership reach their new goal of net-zero carbon

before 2050, they will need new technology to be developed and to be commercially available. To help get entrepreneurs to develop this new technology, we need fossil fuel companies to pay the costs they are causing in our economy.

The fastest way for this to happen is for all of us—along with OPPD's Board, managers and lobbyists—to urge our members of Congress to pass the “Energy Innovation and Carbon

OPPD's Board of Directors voted unanimously to commit to net-zero carbon use by 2050!

Dividend Act of 2019” (HR 763) initiated by Citizens Climate Lobby. Rep. Don Bacon has publicly described this bipartisan bill as the best one he has seen on the topic of reducing our use of fossil fuels.

But let's face it. OPPD has a little more influence with our members of Congress than us as individuals. So we really need the OPPD Board to take action on this bill. Here's an example of how you can help again:

Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes read his statement (also in this edition, on the next page) to the OPPD Board and manage-

ment at their September meeting. This helped get the Board to take action. It's efforts like his that caused OPPD to take the action they would not have considered just a year ago. Please tell me who you know who is like Eric (a 'grasstops' leader) who might do the same thing by calling 402-453-0776 or emailing me at [NFPOmaha1970@gmail.com](mailto:NFPomaha1970@gmail.com).

We have been talking with all of the Board about alternative energy and the need to stop burning fossil fuels. This is how good citizen-based lobbying works. We develop respectful relationships with our elected officials and meet with them regularly to find what is preventing them from taking the action we want them to take. Then we work to remove those obstacles. We will win again with OPPD's Board and your help!

Please go to this website <https://www.oppd.com/contact/> and tell the Board and managers that you want them to support HR 763 and to get the Senate to introduce the same bill. We need the Board to tell OPPD management to lobby for this bill, just like they lobby for other bills before they are introduced and to help them get passed into law. We need them to lobby hardest to get this bill introduced in the Senate, hopefully with Senators Deb Fischer and Ben Sasse as co-sponsors—or at least with their support.

The next monthly OPPD Board meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 12, at 4:00 p.m. at Energy Plaza, 444 S. 16th St. in downtown Omaha. Please join us.

Testimony before the OPPD Board of Directors

September 12, 2019



Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes

I am the Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church on the Tri-Faith Commons at 132nd and Pacific. In the 11 years that I have served this 1,300 member congregation, I have witnessed the congregation's views toward climate change and environmental stewardship move from skepticism and indifference to alarm and urgency to act. In fact, our congregation now has a large group committed to environmental activism. Members have also created a major educational initiative called "Earth University" that is regularly attended by 40-60 people.

When we built our new church, the congregation added \$1M to our basic fundraising goal to try to create a LEED Platinum or comparable facility. We didn't quite make that goal, yet did add a \$400k geothermal package and have pre-wired our roofs to receive solar panels in the future, among many

other sustainability upgrades we made.

My point is that Countryside Community Church is made up of people who reflect the concerns and interests of the wider population of Omaha. Our experience opens a window on the sea change that is happening within a great many communities of faith in Omaha. Concerns for environmental stewardship have gone from 'fringe issues' to core moral and faith issues quite rapidly.

More and more people are realizing that, years from now, future generations will not care whether we were Republican or Democrat, gay or straight, pro-life or pro-choice. They will not care if we were Christian or Muslim, Jew, Hindu or Buddhist. They will not even care how hard we tried to make a difference. What they will care about is just one thing: they will care about what kind of world we have left them. Will they receive from us a world of greater opportunity or less? Will their world be more peaceful or more violent? Will our children, grandchildren, and their descendants see us as people who have blessed them or cursed them?

The choice is ours. I hope that the OPPD Board will make a net-zero carbon goal an outward and visible expression of our pledge to making this world a better place, not only for ourselves but for generations to come.

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Becoming Very Active for Citizens Climate Lobby

by Bob Kraft, Co-Leader CCL's Omaha Chapter



About sixteen months ago, I was rather lost about the climate crisis. I had immersed myself into reading everything I could find as well as watching every documentary on climate on Netflix and Amazon Prime. My sleep was troubled, particularly after watching “Years of Living Dangerously”. In it, a mother talked and cried about her daughter dying because of the storm surge from Hurricane Sandy. It taught me that the climate crisis has extended the reach of hurricanes, and that the young woman—along with many others—would not have died except for the increasing power of hurricanes due to climate change.

That summer I found Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL), a national group with 156,000 members and chapters across the country and world that was doing something about the climate crisis. CCL, I found, was a bipartisan group, which drew my attention immediately. I had gotten so tired of the fighting and bickering between the parties. CCL was addressing and working with both. They were pushing for carbon fee-and-dividend legislation—something I had learned about from Ted Halstead in a TED Talk that had introduced me to the concept of carbon-pricing with a dividend and the “Climate Leadership Council”. But CCL had gone further than the Climate Leadership Council and was getting more done about actually legislating carbon fee-and-dividend. Carbon fee-and-dividend is a process that pays every adult citizen (and half the amount for each child) to insulate us from higher prices caused by a small (but yearly increasing fee) on fossil fuels as they come out of the ground. Most people will get more money than the higher prices will cost them. I was impressed.

Then I found there are really nice people in the local chapter of CCL. They promote appreciation with each other and in their work with our federal representatives and senators to enact this legislation. CCL volunteers work with leaders in the community, and they have different kinds of meetings you can attend (their monthly meeting along with ‘Lite’ meetings that are shorter and at a casual venue). They will help you write letters to the editor (I have since gotten ten published in print media and helped my wife to get three published), and the list goes on and on.

So I became involved. The leaders like to say ‘Yes’ to my increasing involvement in bringing about change. They agreed to let me run and promote the monthly meeting for the past year. They were kind enough to let me organize it in a way that I liked better. And I also have been involved in running their “Dialing Congress Campaign” (DCC) where I help people call their Congressional representative and senators. We are expanding that campaign to include Tweeting our representative and senators with a simple click. Because it is so important that OPPD more quickly decarbonizes, we have been adding to the DCC activities the easy action of contacting the OPPD staff and directors to tell them how important it is to do more right now as well as to support our current legislation in Congress called the “Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act” (HR 763) because it would help OPPD figure out how coal and natural gas prices will go up, AND it pays their customers for those increases so the increases won’t hurt their pocketbook.

There are actually other actions I have taken since I joined CCL: I have tabled at

Earth Day with my new friends; I enter the data for them when someone gets a letter to the editor or tables at an event; and I have called my elected representatives many times. These are all activities that make a difference, especially when a lot of us are joining together to do them.

I have changed, and I feel much better because I am doing specific actions to attack the climate crisis as well as helping other people do something about the climate crisis—actions that will cause change now and into the future. I don’t get upset so much and I am sleeping better because, I believe, my anxieties and fears were ‘calling’ me to do something meaningful about climate change: for my grandchild, for my adult children, and for me.

You don’t have to do nearly as much as I have done with CCL to help out. Just joining the Dialing Congress Campaign and calling your representative and senators (which takes less than five minutes a week) is immensely helpful. We have been assured that calls matter, and calls to Representative Don Bacon have reached a critical point—we are pushing to have them become the topic he is called most about. Climate change calls are currently #2.

I have changed and I feel so much better now. I am working to change the world. You can join me a little or a lot to change what is building up to be disastrous effects from our burning so much carbon over the last century or so. Join me and you might sleep better at night, too. No matter where you live, if you want to help, or if you just want to learn more, please contact me “Bob at CCLOmaha.com” or 402-968-8625.

Contesting v. Limiting War

An Intertwined History

by David Forsythe, UNL Professor
Emeritus of Political Science

The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 to Frederic Passy and Henry Dunant. The former was a French educator and public figure who championed eliminating war through arbitration and other measures. The latter was a Swiss businessman who developed the idea of what is today called the “International Red Cross” (IRC). He wanted to limit war through such concepts as neutralizing medical aid to the wounded, and that focus quickly expanded into a concern for prisoners of war and other victims. Dunant’s ideas not only led to the global Red Cross but also gave a great push to the development of the laws of war.

In 1863, Dunant and four others from Geneva formed the “International Committee of the Red Cross” (ICRC). The ICRC was the central node in the emerging Red Cross network of private, but government-chartered, aid societies. Some are called “Red Crescent Societies”, and Israel uses yet another name for its official aid agency. These National RC Societies, now numbering over 190, have their own union, the International Federation. All of these Red Cross component units are independent one from the other, although they meet in various bodies to try to agree on common values, strategies and tactics. All RC actors are supposed to be neutral and impartial, which for the National Societies implies some independence from the governments that endorse them. This is tricky business.

The ICRC, whose President and Governing Board are still all Swiss, which is a historical quirk but which presumably enhances its neutrality, drafted the 1864 “Geneva Convention” that neutralized the war wounded and the medical personnel treating them.

After the Second World War, the ICRC helped develop the much broader 1949 “Geneva Conventions” for victims of war. The four interlocking treaties covering many aspects of warfare benefit all those not actively fighting—the sick and wounded, those detained and the civilian population. 2019 is the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the 1949 GCs, and they remain a central element in modern laws of war.

The ICRC, starting with five unpaid Protestant Genevans, now is the agency authorized by the laws of war to carry out detention visits in international war for both military and

The ICRC recognized the “American Red Cross” (ARC) in the early 1880s, although Clara Barton and other Americans had been active in humanitarian ventures before that time. (She was a great friend of the ICRC. At her death in 1912, the magazine edited by the ICRC gave more space to her passing than it had to Dunant when he passed away in 1910. But then Gustav Moynier, who really built the ICRC, liked Barton a lot more than he liked Dunant, whom he had forced out of the ICRC in 1867.) The ARC charts its own course of action, although it is a member of the Federation and makes a

One can hope that those opposed to war in principle will meet with success one day. In the meantime, one should refine the laws of war and improve practical efforts to aid and protect war victims (and victims of industrial and natural disasters as well).

civilian prisoners. It also visits political prisoners and detained migrants when authorities allow. It has an annual budget of about \$2 billion and a multinational staff of almost 20,000. In addition to protecting prisoners, it provides material and other assistance in situations of violence, or in the aftermath of violence. The international laws of war recognize both international and internal war (sometimes called ‘civil wars’). The ICRC is active in all the hot spots of the world such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan or wherever there is violent conflict—actual, anticipated or somewhat concluded. This all had extremely modest beginnings in the period 1859-1863.

financial donation (much smaller than the donation of the U.S. government) to the ICRC.

After September 11, 2001, the ICRC visited prisoners held at the U.S. military base on Guantanamo but never secured access to prisoners held by the CIA. On the issues of U.S. seizure and treatment of detainees after 9/11, the ARC kept silent. The more rigorous neutrality of the ICRC and its all-Swiss leadership allowed it a certain space for action not possessed by the ARC. Currently the ARC cooperates with the Federation regarding assistance in Venezuela. The ICRC manifests its

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What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

The Fire This Time

With summer, the world now experiences raging wildfires that raise carbon-dioxide levels and accelerate global warming. The Amazon Valley is of particular interest because of its role in producing a large proportion of Earth's oxygen. While the Amazon Valley is the largest and most spectacular source of fires, even Greenland (which used to be regarded a place of perpetual ice) is being scarred by fire on its now snowless west coast.

emissions, which have been increasing since the dawn of the fossil-fuel age two centuries ago. The conversion of Amazon (and other) forests to savannah also reduces rainfall. When most of the land is forested, trees retain moisture, and feed it back into the atmosphere, seeding more rain in a feedback cycle. Once a certain proportion of the rainforest has lost its cover, reduced rainfall increases chances of drought, which enhances

coal-fired power plants on Earth emitted 15 billion tons of CO₂ in 2017.

Wildfires Worldwide

As fires raged in the Amazon Valley during the summer of 2019, vast stretches of savannah were aflame in central Africa. Arctic areas of Siberia also were experiencing record wildfires: 6 million acres. Even Indonesia also was experiencing intense fires, feeding off



Wildfires have quickly become a source of greenhouse gases equal to that of human emissions as nationalistic leaders such as Donald Trump of the United States, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil and Vladimir Putin of Russia deny that any problem exists. History will remember them as three of the most powerful and ignorant men in human history.

As more of the Amazon's forests are felled for economic development, turning rich, oxygen-producing areas to savannah and ashes, the area on balance may become a net carbon-dioxide producer rather than a net source of oxygen. In scientific language, the Amazon is becoming a source of CO₂ rather than a 'sink'. This change, together with similar trends in other fire-ravaged areas around the world, is rapidly adding to the proportion of CO₂ in the world atmosphere at a rate equal to or greater than human

fires, establishing an opposite feedback loop. Scientists have calculated that deforestation takes on a momentum of its own when roughly 20 to 25 percent of forest cover has been lost. By the end of August, 2019, this figure reaches 20 to 25 percent. If drought and fire continue, the point at which the Amazon Valley may reach 'dieback'—a self-perpetuating cycle—may be 2020, one damaging fire season away. The Amazon in total holds 100 billion tons of carbon dioxide. All the

peat bogs. These fires were pouring about as much carbon dioxide into the air as worldwide human emissions, and killing trees that used to take in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. John Abatzoglu, an Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Idaho, said that hotter, drier weather conditions "are going to continue promoting the potential for fires.... [providing] a risk of large, uncontrollable fires globally." South of the Equator, Australia has been experiencing

2020... Taking a Stand for Hope

Dear Nebraskans for Peace Supporter,

Year in and year out, important things are always happening to a country, its people and its culture. Some of these years, though, stand out as **milestones**... as **‘turning points’** in a nation’s history:

- **“1776”** for instance defines us as Americans, celebrating both our declaration of independence and the founding of our democratic system of governance.
- **1865** commemorates the Union victory in the Civil War and the abolition of slavery with the adoption of the 13th Amendment.
- The **1879** lawsuit “Standing Bear vs. Crook” legally established Native Americans as “as a person within the meaning of the law”.
- **1920** was the first year women were eligible to vote in the U.S.
- World War II ended in **1945** simultaneous with the dawn of the “Nuclear Age” and the peril of ‘Weapons of Mass Destruction’... and
- In **2008**, Barack Obama became the first person of color elected President of the United States.

2020, we can already predict, will be one of those milestone years... Another of those turning points that will define who we are (and what our future holds).

Starting in 2020... the United Nations “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” warns that GLOBAL greenhouse gas emissions must be slashed by **45 percent over the next ten years.**

*Unless the world community commits — in 2020 — to adopt binding, enforceable targets to reduce carbon levels by **nearly half by 2030**, we will be unable to stop global temperatures from increasing over 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). With that additional heat in the oceans and the atmosphere, the entire planet will face runaway climate disruption, with more extreme hurricanes, droughts and floods... relentlessly rising sea levels... and millions of climate refugees seeking shelter, food and drinking water.*

*To have any chance of preventing this bleak future, the U.S. must not only fulfill its carbon reduction pledge under the “Paris Agreement”, we must do more: further reduce our production carbon emissions from energy, manufacturing, agriculture and transportation — **and on an individual basis**, drastically curtail our personal consumption and learn to live with less like our “Greatest Generation” great-grandparents during World War II.*

And, of course, in 2020... Americans will vote on whether to continue the policies of the Trump Administration for another four years.

*Donald Trump’s presidency has done immeasurable harm to the cause of peace and justice. From his dismissal of the science of Climate Change to his rogue foreign and military policies, the man is downright scary. Add in his anti-immigrant hysteria, smug-faced racism and spiteful slashing of vital social programs (together with his shameless shilling for the 1% and total disregard for **facts** and **truth-telling**) — and we’re looking at a true sociopath who has unleashed demons that we’d hoped had been permanently buried.*

And the worst part is, we didn’t have time to lose on a Trump presidency. Already in 2016, Climate Change and nuclear weapons abolition required immediate action by governments around the world. As Commander-in-Chief, the man has set us back when we could least afford it. Evicting him from the White House — and depriving his supporters majority control of Congress — is critical if we’re to have a chance to fix things before it’s too late...

Stakes this high are enough to make any year stand out historically.

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2020 though constitutes yet one more milestone (albeit a personal one for NFP):

THIS COMING YEAR, NEBRASKANS FOR PEACE WILL CELEBRATE ITS ‘GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY’...

The oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization in the entire country will turn 50.

And in a dark time, with so much at stake, isn’t it heartening to know there’s a group like NFP that has kept the faith and fought on for 50 years — never relenting, never giving up, always... *ALWAYS*... taking a principled stand for peace, for justice... and for HOPE?

These are discouraging times, and it’s easy to lose heart and feel hopeless.

But as sixteen-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has reminded us, hope is something we earn.

“You can’t just sit around waiting for hope to come... You have to act. Do something.”

And acting... **taking a stand**... is exactly what Nebraskans for Peace has been doing for now half a century. Never once in that time have we surrendered to despair, to self-destruction or doom.

... Whatever the issue, whatever the year, we have continued to take a stand and act. “And once we start to act,” Greta Thunberg says, “hope is everywhere.”

Our nation is at a turning point — arguably (*since life as we know it hangs in the balance*) the biggest turning point in human history.

2020 is unquestionably a milestone year, a turning point. But the struggle to maintain the conditions for life on earth (for all of Creation) will go on beyond our lifetimes.

... AND WITH YOUR SUPPORT, NFP pledges to be part of that continuing struggle.

- **Just as we’ve continually** spoken out on racism and sexism and discrimination against our LGBTQIA neighbors and the people of Palestine...
- **Just as we’ve continually** opposed unconscionable Pentagon spending and ill-conceived foreign military ventures squandering lives and resources...
- **Just as we’ve continually** led the struggle against nuclear weapons (including our new “Back from the Brink” abolition campaign) ... and
- **Just as we’ve continually** called for climate action on taxing carbon, renewable energy development, localizing our food supply and cutting our personal consumption...

With your continued support, we pledge to keep “Taking a Stand for Hope” for years to come.

Help us meet our ‘end-of-the-year’ goal of raising **\$30,000** to start off the milestone year ahead. To make 2020 a ‘turning point’ for Peace & Justice, we need your financial donations.

Thank you for your continued support and may 2020 bring us all a ‘Happy New Year’.

Ron Todd-Meyer
Nebraskans for Peace President

Tim Rinne
NFP State Coordinator

JOIN NFP TODAY!

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What's HOT, conclusion

large wildfires for several years during its calendar summer, December through March. Large amounts of deforestation afflict not only Brazil, but every country with which it shares the Amazon basin—Venezuela, Columbia, Peru, Paraguay and Argentina. Each of them has prepared a menu of development that requires felling of trees: mining, agriculture, cattle ranching, logging, road building, and construction of towns and cities. Almost half of the Amazon basin lies outside of Brazil, mainly along its northern and western borders. Development is occurring at speed unknown in previous years. If a country is politically stable and can provide a workforce and utilities, the developers swarm in. In Peru, deforestation has jumped due to increasing production of coco (for cocaine) and illegal gold mining. More

than half of that nation's land lies within the Amazon Basin. Small mines have destroyed forests totaling about 170,000 acres in five years, according to a report in the *New York Times* (2019) describing a study by researchers at Wake Forest University. Agriculture and ranching are also producing a surge in deforestation in Bolivia, where recently ousted President Evo Morales had made expanding the country's agricultural frontier a priority, sometimes by distributing land to farmers. The opening of China's beef market to Bolivian exporters is thought to be driving some of the forest loss this year as ranchers seek pastures for expanding herds. Wildfires have quickly become a source of greenhouse gases equal to that of human emissions as nationalistic leaders such as Donald Trump of the United

States, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil and Vladimir Putin of Russia deny that any problem exists. History will remember them as three of the most powerful and ignorant men in human history.

FURTHER READING

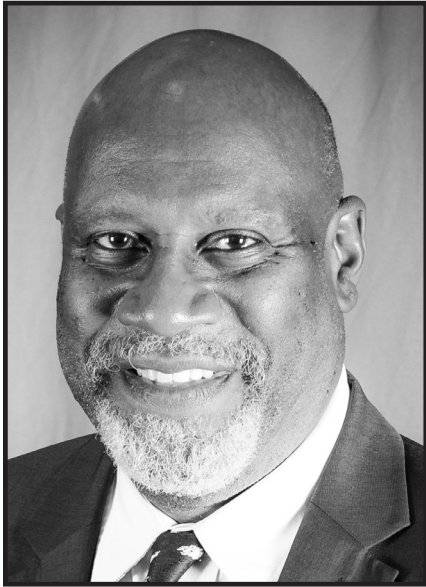
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Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor at the University of Nebraska—Omaha, is author of Climate Change: An Encyclopedia of Science, Society, and Solutions (2017).

The Nebraskans for Peace

2019 Peacemaker of the Year Award



A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon

At the 2019 Annual Peace Conference this past October, I received the “Frank LaMere Peacemaker of the Year Award” and decided I would share the remarks that I made in accepting just the second award in my lifetime (along with some other thoughts I’ve since had).

First, I am honored to receive this award from my colleagues and board members in NFP. Over 15 years ago, I joined Nebraskans for Peace which is now one of the longest-existing peace groups in the country. It was formed during the Vietnam War to protest—and educate the public about—U.S. involvement in that war. For many Americans, war (as author and peace activist Chris Hedges has noted) “is what gives us meaning”. The invention of unnecessary conflicts with other countries has become central to our cultural identity. Meanwhile, millions have died in the dubious pursuit of paternalistic and imperial interests.

For those who have lost loved ones in these wars, such comments may come across as offensive and painful. Regardless of how we try to glorify these military ventures however, the killing of indigenous folks in their homelands—whether during the “Indian Wars” on this continent or through an ‘oil grab’ in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq—emblemizes the bloody history of conquest and “Manifest Destiny” upon which this country was founded and still functions.

When I was a young child, I recall my mother sending me and my older brother to get a door felt weather seal from Mickens Lumber Company which was a few blocks from our slumlord-owned rental home. After I got there on that cold winter day, my nose was running and this woman (who was white, because in those days they did not hire African Americans to work in clerical positions in stores in Omaha) asked me to walk behind the counter so that she could wipe my nose. I have never forgotten that act of kindness over 60 years ago.

I was one of 14 siblings and my parents received welfare, food stamps and Social Security Supplemental Income assistance because my father hurt his back working in the meat packinghouse. My mother was a longtime volunteer and member of low-income civic rights and social justice groups. Well before the Nebraska Applesseed Center or Voices for Children or other public policy organizations existed, she helped start a group of women called “Mothers for Adequate Welfare”. I recall that one time she and her best friend successfully advocated to get the State of Nebraska to give welfare recipients their food stamps before the Fourth of July holiday.

But I have other memories as well. One day when my mom and I were shopping at the largest black grocery store in North Omaha (“Garden Market”), she told me about the ‘Uncle Toms’ and elite ‘Negroes’ who would go out of their way to avoid her rather than offer a perfunctory greeting. These malcontents, opportunists and sell-outs were getting paid exorbitant salaries, and getting publicly recognized with awards. Why, my mother asked, were these people getting awards for merely doing their jobs? It was during one of her countless lectures to us that I decided never to accept awards. It was during those teachable moments that I learned about real social justice and racial equity.

I worked for 25 years and eight months at Catholic Charities in Omaha. I was probably one of the longest-serving atheists, hired by a Catholic Charities agency, in a key administrative position. During the interview in 1983, they asked me about my religious beliefs. Years later, when I reminded one of the interviewers that I’d been asked that question, she denied it. As the African proverb goes, “That which is done to one, one never forgets. However, that which is done to others one soon forgets.”

During my Peacemaker Award acceptance speech, I told a story about how one day at Catholic Charities a young practicum Catholic student who knew about my religious persuasion and marriage to a believer in religion asked if I would one day go to heaven. In earnest, I could not answer her question and told the student that I would ask my wife. After a brief discussion later that evening, I was told by my wife of many years (I suspect that at that time we’d been married over 15 years) that I would be granted a pass to

Farm to School

A Report from Rep. Jeff Fortenberry

On October 25th, I had the pleasure of visiting Clinton Elementary School in Lincoln to celebrate the launch of a truly innovative event known as “The Crunch-Off.”

Nebraska schools, along with our neighbors across the Midwest and the Mountain Range, are competing to see who can bite into the most crunchable fruits and vegetables, hoping to highlight the great local farmers and producers who feed America. This initiative is part of the federal “Farm to School Program,” seeking to better child nutrition and stimulate local economies. Clinton Elementary School is one of the schools participating.

I watched as the diverse, excited faces of the little children at Clinton filed into the cafeteria. It was noisy. The atmosphere was electric with a sense of anticipation. One boy asked, “Are these apples real?” When the enthusiastic program coordinator put on her red apple nose, the room grew quiet. We all counted down—“5, 4, 3, 2, 1!”—and crunched into our apples. Then we all shouted together, “Happy Crunch Day!”

One of the exciting aspects of Farm to School is how it not only feeds school kids but also teaches and inspires healthy food choices while helping children understand the provenance of their food. A nutritional, novel, and locally sourced school lunch menu can also keep our students alert and inquisitive throughout the day. A hungry child cannot learn well.

The Farm to School Program is a fairly new initiative. I successfully worked to expand the program in an earlier Farm Bill. Currently, over 23 million students at over 42,000 schools are involved in Farm to School programs, including many, like Clinton Elementary, right here in Nebraska. As an example, if a school wants apples, the federal government has

a process to connect the schools with local apple orchards. The program is approaching \$1 billion in economic impact for local producers across America. It’s an amazing way to keep alive the relationship between what we eat and who we are.

In the House of Representatives, I am working on two bills that will build on this important program by creating further economic opportunities for our nation’s farmers, ensuring our children have access to healthy, quality meals, while connecting the rural to the urban and the farm to the student. H.R. 3526, the “Farm to School Act” increases the grants available as well as the size and scope of projects; prioritizes grant applications that engage beginning,

veteran, and other underserved farmers; helps high-need student populations; and increases access among Native schools to farm-fresh and traditional foods, especially from tribal producers. H.R. 3220, the “Kids Eat Local Act,” will bring more local food into school cafeterias without raising the cost of school meal programs, while also removing burdensome red tape to make it easier for schools to flexibly source local food.

The Farm to School program feeds kids, teaches kids, and inspires kids about local, nutritious food and farm life. I am very happy that the children of Nebraska will continue to benefit from this program and that our schools are embracing this opportunity to teach young people to “know your farmer, know your food.”

Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

In planning for the next 50 years for Nebraskans for Peace, I would like to focus on Planned Giving to Nebraska Peace Foundation. While any gift to the Foundation involves some amount of planning, a Planned Gift is one where consideration is given in choosing the appropriate vehicle, often via your estate, to match the mission of Nebraskans for Peace with the donor’s intent. So if you are ardent to see that Nebraskans for Peace continues long into the future, then please consider a Planned Gift to Nebraska Peace Foundation which provides financial support for Nebraskans for Peace long into the future.

The vehicle may be a Charitable Remainder Trust or various other types of trusts which benefit Nebraska Peace Foundation upon the donor’s death. Check with your accountant or tax advisor to see which type of vehicle, a trust or a direct bequest, best suits your situation and your desires.



Contesting v. Limiting War, conclusion

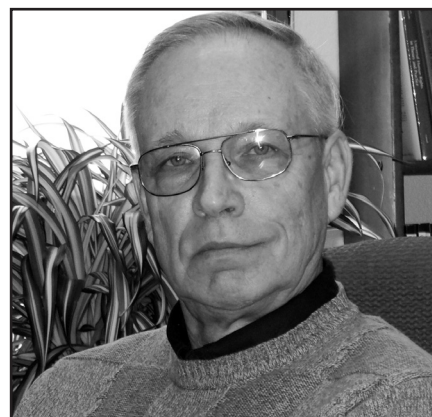
own policies there pertaining both to detention visits and medical assistance to hospitals. The RC global network is decentralized (some would say badly fragmented) but not without accomplishments.

From the beginning, the IRC and its attempts to limit war's destruction through both legal and practical efforts have been charged with prolonging war. There are two lines of criticism: 1) better to seek the elimination of war pure and simple; or 2) better to get out of the way and let the victor fight a total and quick war. But do not prolong war with various well-intentioned limitations. This view continues in some circles, finding law and war to be a contradiction. But all states and their military establishments endorse the effort to avoid total war, since all states have ratified the 1949 GCs. (The additional protocols from 1977 and 2005, added

to the 1949 GCs, are another matter.)

There have always been competing views about how to deal with the horrors of war. The Red Cross view is that war has always occurred in human history. One can hope that those opposed to war in principle will meet with success one day. In the meantime, one should refine the laws of war and improve practical efforts to aid and protect war victims (and victims of industrial and natural disasters as well). The Red Cross approach requires independent neutrality and thus the refusal to pass judgment on who is right or wrong in resorting to violence.

It is well to recall that both Passy, who frontally challenged the process of war, and Dunant, who tried to help its victims, were both honored by the Nobel Prize in 1901. Moynier deserved the Prize but never got it, much to his deep disappointment.



David Forsythe is a retired UNL professor and ICRC junkie, who has followed the organization's activities closely since the 1970s, interviewed all its Presidents since that time, and has accompanied some field missions including prison visits. He has written several books and articles on the organization.

Peacemaker of the Year, conclusion

get to this holy place even as a non-believer. I shared this story with my Catholic Charities colleagues, and they found it funny—a 'good natured' acceptable response.

About 20 years ago, I was nominated by my Catholic Charities colleagues to get the "Ike Freidman Award". This wealthy benefactor established in his will that each year monetary awards would be given to people who worked on behalf of civil rights and social justice issues in the city. I was nominated and it was a sure \$1,000 award for me. I rejected the award and my colleague, Mary Ann Beckman, got that \$1,000. After I shared this incident with my wife, I caught holy hell at home. It was a year later before my wife forgave me. As a young worker with four children, we could have used that money to pay off some debts.

Fast forward: I had my job eliminated at Catholic Charities after 25 years and eight months. Moreover, I was slated to get a major award at the annual dinner within two weeks. Instead, I was called in and asked to give up the key to my office door and turn in my agency credit card. I was shocked. I had the option of filing for racial and age discrimination or taking six-months salary and health care benefits. After consulting with a longtime community lawyer, I was advised that unless I could find collaborators with the agency to vouch for me, it would be in my best interest to walk away and take the severance package. I did so under serious financial pressure for my family.

Meanwhile—after I lost this job—I resigned from all boards and advisory groups that were associated with my job. Rotary Club of Omaha decided

to give me an award and my wife convinced me that the award was not merely about me but symbolic of the work that I had made a lifetime commitment to on behalf of the oppressed and the low-income members in our community. They also cited my Peace Corps experience as part of their decision to recognize me. This was my first award—ten years ago. NFP's "Peacemaker of the Year Award" October 12th was the second, and I subsequently received yet another award from "Black Men United" for fighting against racism in the state.

In accepting these awards, I asked three questions of the audience honoring me: Who have you helped? What have you done for the oppressed? And how will our work benefit those who are not yet born? If we are serious about the struggle, then we will stand on the shoulders of our ancestors and lay down social justice bread crumbs for those future generations.

Hard Truth, conclusion

on Poverty”. While there can be little doubt that Johnson was motivated by the need to deflect criticism of his OTHER war, in Vietnam, it is beyond doubt that Johnson’s zeal for economic justice was genuine or that the program of federal ‘safety-nets’ did in fact reduce poverty overall. “In 2012... programs providing nutrition and early education..., health coverage, access to affordable housing, employment and income supports, the child support program and refundable tax credits cut the poverty rate to half [of] what it would have been without such programs.” (Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 Years After the Poor People’s Campaign Challenged Racism, Poverty, The War Economy/Militarism and Our National Morality, April 2018.)

But the resources (\$668 billion annually) consumed by U.S. wars in Vietnam and other oil-rich areas mean that funding for anti-poverty projects (\$190 billion annually) has been far less than has been needed—and is rapidly eroding today. And the criminalization of poverty is part of the broader trend of militarization and authoritarianism. According to the Department of Justice, 95 percent of the growth in the incarcerated population since 2000 is the result of an increase in the number of defendants unable to make bail. The Supreme Court declined to kill gerrymandering, and voter suppression is on the rise.

One could drown in the statistics of dispossession, paralyzed by the tangled web of racism, poverty, the police state and ecocide and the way each form of violence is multiplied and magnified by the others. Almost four children in ten spend at least one year of childhood in poverty. Households headed by Native American women are poorest, more than 45 percent living in poverty, many of whom must travel two hours each way to vote. LGBTQIA teens are at ten times the risk as other teens for suicide. The U.S. military—in our pursuit of endless war—emits more CO2 annually than many entire nations! “Racism allows us to deny the humanity of others...[so] we are emboldened to abuse our military powers and, through violence and war,

control resources...[leading to] the potential destruction of our entire ecosystem... And we see how the current moral narrative of our nation both justifies this cycle and distracts from it,” Theoharis wrote.

The U.S. is the richest country on Earth, so far as we know the wealthiest country that has ever existed, but more than 40 million people (one in eight) live below the poverty line. Shocking as that is, the hard truth is the federal poverty line is very low, and fully ANOTHER hundred million people—a total of 140 million people or 43.5 percent of the U.S. population—cannot absorb a \$400 emergency without a cascade of problems. If a car breaks down or a medical co-pay comes due, these households start to crumble: water bills go unpaid or groceries don’t get bought.

This is what ‘low-income’ means. This is what income inequality and the magic of compound interest and the unfettering of the profit motive have wrought. The richest 400 Americans own more than the poorest 204 million people in this country. The THREE richest men own more than the poorest HALF of the U.S. population. We have heard these appalling statistics so often, for many ears they scarcely register as an indictment.

Barber means to change all that, and he knows how. His study of liberation movements has convinced him that success—the abolition of slavery and woman’s suffrage are examples—is won by moral fusion movements. The Campaign seeks to unite existing organizations and communities with a common hunger for justice. “When you lift from the bottom,” Barber says, “everybody rises.”

The political right has long wrapped itself in morality as if it were the American flag. Barber challenges the narrow moral narrative—abortion, prayer in school and the sacred right to bear arms—and calls for a new narrative of moral revival. He sees the coming action as the third wave of transformation generated through the fusion of moral movements: the first wave being the abolition of slavery, and the second

wave the civil and voting rights movements a hundred years later. This time the stakes are greater than ever, as a glance at any newspaper, TV or smart phone will confirm.

In Lincoln, a steering group, including Mary Pipher, writer and therapist; Chris Funk, CEO of the Center for People in Need; Richard Randolph, Pastor of Christ Methodist Church; and Scott Young, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc., has called two organizational meetings, in October and again in November, when Barber and Theoharis both spoke to the Lincoln meeting through the magic of teleconferencing.

Barber welcomed Nebraska into the Poor People’s Campaign as the 49th state chapter. The group is in its infancy as I write, so it is far too soon to talk specifics. Efforts to pass progressive legislation and enact progressive policies at the state level could include moving Nebraska forward on Medicaid expansion—already passed by the citizens into law—and perhaps the minimum wage, affordable housing and reform of the bail bond system. Barber said he hopes Nebraska will bring buses of impacted people to join him in Washington, D.C. On June 20, 2020, the Poor People’s Campaign will return to its roots, to mark the anniversary of the day Reverend King stood on the Mall and spoke to America of his dream.

Barber says straight up that he stands on the shoulders of King and thousands who came before. And he admonished the Lincoln group to sing! I feel the spirit of the Prophets rising up in this movement, and this sparks my Joy. And though you know, Gentle Readers, how much I love to have the last word, here I defer to Reverend Barber.

“This much is clear—our nation is in need of a movement, not just a moment. We are in need of transformation not just transaction. We need change not charity. And this nonviolent, multiracial, intergenerational army of the poor is rising up to break every chain of injustice in the land.”

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HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

Rev. William Barber II & the “Poor People’s Campaign”

I have followed the career of the Reverend Dr. William Barber II, co-chair of the “Poor People’s Campaign”, for the past couple of years because, to be plain, Barber sparks my Joy. Grounding his project in the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., Barber organized “Moral Mondays” in his own state of North Carolina and beyond—to confront elected officials directly with the impact of the systemic failures of our society—and has successfully passed progressive legislation in a handful of states. He brought the “Poor

People’s Moral Action Congress” to the nation’s capital in June 2019 and released the “Poor People’s Moral Budget”: policy proposals designed to build a ‘moral economy’, by cutting military spending by nearly half and increasing taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals.

The Poor People’s Campaign is spreading like brush fire across the nation, now active in 49 states, most recently Nebraska. Barber and his partner in crime, co-chair Reverend Doctor Liz Theoharis of

The Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice of Union Theological Seminary, call for a moral reckoning in America. The Campaign seeks justice on the most elemental catastrophes of our time—systemic poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the endemic racism that has poisoned the U.S. since 1619.

With rigorous accountancy, the Campaign examines the hard facts of systemic poverty in the U.S. in the years since 1964 when Lyndon Johnson declared the “War