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On Jan. 15, The Peace and Social Justice Center in partnership with the NAACP-Wichita Chapter commemorated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his anti-war legacy. Some sixty people gathered at WSU on one of the coldest evenings of the season to listen to an excerpt of King's speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A time to break the silence." There were two panelists: historian Gretchen Eick and NAACP-president Kevin Myles. Professor Eick did an excellent job of explaining the historical context and consequences of King's courageous stand. Kevin Myles spoke about his own experiences as a Muslim in the US military and about issues among African-Americans in the cities today.

### **Peace Center Participates in World-Wide Actions in Solidarity with the People of Gaza**

Throughout the recent Israeli attack on Gaza, Peace Center members have joined with people all over the world to condemn the Israeli atrocities. WSU students and the Islamic Community organized demonstrations in Old Town and on the Douglas St. Bridge. On Jan. 16, we also co-sponsored and attended a large demonstration of up to 400 people. On Jan. 23, we held a forum at WSU where three community members reported on their recent trips to the West Bank. Several peace center members have had letters published in the *Wichita Eagle* during this crisis. On Feb 4, we presented the film,

## **Peace Center and NAACP Honor Martin Luther King's Anti-War Legacy on his 80th Birthday**

In his speech, King forcefully condemns the Vietnam War and the path of US foreign policy. He calls for a "true revolution of values" in America in order to end the triple evils of racism, militarism and economic injustice at home and abroad.

King declared, "A time comes when silence is betrayal..," and, "I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today - my own government."

Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Guantanamo...it is painfully obvious that King's charge is just as true today as it was 42 years ago.

The Peace Center and the NAACP have published the original speech given by King on April 4, 1967 at the Riverside Church in New York City. The speech is available online with audio and text at: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm> or a limited number in booklet form from the Peace Center. Call 263-5886 for more information.



A Palestinian flag is seen atop a destroyed house in Jabalya, following Israel's 22-day offensive in Gaza, January 26, 2009. Some 1,400 Palestinians, including at least 750 civilians, were killed and thousands wounded. Fourteen Israelis, most soldiers, died also.

*Peace Propaganda and the Promised Land*, about the US media and the dehumanization of the Palestinians in their news coverage.

We have updated our website, [www.wichitapeace.org](http://www.wichitapeace.org) with links to information on the "Israeli Occupation Industry" and "Gaza Actions" where members can call representatives, the White House or write letters and sign petitions online. Peace Center members who want to receive action alerts by email on the Gaza situation may send their names and email addresses to: [staff@peacecenter.com](mailto:staff@peacecenter.com).

# Half the Sky

from the Chinese proverb "Women hold up half the sky"  
Women represent half the world population,  
two-thirds of the labor force, receive one-tenth of the world income  
and own less than one percent of world property

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund has filed an Amicus Curiae brief to challenge Prop 8 in California. Read the article here: <http://www.wichitanaacpblog.com/2009/01/naacp-legal-defense-fund-files-amicus.html> We need to support this – civil rights are human rights.

This point is graphically illustrated in *MILK*, the biographical drama of the life and assassination of Harvey Milk. The movie was shown in Wichita for just two weeks – the attendance scarce. It will probably return soon as Sean Penn, has been nominated for an Oscar for his performance of Milk. While watching the story unfold, I found my eyes tearing up – my mind returning to the late 1970's, when peace people in Wichita participated in the struggle for human rights for gays & lesbians.

In 1977, Wichita homosexuals (the term used then) began their struggle for recognition in the Civil Rights Ordinance of the Wichita City Council. This drive organized self-righteous, hate-filled opposition from local fundamentalists, Concerned Citizens for Community Standards, who called for a repeal of the ordinance. In response, peace activists joined with

## Ten Kansans Join Thousands in Demonstration to Close the SOA

The School of the Americas (SOA) is a US Army military training school for Latin American militaries, located in Fort Benning, Georgia. Renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001, the school has been producing death squad leaders and human rights abusers since 1946.

Joining torture survivors, labor union activists, veterans, students, and thousands working for justice, ten people representing the Peace Center participated in the 19th annual SOA Watch vigil/protest at the gates of Ft. Benning this past November.

Armed police officers lined both sides of Ft. Benning Road, while helicopters hovered noisily over the crowd. However, as always the group, ranging in age from infants to 90+, was totally peaceful. Six people participated in civil disobedience, crossed onto fort property, and were arrested.

On Sunday morning, the solemn funeral procession lasted about 2 hours with vocalists chanting names of those killed by Latin American soldiers trained at the School of the Americas (now called Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation). As each name was chanted, small white crosses with names of the dead were raised as the crowd

Women's Equality Coalition, Religious Leaders for Human Rights, Dignity and the Catholic Worker Community. It was a nasty time for Wichita, with Anita Bryant, nationally known anti-gay activist, coming here to lead the attack against homosexual rights.

The vote on the Repeal of the Ordinance was May 9, 1978. Sunday, May 7, found many gay supporters in front of Wichita Churches with our leaflets calling for compassion and justice. We lost the vote big time! But Wichita has never been the same—gays found themselves—they came out not only to the Wichita community, but also more importantly to their parents. There are many great stories of total acceptance of the gay children by their parents.

We had our own martyr—this is not very well known—one of our gay activists was beaten and shot after he stopped to help a couple of gay-bashing kids with car trouble. He survived and the judge sentenced the two 16-year olds to care for "Bill" for the rest of his days. The rest of his days were all too short as he died before the end of the year  
—Mary McDonough-Harren



called out "Presente." Many chose to "decorate" the Ft. Benning fence with the crosses or other meaningful items as a visual tribute to the victims. Later puppetistas paraded through the crowd and the atmosphere became increasingly more joyful. The vigil ended on a hopeful note with an invitation to return next year for a big party if the school is closed.

The latest success for SOA Watch in Latin America is Chile's decision to decrease the number of soldiers and police it sent to SOA/WHINSEC from 195 in 2007, to 45 in 2008. In 2007, in the U.S. House of Representatives, legislation to investigate the school lost by only 6 votes. Thirty-five members of Congress who voted against investigation were not returned to Congress in the November, 2008 elections. Because of this, it seems that passage of legislation to inspect and/or close the school has a very strong possibility of passing. Please see [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) or watch the Peace Center Weekly Calendar for updates on pending bills or to participate in "call-ins" to our representatives.

## Upcoming Events

### Film: *Sir! No Sir!*

—A film about GI resistance in the Vietnam War  
Wednesday, March 4, 2009, 7:00 pm  
At the Peace Center, 1407 N. Topeka

**Upcoming Actions**—Please consult the website or the email calendar for details of the following:

The 6th anniversary of the Iraq War—March 19

The 42nd Anniversary of Martin Luther King's Anti-War Speech—April 4, 2009

The 41st Anniversary of King's Assassination—April 4, 2009

*Molly's Brigade is calling for a sabbatical to our street demonstrations...well - perhaps we'll have to work on Afghanistan....and a great big thanks to all who joined us every Friday for over a year...we are truly grateful!*

## Help us Save Paper and Postage— Order the Electronic Newsletter

If you would like to help save paper and postage and receive the newsletter (as a .PDF attachment) by email only, please notify Cathy Benton at: [staff@wichitapeace.org](mailto:staff@wichitapeace.org).

## 2009 Peace Center Phonathon

Peace Center members will begin our yearly Phonathon starting the second week of February. The Peace Center depends on member contributions for its funding so please pledge generously. Thank You!

## Office Space for Rent

**100 sq. ft. \$125/month**  
**One year lease with deposit required.**  
**For information call 316.263.5886**

## PEACE ESSAY AND ART CONTEST

The Peace Essay/Art Challenge Experience (PEACE) has been an activity sponsored by the Peace Center Education Fund for several years. It is a challenge for students in the USD 259 school district. Every year the PEACE committee chooses a theme relating to peace and justice. For 2009, the challenge will focus on Earth Day, April 22, 2009.

By focusing on Earth Day in our challenge for this spring, we want to motivate students to think about peace and justice as not just an absence of war, but also as a local and global movement to conserve and share resources.

We hope to appeal to students' idealism and desire to take concrete action to raise environmental awareness

for future generations with this current PEACE event. We will be sending the rules to the Wichita schools in January and will disseminate the challenge information by distributing posters and fliers throughout the community.

Students may enter submissions in a variety of formats, including essays, poems, short stories, visual arts, sculpture, and audio or video recorded work.

The deadline for submissions is April 15. A reception and showing for the winners and their families will take place after the winners are chosen. Submissions may be brought to the Peace Center, 1407 N. Topeka, Wichita. Please call before coming, 316.263.5886. Office hours are Tues-Fri from 1-5 pm or as arranged.

\$2.00 ea. or  
3 for \$5.00

## Peace Center Buttons For Sale

Show your support for the Peace Center!  
Great gifts for family and friends!



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Email: staff@wichitapeace.org  
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**YES!! I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN WICHITA  
and here is my contribution**

Apply to:  Peace Center *or*  Education Fund (tax-deductible)

Peace Supporter \$\_\_\_\_\_ up to \$25     Peace Seeker \$\_\_\_\_\_ \$26 to \$100     Peace Keeper \$\_\_\_\_\_ \$101 to \$300  
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