



Network News

June 2023

Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

If we remember those times and places -- and there are so many -- where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. – Howard Zinn

This issue of the Network News features just a small fraction of the people behaving magnificently. May it give you energy and hope.

WNPJ's Spring Gathering: Focus on the Driftless, Energy and Land Use

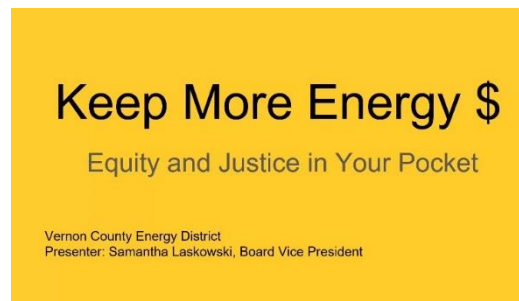


WNPJ's May 6 Assembly & Steering committee met at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve in southwestern Wisconsin. We learned about energy and land use issues and opportunities that are applicable to all of us.

Watch the videos and download resources at wnpj.org/post/driftless-energy-2023

WNPJ Board member Dena Eakles provided an overview & some history of the rural Driftless area of Wisconsin, including the current state of energy cooperatives.

Samantha Laskowski of the Vernon County Energy District gave an informative presentation explaining how homeowners and others can access tax credits, rebates and discounts to convert to renewable energy, adding up to large energy savings while addressing the climate crisis and creating energy equity. Check out the video and accompanying PDF to learn how you can benefit!





Longtime activist Spark Burmaster talked about the possibility of a new "micro" nuclear power plant at the site where the Genoa Coal & Nuclear Plant was decommissioned over a decade ago. He explored the risks and costs, and explained the harms of promoting “carbon-free nuclear energy” as a solution to our energy needs.

Rob Danielson of Save Our Unique Lands (S.O.U.L.) of Wisconsin focuses on energy expansion in Wisconsin: individual/community/distributed solutions vs. corporate solutions. He explains how boosting energy efficiency negates the need for the massive proposed corporate energy expansion that will use critical land, and how Wisconsin’s current statutes need to change to make corporations accountable. He compared the cost & benefit of building a nuclear power plant at Genoa to the same amount of money spent to extend the Focus on Energy program: for \$4 billion you could triple fund the Focus on Energy Program for 41 years and remove 7 times as much carbon dioxide. You’ll find a map of the Wisconsin Utility Districts and the problematic state statutes on the web page just below the video.

Forest Jahnke shared the Crawford Stewardship Project's work to promote sustainable land and water use and environmental justice in the Driftless region, and protect local control of resources. He explained the geology of the region and how it is impacted by projects including industrial level factory farms, frac sand mining and power lines.

Marcia Halligan shared about the Kickapoo Peace Circle, and her book *Hidden in the 13th Moon*: She offers “Blessings and thanks to all the creatures, features and aspects of the natural world and those who cherish them.”

More reports from WNPJ members!

These videos are available at wnpj.org/post/2023-spring-assembly-more-reports

Brad Geyer, Veterans for Peace Chapter 25, Madison, spoke about the chapter’s Memorial Day display and events, and efforts to pass US Congressional Resolution 77: Embracing the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mark Foreman, Veterans for Peace Chapter 102 – Milwaukee talked about the chapter's outreach activities in Milwaukee including the Armistice Day event, and especially the Golden Rule, a boat which sailed in 1958, attempting to stop nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands. The boat was recovered and has been sailing around the US and down the Mississippi River, educating people about the dangers of nuclear weapons. The Golden Rule is expected to be in Milwaukee September 1-4. vfpgoldenruleproject.org



John Peck, Family Farm Defenders, PC Foundation, Wisconsin Books to Prisoners

John is also a board member of WNPJ. He talked about elements of the Farm Bill, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Program). Family Farm Defenders works on many issues important to farmers, including antibiotics in herds, big data in agriculture, privatization of "the commons", GMO, and right to repair (equipment). He announced his upcoming workshop on climate in agriculture at the MREA Energy Fair in June, and provided information about how the PC Foundation can help organizations like Wisconsin Books to Prisoners as a fiscal sponsor.

Steve Watrous of the Milwaukee End the Wars Coalition, comprised of several peace groups, reported on two Zoom calls on April 15 and May 13, attempting to bring peace activists together with the challenging goal of Uniting Wisconsin to End the War in Ukraine. Steve is the contact for WNPJ member group **United Nations Association-USA Milwaukee**.

Judy Miner, past Director of WNPJ, reported on the **United Nations Association of Dane County** offering monthly programs available to the public. Check WNPJ.org Events for topics.

Debra Gillispie, founder of Mothers Against Gun Violence in Milwaukee and also a board member of Wisconsin Network for Peace & Justice, talked about the possibility of taxation of gun products to help survivors of gun violence.



Amber Williams is WAVE's Community Outreach and Engagement Associate (WAVE is Wisconsin Anti Violence Effort). She talked about their work educating on gun violence prevention, how people can help, and encourages people to contact her for their youth interns to be involved in your events.

Mary Kay Baum spoke about **WISDOM's** work on criminal justice issues, and **Madison Arcatao Sister City Project's** relationship to the people in Arcatao, El Salvador, currently experiencing an extremely difficult political situation.

Guest writer Emily Adams enjoys meeting people and writing about their work. Emily volunteered her time outside of work to interview people at Casa Maria Catholic Worker and Wisconsin Green Muslims and contributed these two articles.



Rita Corbin

Casa Maria Catholic Worker

- by Emily Adams

Lincoln Rice began living at Casa Maria when he was a senior in college. He still calls the organization home after 26 years.

“I think the way Casa Maria is organized has played a large role in why I’m still here,” says Rice, a live-in staff member.

Casa Maria has provided housing to Milwaukee families since 1966. Its founders Annette and Michael Cullen wanted families to feel at home, so they arranged for families and staff to live together and make decisions by consensus. Casa Maria’s four Victorian homes are nestled between gardens on residential streets. The front lawns are dotted with yard signs supporting Black Lives Matter and climate justice, a few of the justice issues staff members are involved in.

Rice says political activism has always been a part of Casa Maria’s mission. One of its founders, Michael Cullen, was a member of the “Milwaukee 14” activist group that burned draft records during the Vietnam war. He and Annette would later found Casa Maria as a married couple before being deported to Ireland for Michael’s activism.

Casa Maria, at the time a fledgling organization based in a convent, managed to grow and thrive as part of the Catholic Worker Movement. The movement started by encouraging volunteers to fight causes of violence and poverty during The Great Depression. It grew to include justice organizations around the U.S.

Rice first read the words of Doris Day, suffragette and founder of the Catholic Worker movement, in high school. He says the Catholic Worker Movement principles of hospitality and community are part of what drew him to Casa Maria. Rice references a familiar quote when describing Casa Maria’s mission:

“The extra coat in your closet belongs to the person without one,” he says.

Casa Maria’s methods of accomplishing its mission change from year to year. The organization is currently focused on supporting families with open Child Protective Services cases, which Rice says can be biased and disproportionately affect Black families. Casa Maria is also involved in anti-drone protests and boycotting Chase Bank, a major climate change contributor.

Staff members often work closely with other organizations in the Milwaukee area to help support Casa Maria’s mission. Rice says being a member of WNPJ allows him to stay connected to like-minded organizations and recognize the work of young volunteers.

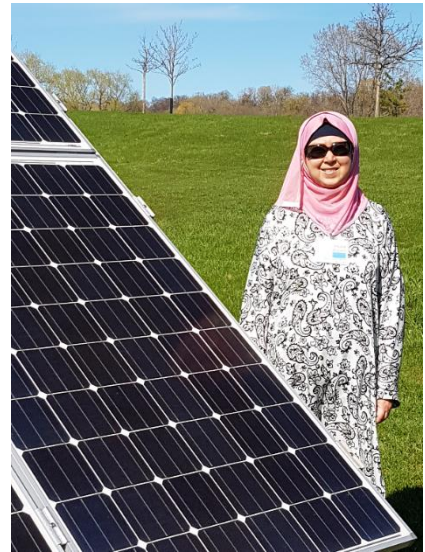
Moving into 2023, the need for shelter and support is still ever-present within the community. Casa Maria will continue its 57-year legacy of providing housing for Milwaukee families — an extra coat to those in need.

You can reach Casa Maria through their Facebook page @CasaMariaCatholicWorker or their website at casamariacatholicworker.weebly.com

Wisconsin Green Muslims: Finding Joy in Going Green

- by Emily Adams

Reckoning with the climate crisis may be difficult, but there’s happiness to be found in protecting our most sacred resources. The interfaith organization Wisconsin Green Muslims brings people together to learn about the environment. One of its numerous affiliated projects is called Faithful Rainwater Harvesting, or FaRaH, which means joy. Community members enthusiastically support a variety of causes from solar energy to water quality.



Huda Alkaff, an ecologist and environmental educator, founded the Milwaukee-based organization 18 years ago. Wisconsin Green Muslims’ mission is to educate the Muslim community and public about the Islamic environmental justice teachings, to apply these teachings in daily life and to form collaborations and coalitions toward a just, healthy, peaceful, and sustainable future. Alkaff says the organization connects people from at least 19 different faith traditions and spiritualities.

Wisconsin Green Muslims coordinates the Wisconsin Faith Communities for Equitable Solar Initiative. Through over 200 one-on-one and small group conversations, listening sessions, presentations, Wisconsin Green Muslims reached more than 8,000 people of different backgrounds and a wide variety of constituents in Wisconsin to generate Just Solar guiding principles from the people, by the people, for the people, rooted in our collective values of justice, equity and inclusion. Two pathways came up from these listening sessions and conversations: (1) Energy Efficiency to Solar power and (2) Solar Trainings to Living Wage Jobs, primarily for women, people of color and disadvantaged communities. We are centering energy democracy in our work: community-based, solutions-focused, frontline-led, and justice-centered renewable energy efforts.



Wisconsin Green Muslims educates thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds in Wisconsin and beyond on a variety of environmental topics, including climate change, water, food, fair trade, solar energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and transportation equity. The group’s Green Ramadan campaign is now shared and implemented in approximately 20 states and globally.

Learn more about Wisconsin Green Muslims on their website at wisconsinmgreenmuslims.org.

Raging Grannies of Madison

- Bonnie Block, past Director of WNPJ

The Madison/Dane County “gaggle” of Grannies was begun in 2003 so this is our 20th year as a “disorganization.” We use street theater and wear colorful hats, aprons, and shawls to call attention to our songs for peace, justice and protecting our environment. We’re a proud member organization of WNPJ and were awarded the WNPJ Lifetime Peacemaker Award in 2010.



As “sisters in sass” we use humor, satire, and “speaking truth to power” to demand greater equity by ending racism/sexism/ableism and all forms of discrimination. Instead we use music and laughter as a vehicle to work for health care including reproductive care, education, jobs with living wages, and political, legal, and corporate systems that provide fair taxation, campaign financing reform, dealing with climate change, and ending mass incarceration and militarism. You can check out our 180-page Song Library at the Raging Grannies of Madison website. And you can find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

We will sing for groups and events in WI to which we’re invited (and sometimes where we’re not!) From May to November you can find us every other Saturday at 10 am at the Farmer’s Market across from the S. Hamilton corner of the Capitol Square. And we have a list of alternative holiday songs we sing for the Annual December Fair Trade Festival at the Madison Convention Center. Hope to see you there! raginggrannies.madisonwi.us

James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation aids asylum seekers

- Leila Pine, Chair JRUUC Immigrant and Refugee Rights Team



The JRUUC Immigrant and Refugee Rights Team (IRRT) has been involved since October 2022 in providing housing, meals, rides to medical and legal appointments and to English classes, social events and case management support services to three Nicaraguan asylum seekers and three Cuban asylum seekers.

We helped one of the asylum seekers get his teenage son, whose life was being threatened in Nicaragua, to Madison and get him clothing, a bed and bedding as well as legal help on his asylum petition. We helped find two financial sponsors at Temple Beth El for two Cuban asylum seekers and temporary housing for another in the home of another JRUUC member. We helped get winter clothing for two asylum seekers and helped three of them get weekly groceries from an east side food pantry.

Since October, 2022, 8 to 10 JRUUC members including two ESL teachers from our congregation have helped provide English classes, rides to frequent medical and legal appointments and English classes at the Literacy Network, meals, find monthly housing and meals in the homes of three of our own congregation members and several other Dane Sanctuary Coalition congregation members for a disabled asylum seeker who had broken both his legs and was dumped in a men's homeless shelter after several surgeries at UW Hospital. We also obtained donations to pay his phone bills and to cover his rent in a furnished sublet for March, when no volunteer housing hosts were available.

He is about to move into the home of another JRUUC volunteer family for the month of May, and we plan to teach him how to drive and study for the tests to get a valid Wisconsin driver's license this summer. We will also help him apply in July for a work permit and Social Security number, which is a lengthy process, and will continue to help him move toward independence and financial self-sufficiency as he continues his physical therapy to heal from his accident.

Hopefully we can inspire each other with new ways to help bring love and justice to our immigrant neighbors.

The James Reeb Immigrant and Refugee Rights Team (IRRT) in Madison joins 20 other congregations and 7 nonprofits that are members of the Dane Sanctuary Coalition, a program of WNPJ member organization Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. Learn more about this work at jruuc.org/social-justice and danesanctuarycoalition.org.

What you can do to prevent nuclear war

- By *Stefania Sani and Janet Parker*

Guest column Published in The Capital Times, May 25, 2023

The Biden administration has just approved using U.S. weapons to attack Crimea, a horrifying leap closer to nuclear war. We agree with journalist Caitlin Johnstone's response, "Everyone on earth should be shouting a loud, unequivocal 'no' to this at the top of their lungs."

Some are. Last week, an [open letter from the Eisenhower Media Network](#) to the Biden administration was published as a full-page ad in the New York Times from a group of former military, intelligence and civilian national security officials. Their headline: "The U.S. Should Be a Force for Peace in the World."

The letter begins: "The Russia-Ukraine War has been an unmitigated disaster. Hundreds of thousands have been killed or wounded. Millions have been displaced. Environmental and economic destruction have been incalculable. Future devastation could be exponentially greater as nuclear powers creep ever closer toward open war.

"We deplore the violence, war crimes, indiscriminate missile strikes, terrorism, and other atrocities that are part of this war. The solution to this shocking violence is not more weapons or more war, with their guarantee of further death and destruction.

"As Americans and national security experts, we urge President Biden and Congress to use their full power to end the Russia-Ukraine War speedily through diplomacy, especially given the grave dangers of military escalation that could spiral out of control."

What a welcome development! More welcome news: Peace in Ukraine Coalition's ceasefire and diplomacy petition will be printed this week in The Hill, a widely-read Capitol Hill newspaper.

And what are we doing in Wisconsin? Our group, **Madison for a World BEYOND War**, speaks up publicly to defuse nuclear war. We have done 31 War Abolition Walks in Madison since April 2022 to call for an end to the war in Ukraine, and all war. On May 6, we were part of WI vs WW3, an [antiwar demonstration](#) at the Capitol during Farmers Market on the Square. It was a big-tent event, organized by unusual collaborators — veterans, libertarians, socialists, Catholics, Quakers and Democrats. In March, we helped host the 20th Midwest Catholic Worker Faith & Resistance Gathering, which brought together well over 100 people to resist the F-35 fighter jets and war.



War is organized mass murder. We are part of a growing global movement for war abolition. Wars end in negotiations. Why not skip the killing and start with negotiating? Almost all human conflicts are resolved nonviolently, between individuals and between nations. Only a tiny number of conflicts lead to people killing each other. But once wars get started, they are addictive and terribly hard to stop. We are doing all we can so that the war in Ukraine ends in negotiations, not nuclear annihilation.

We at World Beyond War don't take sides. In war, the only winners are the people selling the weapons. We call for a ceasefire and negotiations in Ukraine. Our message is: Let's not annihilate ourselves with nuclear weapons.

We honor the brave war resisters in Russia, the hundreds of thousands of people who have demonstrated, spoken out and refused to be drafted into the military. We honor the Ukrainian conscientious objectors who have fled the country to avoid being drafted, and other Ukrainians who have been prosecuted and jailed for draft resistance — Ukrainian and Russian antiwar activists are heroes. Let's follow their examples and speak out.

In Madison, we do War Abolition Walks together most weeks. We hold signs that say, "Defuse Nuclear War" and "Weapons Makers Are the Only Winners." Often, we visit the offices of our members of Congress. Will you join us?

*Stefania Sani and Janet Parker are co-coordinators of WNPJ member organization **Madison for a World BEYOND War**. Visit their website at worldbeyondwar.org/madison to read more or to join their mailing list.*

Song of Peace (Finlandia)

This is my song
O gods of all the nations
A song of peace for lands so far away
This is my home, a country where my heart is
Here grew my hopes and dreams for all
mankind
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as
mine

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean
And sunlight shines on clover leaf and pine
But other lands have sunlight too and clover
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine
O hear my prayer, o gods
of all the nations
A song of peace for their
lands and for mine



Poem by Lloyd Stone, set to the Finlandia melody composed by Jean Sibelius. Listen to various artists sing this beautiful hymn at Rise Up and Sing: riseupandsing.org/songs/song-peace.



Echo Valley Hope's Russian visitors

- by Dena Eakles

As fate would have it, our farm was visited by young parents and a 5-year-old. They told me they are Russian, and in this country since before the war. I let them tell me, not wanting to pry. The husband had "won" a green card.

They are grateful to be here. He would be forced to fight. Their parents and other loved ones remain in Russia and they cannot return. We spoke about Chicago's Rogers Park where back in the day I knew many Russians there. They told me there are many Ukrainians there now. They see the Ukrainians as friends.

Their heavy hearts told me much more. I told them I am glad they could have respite here.

There are many sides to a story.

War has no place in humanity.

We all need to talk to one another.

Echo Valley Hope is currently teaming up with the Prem Rawat Foundation to offer the Peace Education Program free to organizations and individuals in Wisconsin. Learn more at echovalleyhope.org.

We want YOU to be on the WNPJ Board!

No matter where you live in Wisconsin, you can sit at the table of the Board of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice! We meet monthly via zoom, and sometimes in person.

Do you have ideas on how to move Wisconsin forward in justice and peace issues? We want YOU to help set the direction for the next years of WNPJ. The only requirement to run for the board is that you are WNPJ member, or contact of a WNPJ Member Group, at the time of the Fall election.

Contact info@wnpj.org to learn more!

Board Members: Tynnetta Jackson, Co-chair, Mary Kay Baum, Co-chair, Vicki Berenson, Treasurer, Erika Bach, Secretary, John Peck, Dena Eakles, Debra Gillispie, and Brad Geyer



Organizations to help those impacted by war in Ukraine and elsewhere

WNPJ does not have direct ties with the global organizations, but their work is well respected so we thought we'd share what we've found for you if you are inclined:

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is on the ground inside Ukraine and neighboring countries to provide critical food assistance to those affected by this devastating war. wfpusa.org

UNICEF USA: Protect Children Living in War Zones unicefusa.org. Provides emergency supplies to ensure safe water, nutrition, health care, mental health & psychosocial support, education and protection in Ukraine and refugee support in neighboring countries.

CARE provides fuel, emergency cash, quality shelter, and more to refugee and displaced families in Ukraine, bordering countries, and other places in crisis. care.org

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA humanitarian mission in Ukraine provides contributions for medical care of people who have been injured. uocofusa.org

Natalka Akulenko received the 2023 Citizen of the Year Award from WNPJ member group UNA-USA Dane County and manages the Facebook group **Friends of Ukraine, Madison WI**. facebook.com/groups/603459800126905

WNPJ Membership Form

(Suggested dues: \$35 Individual, \$52 Sustaining, \$45 Family, \$10 Fixed Income, \$50 Organization without paid staff, \$75 Organization with paid staff, Benefactor: any amount)

Name _____

Organization (if any): _____

Is this an Organization membership? Yes No

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

New Renewal

Join or renew online at wnpj.org, or send checks payable to **WNPJ | PO Box 727 | Madison, WI 53701**



What's on our website?

www.wnpj.org

- * Peace and justice news from member organizations
- * Calendar of events around the state
- * Sign-up for weekly e-mail news & alerts
- * List of member organizations and contact info

And more!

Join us the first Thursday of every month
noon-1:00 pm for our Weaving the Web
Virtual Drop in Hour

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