

Minutes of Peace and Social Action Committee (PASA) Meeting
March 1, 2009

Present: Martha Dickinson, chair, Stefanie Alley, Evelyn Foster, Susan Walsh, Mary Alice Horrigan, and Judith Toland (in abstentia, from her hospital bed).

We held a limited agenda meeting during potluck to consider endorsement of two events. We agreed to endorse the following:

1. Active Community Teach-In, New Strategies for Organizing in the Obama Era, Saturday, March 21, 2009, UU Church in Bangor.
2. HOPE Festival and Green Expo, Saturday, April 25, 2009, in Orono, Maine.

We will ask the Board to allocate a donation in support of these events. In the meantime, donations are gratefully accepted at the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine. See below and Martha for more information and about how to make a donation.

Respectfully,

Martha Dickinson, Chair of PASA
1 March 2009

P. S. Please see our UUCE webpage for information about our on-going projects.

Joseph Gerson to Headline Active Community Teach-in Bangor

Bangor-- Joseph Gerson, director of programs for the American Friends Service Committee in New England, and director of the Peace and Economic Security Program for AFSC. will be the keynote speaker for an Active Community Teach-in (ACT VIII): New Organizing Strategies for the Obama Era on Saturday, March 21st from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Universalist Unitarian Church, 120 Park Street in Bangor. The teach-in is sponsored by more than 10 area peace & justice groups.

Joseph Gerson is a leading figure in the U.S. peace movement. He has spoken at over 70 colleges and at international conferences like the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in Hiroshima, the Japan Peace Conference in Sasebo, and the Swedish Peace Council. His recent work includes participation in several national working groups on the war in Afghanistan and Central Asia, coordinating the first national organizing conference on military bases (American University,) the New Strategies for the Obama Era conference at Tufts University, and hosting a delegation from the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament.

Over the past year Gerson has given keynote talks at the World Conference against A- and H- Bombs in Hiroshima, at the International Conference on Afghanistan, and the Peace Forum in Beijing. In the same period, he has published articles analyzing the foreign and military policies of President Obama, U.S. nuclear weapons and war policies, alternatives to the U.S. war in Afghanistan, U.S. efforts to create permanent military bases in Iraq, and the global infrastructure of U.S. military bases.

His work with AFSC has included helping to launch the nuclear freeze movement of the 1980s, preventing New England harbors from being transformed into nuclear weapons bases, helping to build the U.S. and global anti-bases and nuclear weapons abolition movements, and helping to create peace and anti-war coalitions in the Boston area, across New England, and to a lesser extent nationally and internationally.

He has published the following books:

* Empire and the Bomb: How the United States Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World, Pluto Press and University of Michigan Press, 2007

* With Hiroshima Eyes: Atomic War, Nuclear Extortion and Moral Imagination - New Society Publishers, 1995

* The Sun Never Sets Confronting the Network of U.S. Foreign Military Bases - South End Press, 1991

* The Deadly Connection: Nuclear War and U.S. Intervention - New Society Publishers, 1984

After Gerson's speech, a panel of Maine activists will discuss how they see the need for supporting or challenging President Obama on the issues of health care, labor, the environment, and foreign policy.

Participants will then join workshops led by organizers from regional and statewide campaigns working on those issues. The focus of the workshops will be sharing how people can become involved and how the various campaigns can cooperate and collaborate to link efforts.

Ilze Petersons, of the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine, one of the sponsoring organizations, says the hope is to attract both activists and those who have not yet been actively involved. "On his election eve President Obama acknowledged the power of all those working at the grassroots and reminded us that he could not create change without our involvement," said Petersons. " We now have the opportunity to work together to help ensure that the voices calling for peace, meeting basic human needs, and creating a sustainable economy and environment are amplified and strengthened. Let's explore together how we can build a long-term movement for progressive change".

The teach-in is free and open to the public, but pre-registration by March 16th is encouraged. To pre-register or for more information call 942-9343. To co-sponsor, volunteer, or for more information, please call 942-9343. For more up-to-date information, check the Peace & Justice Center website: www.peacectr.org.

Co-sponsors of ACT are Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine, Maine People's Alliance, Veterans for Peace, Peace & Justice Group of Waldo County, Midcoast Peace & Justice, Food and Medicine, Maine Peace Action Committee, Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, Pax Christi Maine, and the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor and MDI peace & Justice.

HOPE

The 15th annual HOPE (Help Organize Peace Earthwide) Festival will be held on Saturday, April 25, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Maine Student Recreation and Fitness Center in Orono, a new light and airy "green" venue. The deadline for table registrations is March 31st, but the best locations, backdrops and electrical outlets will be allocated on a first come first served basis. So send in your registration as soon as possible or call the Center to let us know you want a space reserved for you.

More than 70 organizations working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment plan to share information and sell buttons, bumper stickers, T-shirts and more. The keynote speaker will be Eliot Coleman of Four Season Farm and David Mallet will perform. There will be workshops, demonstrations and talking circles. Children of all ages will enjoy puppets, juggling and fun educational activities. Delicious locally produced food will be for sale, and for fitness fans there will be a 5K fun run beginning at 10:00 a.m.

"Green Vendors" and Local Food Vendors are encouraged to participate and volunteers are needed. To get a registration form or to volunteer call 942-9343.

You may also download an organizational registration form, food vendor form or to take out an ad in the HOPE program by visiting our web site www.peacectr.org