



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023
VOLUME 51, NO. 3

2023 Annual Peace Conference Think Large, Act Locally



**Senator
Danielle Conrad**



**Senator
Terrell McKinney**



**Senator
Machaela Cavanaugh**



**Senator
Tony Vargas**

This year, four esteemed Nebraska State Senators will join Nebraskans for Peace for a panel discussion on the 2023 Legislative Session. Our theme for this year's Peace Conference, Think Large, Act Locally, asks us to consider the condition of the planet and its people and to take action in our own communities to correct the atrocities we see happening around us.

We know that what happens on a local level is a microcosm of what is happening on a national and global level. Join us to find out what we can do to support our Nebraska State Senators in the 2024 Legislative Session and to let them know how they can better support Nebraska communities.

We are excited to announce that we will gather again in person for our 2023 Annual Peace Conference! On November 4th, 2023, we will gather at Aldersgate United Methodist Church at 8320 South Street in Lincoln. Aldersgate won the Sacred Grounds award from the National Interfaith Power and Light's Cool Congregations Challenge for transforming its 1.9 acres of lawn into a neighborhood arboretum with a nature-based playground.

continued on page 3

inside:

Alt En Update	p. 2	What's HOT in Global Warming? Nationalization vs. Nature	p. 8
Lincoln Adopts a Local Food System Plan	p. 4	In Memory of Byron Peterson	p. 11
Roots of Justice: Historical Truth and Reconciliation in Nebraska	p. 7	"Divisible" with Liberty and Justice for Some	p. 12

Nebraskans for Peace's state office in Lincoln is located on land that formerly belonged to the Otoe Tribe.

Nebraska Report

The Nebraska Report is published four times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

Newspaper Committee:

Brittany Cooper, Editor; Ron Todd-Meyer; Susan Alleman; Lois Todd-Meyer

Layout: Michelle O'Dea

Printing: Fremont Tribune

Website: Brittany Cooper; Susan Alleman

Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: Nebraska Report, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501-3466.

Nebraskans for Peace

NFP is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

NFP Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Staff

Maggie Ballard (President), Frank Cordaro, Henry D'Souza, Tessa Foreman, Tom Genung, Kathy Gruba, Patrick Jones, Rich Maciejewski, Patrick Murray (Secretary), Kathy Niece (Treasurer), Luisa Palomo-Hare, Del Roper, Judy Sandeen, Renee Sans Souci, Danielle Savington, Don Tilley, Ron Todd-Meyer (Vice President), Brian Whitecalf, Ryan Wishart, JaQuala Yarbro. Brittany Cooper (Executive Director); Susan Alleman (Organization Administrator); Phone 402-475-4620, nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org.

Nebraskans for Peace Chapter & Affiliate Contact Information

Crete Chapter	Pat Wikel.....	402-826-4818
Lincoln Chapter	NFP.....	402-475-4620
Omaha Chapter	Doug Paterson.....	402-672-8377
Scottsbluff Chapter	Byron Peterson.....	308-225-1589
Southwest Nebraska Chapter	Dennis Demmel	308-352-4078
Central Nebraska Peace Workers	Del Roper.....	308-384-3266

Contact the NFP State Office for information on the UNL, UNO, UNK, Creighton & Nebraska Wesleyan University and Hastings & Doane College Chapters

Alt En Update

by Al Davis, Lobbyist
Nebraska Sierra Club

Several years have now passed since the Alt En ethanol plant was closed and the full measure of the catastrophe is still unknown. For those of you who may be new to this venue or are unaware of Alt En, a short background piece is appropriate to bring folks up to speed on the industry.

Farmers purchase seeds which are treated with pesticides when they plant each spring. Seed manufacturers must prepare enough seed to satisfy the needs of farmers but there is always a cushion of seed which is left over. Instructions on the containers the seed is shipped in suggest that the best way to dispose of the seed is to plant it, but that is a solution which really only works for small amounts of the seed and not the vast amount left over after the "sell by" date has passed. Burning the seed is another suggested solution but that must be done under controlled conditions so the pesticide is not released into the air. Therefore that is an expensive proposition and the seed companies were looking for other solutions.

Alt En was conceived by a Kansas City industrialist who was, at one time, Joe Biden's speech writer. During the 1980s when the pipeline industry was being deregulated that individual bought into the pipeline business and later became interested in trying to design industrial feedlots which would use fecal matter in digesters which would then produce gas to burn boilers which turned seed corn into ethanol. The residue produces a highly nutritious byproduct called distiller's grain or wetcake and that product is fed to cattle in the feedlot, thus completing the cycle. With great fanfare the Alt En plant at Mead was organized around this principle.

Mead annexed rural land near the community and the ethanol plant received tax increment financing to build the plant at Mead. The plant opened with ribbon cutting and representatives of government and industry were there to praise this new ecological plant. Less than six months later the digester exploded and the plant closed for several years.

During the period when the plant was closed, the owners developed a new business model. They would use treated seed, given to them by the seed companies, to produce ethanol. Alt En knew at the time that the byproduct was forbidden to be fed to livestock because it was highly contaminated with pesticides and fungicides, so the proposed solution was to apply the wetcake to land as fertilizer.

It is important at this point to state that Alt En had advised the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (now NDEE) of its intent to switch to treated seed and NDEE wrote back that this change was minor and would not trigger the need for an additional hearing. It is also important to acknowledge that the land application of the wetcake was taking place with the approval of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture

2023 Annual Peace Conference, continued



Senator Danielle Conrad



Senator Terrel McKinney



Senator Machaela Cavanaugh



Senator Tony Vargas

Senator Danielle Conrad was first elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 2006; and re-elected in 2010 and 2022. Senator Conrad graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2003. Senator Conrad is a member of the Nebraska Bar Association board, Legal Aid of Nebraska board, and Nebraska Lawyers Trust Account Foundation.

Senator Conrad served as Executive Director of the ACLU of Nebraska from 2014 to 2022. Senator Conrad serves Nebraskans on the Education, Government, Military, & Veterans Affairs, and Nebraska Retirement Systems Committees.

Senator Terrel McKinney was born and raised in Omaha, NE. He attended Omaha North High School, graduating in 2008. McKinney is a father and state Senator representing District 11. He serves as the chair of the Urban Affairs Committee and is also a member of the Business & Labor and Judiciary Committees. He is a devoted community organizer, activist, and wrestling coach within the North Omaha community.

Before running for office, Senator McKinney worked as a community organizer focusing on food insecurity, Medicaid expansion, and other community initiatives. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Sport Business Management from Maryville University-St. Louis has a Master's in Business Administration from Midland University. Senator McKinney is pursuing a law degree at Creighton University School of Law.

Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, an Omaha native, was first elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 2018 and re-elected in 2022, serving the 6th District in Omaha. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

Senator Cavanaugh has nearly 20 years of experience in community engagement and public affairs. Before her time in the Legislature, Senator Cavanaugh worked at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska and she has served as Director of Development for Opera

Omaha and as a Staff Assistant in Washington D.C. for U.S., Senator Ben Nelson.

Senator Tony Vargas has devoted his career to public service and advocacy. He began his career as a middle school science teacher and then went on to serve on the Omaha Public Schools Board. Since 2016,

Senator Vargas has served District 7, the communities of Downtown and South Omaha, in the Nebraska Legislature, where he focused on addressing educational equity, economic opportunity, and healthcare access. He is a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Executive Board, the Legislature's Planning Committee, and the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee.

We hope you will plan on attending the NFP Peace Conference on Saturday, November 4th at Aldersgate Methodist United Church in Lincoln not only to hear our tremendous Nebraska State Senator champions but three afternoon workshops as well. You will be able to choose to attend one of the three workshops that align with NFP's priorities.

Our Anti-War Workshop by Omaha Alternatives to Violence "Making Friends with Conflict"

Omaha Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), the local chapter of AVP-USA, is a volunteer-led non-profit. Founded in 1995, Omaha AVP has been a prison-based program teaching transforming power to incarcerated citizens. Transforming power is the power to change a potentially violent behavior or



situation to peaceful ones.

In 2022, AVP expanded its work to the greater Omaha Community, offering community workshops to

conclusion page 5

Lincoln Adopts a Local Food System Plan

by Marilyn McNabb

Most of the food we eat in Lincoln is flown in daily—about 90 percent of it. Grocery stores stock only three days' worth of inventory. That's a fragile system. As we move into even more unpredictable weather because of climate change, risks to producers and supply chains will increase.

A remarkably broad group of Lincoln citizens put together the city's new Local Food System Plan, adopted by Mayor Gaylor Baird in July and approved by the Planning Commission and the City Council. Leadership and credit for developing broad support for the 73-page report should go to Tim Rinne, formerly NFP's Coordinator, and Dr. Megan McGuffey, who heads Community Crops and holds a Ph.D. in food policy. The project has had strong support from Councilmember Tammy Ward.

The Food Plan follows the 2020 Climate Action Plan Draft (Oct. 2020) and the 2021-2027 Climate Action Plan adopted by the City Council in March 2021. Both named a "resilient" local food system as a goal. You can find both of these and the Local Food System Plan online. Mayor Gaylor Baird's strong support was, of course, essential from the start.

The food plan calls for access to healthy food for all, increasing local food production, promoting good production practices that protect soil, water, and air, and reducing food waste.

The plan envisions much more of our food grown right here, in backyard gardens, balconies and decks, community gardens, schoolyards, church grounds, and the like, and on farmland near Lincoln.

The definition of "local" in "local food" varies from Lancaster County to a 250-mile radius of Lincoln to anywhere in the state. Any of those definitions would bring down greenhouse gas emissions and increase resiliency.

Local farmland hasn't always been dedicated to livestock feed and fuel for motor vehicles. That change happened after

at the current results of a plan the Winnebago tribe crafted in 2012, one that has some of the same goals as Lincoln's new plan. Google "Winnebago Tribe Turns to Organic Farming, Looks to Build a Future of Food Sovereignty," *Omaha World-Herald* 5/23/23.

You might expect the part of the Food Plan about reducing food waste to be



War II. The Plan notes that of the farms in Lancaster County, 95% are family-owned, and half are less than 50 acres. Most grow corn and soybeans. Only about 8 percent of Lancaster County farms sell food to local consumers. How might that change if some of the recommendations in the Food Plan become reality? What if we had local food processing opportunities? Year-round farmers' markets? And many other possibilities.

The Plan has good practical ideas and visionary goals (pp. 40–42). For an interesting comparison, you may want to look

predictable, even dull. But it's shocking. It quotes the Environmental Protection Agency: about 35 percent of the U.S. food supply is wasted annually. Approximately half of that is wasted during consumption by households and food services. Fruits, vegetables, dairy, and eggs are the most frequently wasted foods. The EPA found that nationally, this wasted food creates the equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions of more than 42 coal-fired plants and uses an area of agricultural land equal to New York and California.

We've changed before. We can again.

Annual Peace Conference, conclusion

its ongoing prison work. Suzanne King has been with Omaha AVP in 2016 and Jerrold McLeod joined in 2021.

Our Social Justice Workshop from RISE's Jasmine Harris "The Juvenile Justice System in Nebraska"

Jasmine L. Harris is the director of public policy and advocacy at RISE. She received her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2010 with an emphasis in Com-



munity Health Education and her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2005. With RISE, Jasmine has worked to increase policy advocacy en-

gagement around criminal justice issues and increase efforts through Dream.org's National Day of Empathy, which is Nebraska's only lobby day dedicated to increasing awareness about the impacts legislation has on people who have experienced the criminal justice system, their families, and communities.

Our Environmental Workshop with previous OPPD Board Member Rick Yoder, NPPD Board Member Mary Harding, and LES Board Member Chelsea Johnson "How to Engage with Public Power?"

Rick Yoder, now retired, began his career in the public sector at the North Slope Borough and then the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation before relocating to Nebraska in 1992, where he worked at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Business Administration. The throughline of his professional career was providing technical assistance to businesses so they could reduce risk to human health and the environ-



ment from their business operations. Rick served one term on the OPPD Board from January 2017-January 2023.

Mary Harding has been an advocate for the environment since helping found, Nebraska Citizen Action in 1988. She was Executive Director of the Nebraska Environmental Trust from its inception through 2006. Subsequently, she served for two years as the Execu-



tive Director of the Nebraska League of Conservation Voters. She has represented southeast Nebraska on the board of Nebraska Public Power

District since 2003. She introduced the first renewable energy goal for the District, and as Chair of the Board led the process to adopt a net-zero carbon goal.

Chelsea Johnson is the Deputy Director of Conservation Nebraska, a nonprofit that protects our state's environment by educating the public, supporting communities, and increasing civic engage-



ment. She is a member of the Lincoln Electric System Board of Directors, and is currently serving her second term on the Lower Platte South NRD Board.

Political Contacts

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comment Line: 202-456-1111
202-456-1414; Fax 202-456-2993
www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Sen. Deb Fischer

454 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-1325 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
www.fischer.senate.gov

Sen. Pete Ricketts

107 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
www.ricketts.senate.gov

Rep. Mike Flood, District 1

11514 Longworth HOB
Washington D.C. 20515
202-225-4806
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)
<http://flood.house.gov>

Rep. Don Bacon, District 2

1024 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4155
<https://bacon.house.gov/>

Rep. Adrian Smith, District 3

502 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6435
Fax: (202) 225-0207
<https://adriansmith.house.gov/>
Capitol Hill 202-224-3121
State Capitol 402-471-2311
State Senator, District #
State Capitol; PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Governor Jim Pillen

P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244; Fax 402-471-6031
<https://governor.nebraska.gov/>

Alt En Update, conclusion

which had not tested the byproduct before giving them a permit to apply it. Government obviously failed in both of these instances. Ultimately, when NDA did finally sample the byproduct they found it to be full of pesticide and ordered Alt En to remove it from neighboring fields which Alt En did. But Alt En's solution was not to shut down the plant and clean up their mess. They continued to manufacture ethanol but stockpiled the wetcake on site, along with the wet cake which they had been ordered to remove from neighboring fields.

In 2020, the Guardian Newspaper broke the story of Alt En. Judy Wu-Smart, a bee specialist at the University of Nebraska, had seen a dramatic decline in the survival of her bee colonies on the Eastern Nebraska Research Extension and Education Center (EN-REEC). Several residents of Mead had complained of irritation in their eyes and throats, dogs were sick, raccoons were found dead at the piles of wetcake waiting to be land applied. NDEE now ordered AltEn to cease production. In February of 2021, a pipe in one of the digestors broke, flooding nearby fields with pesticide saturated water which flowed onto and across the ENREEC property and a nearby National Guard Training Facility.

Several entities, including the Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club, and several individuals formed a concerned citizen's group called the Perivallon Group which still meets weekly to keep pressure on the state and a focus on the cleanup which is being undertaken there.

A large group of seed companies have spent well over 25 million dollars in an early and preliminary effort to cleanup the mess left behind by Alt En. Part of that cleanup includes actions being taken at the present time. A large "hoop house" on the site has been full of treated seeds since the plant was closed. This seed will now be trucked to Tulsa, Oklahoma to be burned. The seed companies have also been disposing of much of the other accumulated trash at the

site and have taken hundreds of loads of trash to the Pheasant Point landfill in Omaha.

Because so many citizens were affected by the acrid doer of the wetcake on site, the seed companies gathered all the wetcake together and piled it on bare ground on 16 acres of land at the site. They then hired helicopters and trucks to spray a product called "posi-shield" on the wet cake to encase it and to stop the stench. That effort has been somewhat successful in stopping the odor, but the organic nature of the product as it decays under the posi-shield has



caused the development of cracks in the product and water sitting atop the posi-shield is dark and many suspect it is contaminated.

Now comes the plans to finally remove the wetcake from the site. The current plan is to remove portions of the posi-shield covering and do a pilot project where about 10% of the material would be taken to the landfill in Omaha where it will be entombed. Chris Dunker, a Lincoln journalist, compared the pile of wetcake to Memorial Stadium a few years ago. If compiled on a football field, the wetcake would rise high above the top of Memorial Stadium. That means that there will be thousands of truckloads of material which need to be transported from Mead to Omaha to dispose of the product.

Even when this action is completed there will still be work to be done. At least one well, six miles away, has been flagged as contaminated

with pesticides and the permeability of land in the Todd Valley would indicate that the water in the wetcake will soak into the ground and eventually into the aquifer. Surface water which is also contaminated is currently being treated and applied at measured rates to nearby land.

Meanwhile the court cases continue. Alt En has been sued by the seed companies to try and recapture some of their costs. However it seems likely that the owners of the Alt En plant skimmed all the money off the project which they could possibly walk with and that money is sitting in offshore accounts somewhere.

We come to that conclusion in this manner. If a traditional ethanol plant can make money, even though it must purchase the corn which is boiled, then shouldn't a plant producing ethanol which has no cost in the product make much more? Remember, Alt En has not paid property taxes for years, walked away with \$200,000 in funds through the ARPA funds and the company also has a lengthy record of mechanic's liens assessed against the company by companies who worked there but were never paid.

There are still great unknowns about the plant. Isn't it possible that the chemicals there will break down and combine to produce other, potentially more harmful, products? And how can long term exposure to the dust from Alt En affect your health? Is it time that citizens rose up and opposed the widespread use of neonicotinoids which show only marginal benefit to grain production but are so destructive to the insects on which we depend to fertilize our crops? Too many unanswered questions, but citizens must be aware.



by Bill Arfmann
 On behalf of the Roots of Justice Steering Committee

It all began with the NAACP Lincoln Branch and NFP Lincoln Chapter. Each year, typically in July, we celebrate Nelson Mandela's birthday with a picnic, accompanied by a panel discussion of race and racism in our community. This year, Dr. Dwayne Mays and Dr. Paul Olson took the lead. Before the pandemic, we organized a steering committee to push further and dig deeper. We decided to put together a well-documented and accurate history to focus on the Nebraska experiences of five groups:

- Native Americans
- African Americans
- Latinos
- Asian Americans
- Refugees

These stories have not been part of the education of most Nebraskans. Acknowledging the pains of the past—hearing peoples' stories promises to help us all better understand why things are as they are today—can lead to racial healing.

Thanks to numerous individual donations (as well as grants from the Lincoln, Woods, and Weitz Family Foundations), authors were contracted to write these five chapters of Nebraska history. Preston Love Jr., Dr. Ness Sandoval, Kevin Abourezk, Dr. Gabe Bruguier, Dr. Sharon

Ishii-Jordan, Dr. Heather Fryer, Dr. Emira Ibrahimasic, and Dr. Julia Reilly signed on to write our chapters.

Our writers and steering committee determined that these histories required more than gathering old news clips, journals, and other written historical accounts. We organized and executed listening sessions in Lincoln, Scottsbluff, Omaha, and Grand Island. Additional listening sessions are planned for Columbus/Fremont and for Native Americans. The agenda for these listening sessions began with a brief project introduction. Our writers are pulling together the histories from many sources. No one knows or can tell these stories better than the people and families who experienced racism in our Nebraska communities. Therefore, we listened. People talked about their experiences and stories **AND WERE LISTENED TO**. We preserved these vital stories with video.

We are excited to announce that three chapters are complete, and two others are nearing completion. A peer review process and final editing lie ahead this fall. Kevin Abourezk is editing all except the Native American chapter he wrote with Bruguier. All will be published as an e-book on UNL's Digital Commons by late 2023 or early 2024.

The project steering committee and

writers are now considering and planning for the next steps. We are in conversation with the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities about collaboration on a website. Our next steps require us to develop a plan to digitize the chapters to facilitate better interaction and accessibility to metadata associated with the project. Digital access will accommodate the needs of researchers, students, educators, community leaders, civic groups, unions, and interested churches. While the following steps beyond 2023 are not yet clear, it is clear that the work on the Roots of Justice, Historical Truth and Reconciliation project must continue, and the project will **REQUIRE ADDITIONAL MONEY TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE**.

To learn more, visit rootsofjustice.org. To donate online, visit: <https://neappleseed.org/rootsofjustice>. Or write a check to Nebraska Appleseed, our fiscal sponsor. Put Roots of Justice on the memo line. Mail it to:

Nebraska Appleseed
 P.O. Box 83613
 Lincoln, NE. 68501-3613

Finally, let us sincerely thank all from NFP and the NAACP who have already donated and helped take the project to this point. We could not have done it without you!

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

THE SUMMER THE EARTH SIZZLED

by Bruce E. Johansen

Remember last Summer? As a reminder, we have a small gallery of satellite pictures, courtesy of NASA. Red means hotter than average; blue signifies colder. Lots of red on these two maps, you say? Remember the birthing years of global warming when people talked about “tip-



ping points” in the future tense? That was before last July and August, the hottest two months in recorded history, hot enough that temperatures busted through the point at which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that we would be on our way to climate apocalypse.

So, here we are, past the point of having tipped, even if a notable number of Republicans still think climate change is a myth believed only by anti-American, hippie, tree-hugging misfits. Here we are, even if the Trumpoids et al. still think it's

only imagination. Just how hot does it have to get before they become believers in the rules of nature?

Last summer was quite a set piece for sweating over what may come next. A month or more of 110 F. or above F. in Phoenix. One hundred F. in the surf off the southern Florida Keys? Last summer felt like the tipping point of our lives so

rusty factories, burning forests also adds carbon dioxide, the prince of greenhouse gases, to our atmosphere, accelerating our descent into climate-change hell.

Almost any time I have turned on the TV news or read a newspaper this summer, climate change has played a leading role—more heat, with records set world-wide, and observations that

Until we deal with humankind's inability to make peace between nations, and the same nations' unwillingness to peacefully set strict, enforceable limits on greenhouse gas emissions, the spiral of increasing gases in the atmosphere will continue.

far, at any rate, how long will it be before we repeat or beat it?

Remember the fires? – Quebec, Ontario, California, Yellowknife, California Greece, Spain, Chile, Siberia, and more. Once upon a time in Omaha, a summer northwesterly wind usually (but not always) brought a crisp blue sky. Lately has been the first time we had seen the National Weather Service dropping “smoke” into our forecasts day after day. The past several midsummers, the sky often has been the color of week-old mashed potatoes, smelling like acid and reminding us that along with old cars and

we are living through the hottest period since the beginning of humankind's tenancy on Earth; with heavier and more damaging rainfall, wind and hail, as well as temperatures.

How Greenhouse Gases Operate

These events are no accident. They are a result of how greenhouse gases operate.

The speed with which temperatures increase in both the oceans and atmosphere (along with the intensity of precipitation) are governed by thermal inertia, the delayed effect of greenhouse-gas emissions and their effects in the air

and water. Temperatures' actual effects in the air are evident about 50 years after these gases are emitted. In the oceans, inertia requires about 100 years.

When the fossil-fuel age began two hundred years ago, the proportion of CO₂ varied from about 180 parts per million to about 280. Since then, it has increased to about 420 ppm. That is as high as the proportion of CO₂ has been since the Pliocene, 2 to 4 million years ago. Many scientists believe that a level of 350 ppm reflects the level at which human beings, plants, and animals can survive comfortably most of the time. The level of CO₂ has not declined except for a few very short periods since the first coal was burned about 200 years ago, at the beginning of the machine age.

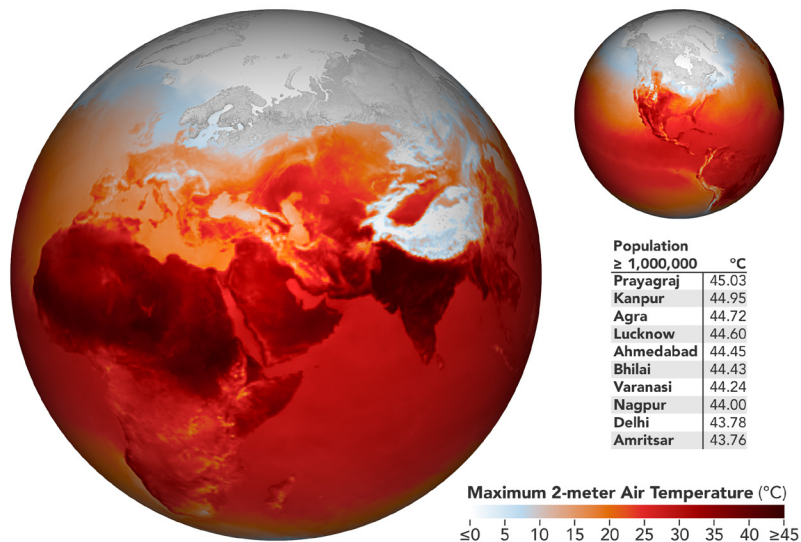
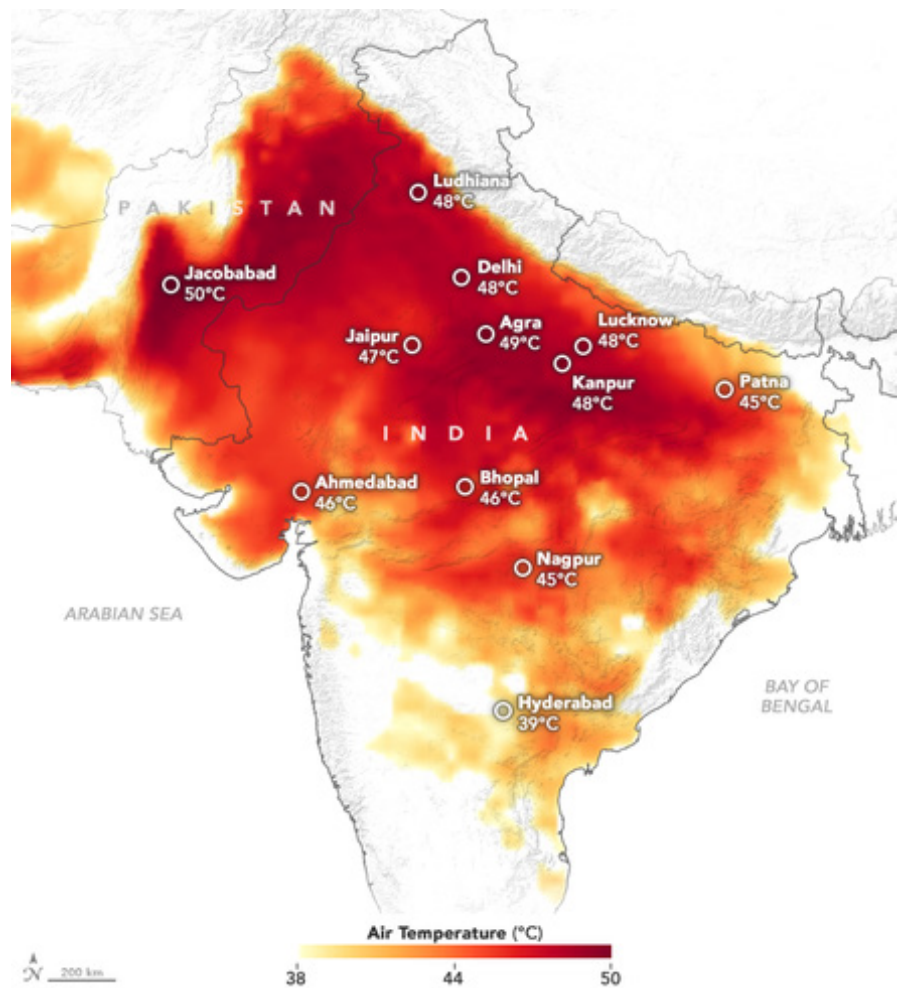
What Will It Take?

Until that curve at 420 ppm begins to decline, and continues to fall, heat in the atmosphere and oceans will continue to rise.

Until we deal with humankind's inability to make peace between nations, and the same nations' unwillingness to peacefully set strict, enforceable limits on greenhouse gas emissions, the spiral of increasing gases in the atmosphere will continue. If it continues, the lives of every living thing on our only home will be in increasing peril. Reducing that peril should be our number-one priority. The other path will be increasingly dangerous and unpleasant. This is not a matter of political debate. It's how the natural world works.

Bruce E. Johansen's latest book is Nature & Nationalism: Weather & War, released in September, 2023. By Springer-Nature in Frankfurt, Germany.

*Bruce E. Johansen
University of Nebraska at Omaha, emeritus
Communication & Native American Studies,
Environmental Studies
Omaha, Nebraska
bjohansen@unomaha.edu*



“Divisible” conclusion

healthy food? You are probably in a Red-lined area. Are there or have been industrial centers that poison the land, air, water, and the people in the community?

And are most of the residents in the community poor and people of color on top of everything else mentioned above?

You are almost certainly in a Redlined Area.

The ASARCO smelting and refinery plant located in Downtown Omaha was purposefully positioned near the Redlined community of North Omaha where most of the Black Community calls home today. The ASARCO plant poisoned downtown and North Omaha residents and businesses, more than 40,000 properties, for 125 years until it was forced out of business and designated a superfund site; meaning labeled by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as one of the most dangerously lead contaminated sites in America. For more than 125 years these plants were allowed to poison, I would even argue that they were PAID to poison these communities and sickness, elevated health costs, and even death resulted and still plagues North Omaha with elevated lead poisoning in the homes and soil.

Do not forget that this situation is not unique to Omaha, Nebraska. All Redlined conditions found in Omaha can also be found in EVERY REDLINED CITY ACROSS THE NATION.

“Today people of color and low-income individuals are still more likely to live and work in hazardous areas. Most Superfund sites, which are areas that have been deemed severely environmentally contaminated, are within one mile of federally funded housing. Even more disturbing, a disproportionate amount of these families are people of color.”-The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Divisible highlighted the Redlined areas in Omaha Nebraska, mainly located in the North Side of Omaha but with many other pockets of poverty in other parts of

the city. Many of the residents of these Red-lined communities have never been educated on how their neighborhoods and lifestyles have been slated for poverty and trauma for generations to come.

I am more educated now but I am still a resident of North Omaha and I was honored to be able to tell my story. My co-creators Prof. Terri Crawford and Dr. Nikitah Imani also told their stories and shared their experiences and expertise with Redlining. I am also honored to be able to work with Professor Crawford on the UNO Community Engagement Center Redlining Board where we give a free tour called “Undesign the Redline” that breaks down how racism was structurally designed in our cities and the impact that it has had on generations of families and communities. Our CEC Redlining Board meets monthly and is planning redress, restorative justice and healing actionable steps for the North Omaha Community. Divisible producer Lizzy Barrett masterfully wove our stories of pain into power and tools to educate the

masses about Redlining and I am eternally grateful to have met her. If you are like-minded and serious about learning about Redlining please reach out to Prof. Terri Crawford at the UNO Black Studies Department and schedule a tour. Because in the age of information, ignorance is a choice that carries extremely high consequences. And If we want our future to change we need to educate ourselves about the past. We cannot allow Redlining and any other form of hate or discrimination to continue if we are to be the United States, indivisible, with liberty and justice **FOR ALL**.

References

<https://www.divisibledoc.com/>

<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.cleanup&id=0703481>

<https://www.bankrate.com/mortgages/what-is-redlining/>

<https://sites.uab.edu/human-rights/2021/01/15/people-of-color-live-disproportionately-close-to-superfund-sites/>

Your Foundation Speaks

Mark Vasina, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Contributions to Nebraska Peace Foundation can be allocated to either an unrestricted or restricted account based on donor preference.

The unrestricted account funds the daily educational needs of Nebraskans for Peace.

The restricted account enhances the permanent endowment of the foundation through investments, generating an annual return of 4-5% in dividends and interest, which then supports the unrestricted account.

Please specify on your check if your donation should go directly to the unrestricted account or to the restricted account, which invests in socially-responsible, fossil-free, and primarily renewable energy stocks and bonds.





In Memory of Byron Peterson 1937-2023

Our loving friend and dedicated board member, Byron Peterson, has passed. Our deepest condolences to Byron's family and friends. We grieve with you; our hearts are broken. Byron was a wonderful, caring activist and an amazing human being. He will be greatly missed.

Byron Peterson Obituary

"Byron Dean Peterson Byron Dean Peterson, 86, died on Sunday, June 11, 2023, at the Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He was born on February 13, 1937, in Nebraska City. He grew up and graduated from High School in nearby Talmage. He pursued his undergraduate degree from Dana College in Blair and then went on to receive his master's degree in social work at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He lived in Lincoln and worked with the Department of Children and Family Services for the State of Nebraska. He later moved to Scottsbluff where he retired and has lived for the past 35 years.

Throughout his life, Byron enjoyed being outdoors. He was always quick to take the lead on an 'adventure' with anyone who would join him. Adventures included camping, swimming creeks and lakes, canoeing, hiking bluffs, rock climbing, sailing, biking, skiing, sledding, and a general notion of exploring anything that needed to be explored.

These adventures spanned from his boyhood swimming holes of the Nemaha River in Eastern Nebraska to the very top of the Grand Teton in Western Wyoming and a whole lot of places in between. He found his perfect outdoor spot out at Lake Minatare where he lived for the last 30 years of his life.

During the Civil Rights movement, Byron was actively involved with the African American community in Lincoln. He participated in the early years of the Malone Community Center working to provide activities for inner city youth. Upon moving to Scottsbluff, he became involved with the Native American community in Scottsbluff and South Dakota. Through his work with the Lakota Sioux Tribe, he earned the name 'Man with Big Heart'. He was a long-term Board Member with Nebraskans for Peace and active with the Democratic Party. He could often be found outside the Gering post office with his 'petting' dog getting signatures on petitions for various causes.

Byron is the oldest of three children and preceded in death by his mother Esther (Casper) Viox, his father Leonard Peterson, his stepfather Pershing "Bud" Viox, and his nephew Marty Peterson. Byron is survived by his two sons Erin and wife Julie Peterson of Omaha, NE, and Tyler and wife Michelle Peterson of New York, and grandchildren; Ella Peterson, Adam Peterson, Isabel Peterson, and Isaac Peterson. He is also survived by his sister Sharon Peterson of Denver, CO, brother Terry and wife Annette Peterson of Auburn, NE, and their two sons Troy and Travis Peterson of Omaha, NE.

Over the years, Byron enjoyed the company of his four-legged family which included a long list of lab and lab mixes, cats, and sometimes chickens. If his dog(s) weren't with him at church, stores, or any public place, they were most likely in his pickup waiting for his return. His remaining dogs, Vic and Charlie found loving homes with his caring friends in Scottsbluff.

Nebraskans for Peace
P.O. Box 83466
Lincoln, NE 68501-3466

Phone:402-475-4620/Fax:475-4624
nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org
www.nebraskansforpeace.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 310
Lincoln, NE

“Divisible” with Liberty or Justice for Some

*by Schmeeka Simpson,, Tour Director
Malcolm X Memorial Foundation*

I had the opportunity to help co-create a documentary called *Divisible* which highlights the very divisible nature of Redlining, using the birth home of Malcolm X, here in Nebraska as a case-study for Redlining across the United States.

So, what is Red lining? “Redlining is a discriminatory practice that designated specific areas of cities to receive financial support and excluded other areas, targeting them for disinvestment and decline. These ‘redlined’ neighborhoods were overwhelmingly populated by people of color. The resulting disinvestment exacerbated pre-existing education, health, housing, criminal justice, and other racial-socio-economic disparities.” – divisibledoc.com

The areas of the city that were excluded from the American Dream were outlined

in red on the Federal Home Owner’s Loan Corporation maps while the areas that would receive all of the investment and resources were outlined in green. The areas outlined in green were restricted areas that did not allow Black people especially to live in them. Racial or Restricted Covenants were made between neighbors that kept out those considered “undesirable or hazardous influences” and were enforced by the police and courts and cemented in the foundations of the mainly all white U.S. suburbs through zoning laws, public policies, school boards, discriminatory loan practices, etc and often accompanied with violence and terrorism for those who tried to change things.

Redlining was banned officially in 1968 but the damage has already been done to countless communities across the United States. Race has been made synonymous with property values so Black communities are always disenfranchised, disinvested,

and devastated generationally while White communities continue to build value, wealth and equity that has also been passed down for generations.

You can identify a Redlined area in any city, in any state through the cookie cutter pattern of poverty and lack of resources available to the community.

Is there a liquor store and a dollar store on every other corner? You are probably in a Redlined area. Is there an influx of predatory banking services such as pawn shops and payday loan lenders? You are probably in a Redlined area. Are the sidewalks missing or damaged and the lighting inadequate? You are probably in a Redlined area. Is there a lack of city services and community infrastructure? You are probably in a Redlined area. Are the schools subpar and ill-equipped to educate? You are probably in a Redlined area. Is there a lack of grocery stores, and access to fresh and