



ST. OLAF COLLEGE

# Peace and Justice News

## Inside Minnesota's gay marriage controversy

Student witnesses judiciary committee hearing

By Elsa Marty '07

During St. Olaf's spring break, I had the opportunity to attend the hearing of a bill proposing an amendment to Minnesota's Constitution that would ban gay marriage or its legal equivalent, civil unions.

My dad, John Marty, is a State Senator here in Minnesota, and as a member of the judiciary committee that heard the bill, he managed to get tickets to the hearing for my mom and me.

The March 26 hearing was intense. First, the proponents of the bill spoke for an hour. Essentially, the theme of their testimony was "the Bible condemns homosexuality and if you don't as well you aren't a Christian." The whole time I wanted to jump up and scream, "I'm a Christian and I don't think homosexuality is a sin!" It was an incredibly frustrating experience.

Then there was an hour for opponents of the bill to speak. That was more uplifting. It's great to know there are other people out there who love and respect the GLBT community.

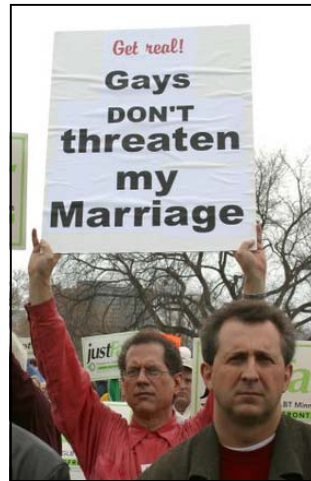
Many people spoke, includ-

• Commentary •

ing the head of Out Front MN (a GLBT group), a psychologist, a law professor, some gay and lesbian couples, children of gay and lesbian couples, a minister, a professor from Luther Seminary whose emphasis is on the New Testament, a family studies professor, and other wonderful witnesses for the GLBT community.

Next there was committee discussion on the bill, and then finally the long-awaited vote. The bill to amend the state Constitution was defeated 5 to 4, with my dad voting in the majority. However, even though we came out victorious that day, the issue isn't over yet; several state legislators have vowed to pursue other means of blocking gay marriage and civil unions in Minnesota.

I was shocked by the intensity of the negative emotions I witnessed over the course of that week at anti-gay marriage rallies outside the Capitol, and continue to observe. Following the hearing, many people pounced upon my dad to ask him how he could vote against



Protestors rally in support of gay marriage outside Minnesota's Capitol building in St. Paul on March 26.

the bill and still call himself a Christian. He has been getting tons of phone calls on the issue. Some have been polite, some have been very mean-spirited. Here are a few of the messages he's received:

"Why don't you THINK next time before you vote!"

"I know you are a religious man and I know if you read the Bible you'll see what I'm talking about."

*Amendment continued on page 3*

## "Body Theology and Radical Peacemaking"

St. Olaf professor reflects on religion and social justice

*Editor's note: This article is excerpted from a March 29, 2004 chapel address given by Prof. Phil Stoltzfus at Boe Chapel on March 29, 2004. A recording of the address is available online at [www.stolaf.edu/church/chapel](http://www.stolaf.edu/church/chapel).*

By Phil Stoltzfus

Foucault once characterized higher education as "the training of docile bodies." Indeed, that is the theme I want to focus on – the training of our bodies, not for docility, though, but for

the work of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Back in 1987, when I was right out of college, my denomination sponsored me in a nine-month service project in which I was supposed to travel around the country and interview Christian peace activists.

I remember one morning in March when I went out to a railroad track near the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California to talk with a group that

held a weekly prayer vigil there. Trains running along these tracks transported weapons out to ships with destinations in Southeast Asia and Central America. The woman I was interviewing, a Lutheran named Elaine, was explaining to me why she felt called to come out every week to sing and pray.

All of the sudden, military vehicles started appearing from all directions, and security *Stoltzfus continued on page 3*

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April 2004

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*Peace and Justice News* is a monthly publication of the **Peace and Justice Resource Network**, an official student organization at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not implicitly or explicitly represent official positions and policies of St. Olaf College.

# Making peace through music

2nd Annual 'Pause for Peace' Concert raises social awareness

By Carl Schroeder '05

On March 16, more than ten St. Olaf singers, songwriters and other performers combined their talents to produce 'Pause for Peace II,' the second annual edition of a concert promoting peace and social change.

Coordinated by Lucas Paine '06 and Emily Dahl '06, the concert opened with Paine's spoken tribute to victims of war, terrorism and brutal governments. "Today we pause and reflect, mourn the dead, remember all those affected by the [Iraq] war and by the decades of dictatorship and sanctions that preceded the war, and direct energy toward working for a more peaceful future," he said.

Performers at the three-hour concert, which took place in the Lion's Pause, included the band Isle of Lucy, comprised of Sophomores Peter Bodurtha, Paul Anderson, Isaac Kidder and Martin Refsal; singers Berit Bolstad '06 and Solveig Harriday '06 and singer/songwriters David Mellby '05, Kristen Graves '04, Max Clark '05, Rachel Winter '04 and Paine.

Between sets, members of Peace and Justice read poems and quotes by contemporary and past participants in the movement for peace and



Lucas Paine '06 performs a set of songs at the second annual "Pause for Peace" concert on March 16.

social change including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dennis Kucinich, Ohio Congressman and Democratic Presidential candidate.

During and after the concert, funds were raised to support a yearlong Peace and Justice project — sending used textbooks to a library at the University of Ghana [see page 4 for more information].

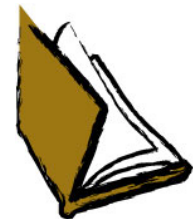
## Recommended Reading

April 2004

\* Bryan Lindsley '03, *St. Olaf Activist Manual*. Ideas and resources for action from a St. Olaf alumnus. Online at [www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/wp/lindsley/](http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/wp/lindsley/).

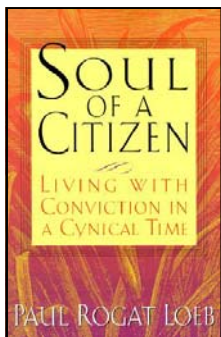
\* Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Essayist and cultural critic Ehrenreich goes undercover into the minimum-wage workforce, tries to make ends meet and writes about the results.

\* MoveOn.org's *Fifty Ways to Love Your Country: How to Find Your Political Voice and Become a Catalyst for Change*. An inspiring collection of fifty call-to-action essays from members of the online activist site MoveOn.org.



## Book Review: *Soul of a Citizen* by Paul Rogat Loeb .....

Many people have a dream for how they will better our world in some minute or gigantic way. Yet today, it seems to take everything in our power to simply hold on to this vision. *There are only 24 hours in a day . . . I could never be a Dr. King . . . what do I know? No one would care anyway.*



In his 1999 book *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*, Paul Rogat Loeb challenges us resurrect our visions. By connecting historical examples and personal stories from around the world, Loeb proves the reality of possibility and action. He compels us to ponder several points:

- *We Don't Have to Be Saints*. How often do we convince ourselves that we simply aren't made to transform society? Loeb writes about Rosa Parks, the black woman who, on December 1, 1955, refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Many consider this the birth of the American civil rights movement. Loeb calls such "historical amnesia" harmful in the way we perceive social movements. We are not told about Parks's previous 12-year involvement in the local NAACP chapter or the hundreds of other activists that had influenced her life before that day. It's no wonder we're somewhat discouraged when heroes such as Parks are perceived as gods, not as the courageous fellow human beings they are.

- *Unforeseen Fruits*. We aren't always aware of the impact of our actions. Loeb webs together multiples of stories from politicians who have been forever influenced by protests, letters, and the like. More often than not, individuals think that their small actions will never amount to anything. Loeb's stories suggest otherwise.

- *Every effort has its uncertainties, and every era its barriers and possibilities*. Because we can only truly see the efforts and movements of our own lifetime, we commit to an understanding that "It used to be different," that "People used to care," and that "It used to be possible." Through contemporary and historical accounts, Loeb shows us that today is no different. The NAACP, feminist and civil rights movements are no different from our similar efforts of today. Today we have the barriers of overworked Americans, continuing economic disparity, the powerful interests of multinational corporations and the media, but these are our challenges. Our predecessors had their own hurdles, yet they made the impossible possible.

Throughout the entire book, Loeb targets the biggest challenge of our time: cynicism. Through personal stories, he assures us that the goals of today's activists are within reach, but do take incredible time, just as the changes that led to the culture we live in today started hundreds of years ago. Dr. King left us with these words: "I may not get to the Promised Land with you." Look where we are because of him.

- Sonja Tengblad '06

## Body theology and radical peacemaking

*Stoltzfus continued from page 1*

personnel lined up along both sides of the tracks, decked out in full riot gear, featuring helmets with tinted visors, batons at the ready, and plastic gloves so that they wouldn't have to touch anybody's body. "I think a train is coming!" said Elaine. Three people, including Elaine, indicated they were going to stay on the tracks.

Immediately, I was faced with a dilemma. Should I stay there – should I place my body on the tracks, too? It wasn't so much an issue of safety – after activist Brian Willson had been severely injured at that same location several months earlier, security had wisely instituted a policy of actually stopping the trains if someone was in the way. But I was still uncertain as to how this action might look. Here I was, a Mennonite, who was an employee of my church's mission board. Would blocking a weapons train count as mission work – as service work? I was supposed to be doing research. Would civil disobedience count as research? I was a Christian. Would this count as a legitimate expression of the ministry of reconciliation?

I looked over at my Lutheran interviewee, thinking, "Here she sits, she can do no other." So I didn't budge, either. The train stopped. The four of us were dragged off the tracks by the security personnel. For some reason, this time, they decided to haul everybody off to prison. They held us for 72 hours, then released us without charge.

In the late 80s, out of the experience of hundreds of people of faith who had been developing such methods of nonviolent direct action and engaging in human rights and accompaniment work in the Third World, a new organization was formed: Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). CPT's mission is to train people in faith-based nonviolence, and to place them, by invitation, into situations of political struggle, for the purpose of

publicly witnessing against violence and advocating for the way of social justice and shalom that Jesus represented. Over the past decade, CPT has stationed violence reduction teams in Haiti, Columbia, Chiapas, Hebron on the West Bank (where a number of St. Olaf students have visited the team in the past), Iraq, and in North American settings where there is community tension.

Today, CPT consists of 32 full-time "peacemaker corps" members, as they call themselves, and 125 trained "reservists," on call for short-term delegations. Teams of generally a half dozen or more people live and worship in a neighborhood experiencing conflict, providing an international presence, monitoring human rights abuses, supporting local efforts in nonviolent resistance, and even at times positioning themselves in situations of imminent violence in order to try to save lives. CPT is not neutral – it is not a ministry of mere "observation" or even "mediation." CPTers are trained to analyze a situation, stand with the powerless, and get in the way of the business of violence. One CPTer put it this way: "We stand on the side of whoever the gun is pointed at."

Embodied reconciliation for our time, with staying power, must not compromise on both the deeply spiritual, as well as the deeply politically engaged, dimensions of peacemaking. Embodied reconciliation must wade into the struggle, confronting far away, and right here at home, the root problems of our age in all their complexity, exposing the very culture of violence, runaway consumerism, militarism and fear in which we are all enmeshed.

We can all get our bodies into the holy procession, into the global movement for peace, justice, and nonviolence. How are you going to be an ambassador of reconciliation? What are you going to do with your docile body today?



Phil Stoltzfus, Associate Professor of Religion at St. Olaf College.

*On April 2, 2004, CPT held an Upper Midwest Regional gathering in Northfield. The larger vision for this new group is to build a network of trained peacemakers across the Upper Midwest who could respond to issues of militarization or violence in our region, as well as develop a pool of ambassadors to go on delegations to foreign sites.*

For more information about Christian Peacemaker Teams, visit [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org).



## Inside Minnesota's gay marriage controversy

*Amendment continued from page 1*

"I'm gonna have to campaign against you."

"That was a horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible vote. Especially for someone who *claims* to be religious."

However, we have also gotten lots of calls thanking my dad for his work and for standing up for what he believes in. Those are encouraging. They make me smile and give me hope.

The following day the Star Tribune ran an article on the hearing that quoted my dad's comment on his vote against the bill:

"I can't think of a more intrusive thing for government to do than step in as this constitutional amendment would do: Tell churches who they can and cannot marry," said Sen. John Marty, DFL-Roseville. "This is the most personal thing we do. I hope every Minnesotan has the right to vote on their own marriage and nobody else should decide we're going to vote on it for them."

To learn more about the effort to promote equal rights for all Minnesotans regardless of sexual orientation, visit [www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org) or contact Elsa Marty at [marty@stolaf.edu](mailto:marty@stolaf.edu).



Photograph by Bert Schlauch

Over 3,000 protestors rally against a bill to ban gay marriage and civil unions in Minnesota outside the Capitol building in St. Paul on March 26.



## *Peace and Justice News*

April 2004

### Editors

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*Special guest editor:* Kailin Kane

*Peace and Justice News* welcomes peace and justice-related articles, article ideas, news items, book reviews, commentaries and other contributions. Contact the P&J News team at [PJNews@stolaf.edu](mailto:PJNews@stolaf.edu).

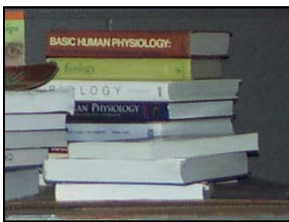
VISIT THE PEACE AND  
JUSTICE WEBSITE AT  
[WWW.STOLAF.EDU/ORGS/PJRN](http://WWW.STOLAF.EDU/ORGS/PJRN)

*The St. Olaf Peace & Justice Resource Network is an awareness-raising organization whose goal is to educate ourselves and others about issues of peace and justice. Through monthly newsletters, speakers, and campus-wide events, we explore both global and local topics of concern. The Peace & Justice Resource Network also helps integrate the efforts of other campus and community groups to promote peace and justice through co-sponsorships, advertising, and participation in local events. It is affiliated with Student Peace Action Network, a national network of campus peace and justice groups.*

*We meet each Tuesday during the school year at 8:00 p.m. in Buntrock Commons room 142 (on the way to the library). New members and curious bystanders are always welcome! Our office is located in the Student Organization Resource Center. Contact Peace and Justice Coordinator Elizabeth Henke at [henke@stolaf.edu](mailto:henke@stolaf.edu) for more information or to be added to the St. Olaf Peace and Justice e-mail alias.*

**This is our last issue of the 2003-2004 school year. Watch for new issues of *Peace and Justice News* this fall!**

### **Textbooks for Africa**



The St. Olaf Peace and Justice Resource Network needs *your* help to pay for postage to send these textbooks to the limited libraries at the University of Ghana.

Donations of any amount are appreciated, and can be made payable to St. Olaf College. Your name will be recognized in a future issue of *Peace and Justice News*.

**St. Olaf Peace and Justice  
St. Olaf College  
1500 St. Olaf Avenue  
Northfield, MN 55057**

## **Upcoming Peace and Justice events In Northfield and the Twin Cities**

Events in **boldface type** take place at St. Olaf College.

### **April**

Thurs., Apr. 1, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Fri., Apr. 2, 10:50-11:50am — Lakota Chief Arvol Looking Horse addresses Carleton College  
Sat., April 3, 1pm — Eyewitness report on recent events in Iraq: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Tues., Apr. 6, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., Apr. 8, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Tues., Apr. 13, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., April 15, 7pm — **Lecture: “Caring for Torture and War Survivors”: Holland 501**  
Thurs., Apr. 15, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Tues., Apr. 20, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., Apr. 22, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Tues., Apr. 27, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., Apr. 29, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield

### **May**

Tues., May 4, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., May 6, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Tues., May 11, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**  
Thurs., May 13, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Thurs., May 20, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield  
Thurs., May 27, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield