BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

# THE OLIVE BRANCH

Weekly Newsletter
September 14-21, 2011

## SOME GROUND RULES FOR PUBLIC DISCOURSE

**By: George Wolfe**

Mediation is a process that can be used to resolve disputes if the parties in conflict are willing to participate. The approach stipulates certain ground rules for dialog and group discussion, which, if observed in the arena of public discourse, would help temper the hostile political rhetoric that is now coming under scrutiny. What follows is a list of some of these ground rules, which I have modified to fit the forum of political debate.

1. Focus the debate on the issues, not on the people involved in the debate. Criticize the proposal without attacking the person or individuals arguing for or against the proposed policy or legislation.

2. Refrain from judging another person's motives for supporting or criticizing a proposal. Judge the proposal, not the person.

3. Refrain from name-calling. Such language does not contribute to constructive debate.

4. Abstain from using offensive language and metaphors. You are much less likely to persuade your opponents and their supporters if you offend them.

5. Avoid exaggerated statements or accusations in the form of broad simplistic generalizations when addressing the issues. Such statements are usually inaccurate and come back to haunt the person or the political party making them. Remember the Chinese proverb: "Words of exaggeration are not words of truth."

6. Refrain from stereotyping. Avoid such statements as, " All liberals are. . ." or "All conservatives are. . ." or "All _____(you fill in the blank) are. . . ," etc. There are invariably a variety of nuanced opinions within virtually all political, social, ethnic and religious groups.

7. In addition to criticism, offer constructive alternatives. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

We have an adversarial legal system that is effective at determining what constitutes justice within the confines of the courtroom. Many of our politicians are graduates of prestigious law schools where they are trained in this adversarial approach to defending or prosecuting individuals accused of crimes. But the adversarial forum that is necessary in the courtroom should not be applied in the public arena to attack or disgrace our well-meaning public servants. Respect and common decency will go a long way toward restoring civil discourse and encouraging honorable citizens to run for public office.

*This article was published in The Star Press, Muncie, Indiana, on January 15, 2011.*

***Inside this issue:***


| | |
|---|---|
| Article | 1 |
| On Campus Events | 2 |
| Off Campus Events | 3-4 |
| Upcoming Events | 5 |


**About George Wolfe**

George Wolfe is the Coordinator of Outreach Programs for the Ball State University Center for Peace and Conflict Studies. He is also a trained mediator and the author of The Spiritual Power of Nonviolence: Interfaith Understanding for a Future Without War.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS— ON CAMPUS

**Monday, September 19—Friday, September 23**

- *International Day of Peace — September 21, 2011*

  The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies will be celebrating the International Day of Peace all week long by selling beaded products from an organization called BeadforLife. BeadforLife is a fair trade organization, and all proceeds go to the women in Uganda that handmade the beads. We accept cash, checks, and debit/credit. Also, there will be a banner on which you can tell us how you promote peace. Please stop by our booth at the following times and locations to show your support for peace!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday | 10:00-2:00 | @ the Atrium |
| Thursday and Friday | 10:00-2:00 | @ the Student Center |

  For more information on the International Day of Peace or BeadforLife, please visit http://internationaldayofpeace.org and http://beadforlife.org.

**Monday, September 19**

- *OXFAM America Meeting*

  5:30 PM in WB 140. For more information, contact oxfambsu@gmail.com.

- *Social Justice League Meeting*

  6:00PM at the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (310 N. McKinley Ave.) For more information, contact SJL@bsu.edu .

**Tuesday, September 20**

- *Feminists for Action Meeting*

  6:00 PM in BB 220. Come have tea, discuss current events, and become an activist for gender equality. Everyone is welcoming, including non-students and community members. For more information, contact feministforaction@gmail.com or ckhurst@bsu.edu.

- *International Ambassadors Club*

  7:00PM at the L.A. Pittenger Student Center in Room 306. For more information, contact IAC@bsu.edu .

- *Free the Slaves Meeting*

  9:00PM at Bracken Library in Room 301. For more information, contact Chelsey Outcalt at cloutcalt@bsu.edu .

-

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS— OFF CAMPUS

**Wednesday, September 14**

- [Bloomington] *Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan* will hold their general monthly meeting at 5:30 pm at First United Methodist Church, 219 E. 4. For more info, visit hchp.info or email Robert Stone or Karen Green Stone at rstone@hchp.info.
- [Indianapolis]*Unite Here Community Committee Meeting* focused on labor issues, especially inducing the management of the Hyatt to honor the desire of hotel workers for a union, and on other issues, such as neighborhoods, parks, libraries, 6-7:30 pm, in Room 438 in Cavanaugh Hall at IUPUI . For more info phone Becky at 372-8795.

**Thursday, September 15**

- [Indianapolis] *Unite Here Community Committee Meeting* focused on labor issues, especially inducing the management of the Hyatt to honor the desire of hotel workers for a union, and on other issues, such as neighborhoods, parks, libraries, 10-11:30 am, in Room 537 in Cavanaugh Hall at IUPUI. For more info phone Becky at 372-8795.
- [Indianapolis] *Fast for Gaza* will meet at 12 noon at Lulu's Electric Café, 1460 W. 86. For more info, contact Lew Weiss at ljweiss@clarian.org or 962-8580.
- [Indianapolis] *Anti-death Penalty Witness*, 12:30-1:30 pm, at the east steps of the State House, Capitol Ave. and Market, sponsored by The Indiana Information Center on the Abolition of Capital Punishment (IICACP). Bring a sign or use one of ours; come for any part of the hour. For more info, phone 466-7128
- [Bloomington] *Panel Discussion: "Ten Years Later: The 9/11 Commissioners Reflect"* Eight members of the 9/11 Commission, including Chairmen Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton will be participating in a panel discussion at the I.U. Auditorium from 2-4:00 pm. The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required. Students, faculty and staff can obtain tickets now. Tickets for the general public will be available at the I.U. Auditorium box office starting September 6th. For details and if you would like to submit a question to the panelists visit: http://www.iub.edu/sept11/panel.shtml
- [Bloomington] The Research Committee of Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan will meet at 4:30 pm at Boxcar Books and Community Center, 408 E. 6. For more info, visit hchp.info or contact Milton Fisk at (812) 336-7184 or fiskm@indiana.edu.
- [Indianapolis] *Christians for Peace & Justice in the Middle East* will meet at 6:00 pm at the home of Dottie Gerner. Bring a sandwich. For more info or directions, phone Dottie Gerner at 283-7175.
- [Bloomington] *Peter Scott Dale talk: "American War Machine: Deep Politics and the Road to Extended Wars"* starting at 7:15 pm in Jordan Hall, Room 124 Indiana University campus. For more information, contact Timothy Baer, Bloomington Peace Action Coalition http://www.BPAC.info (812) 988-1917. Or visit: http://themester.indiana.edu/calendar.shtml#Sep

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS— OFF CAMPUS (CONT.)

**Friday, September 16**

- [Indianapolis] *Weekly Vigil Protesting Warfare* will take place, 4:30-5:30 pm, in front of the Federal Building, North and Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Indianapolis Peace and Justice Center. Bring an appropriate sign or have one provided. For more info, phone Gilbert Kuhn at 926-3068 or email Ron Haldeman atronjane@igc.org

**Saturday, September 17**

- [Indianapolis] *Bread for the World* will hold a monthly meeting at 10:00 am in the board room in the A Wing of the Main Building at Robin Run Village, 5354 W. 62. For more info, phone Marjorie Hill at 291-7150 before attending.
- [Indianapolis] *Two overlapping free events at Earth House*, 237 N. East, with good food for free or as much as you can pay, 2-4:00 pm, and a Really, Really Free Market, 2:30-5:30 pm. For more info, contact Ed Stites at 965-2466 or stitesed@gmail.com.
- [Indianapolis] *Congressman Andre Carson will speak at the first annual fundraising gala dinner of the Center for Interfaith Cooperation*, 6-8:00 pm, in the Krannert Room of Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W. 42 (Cost: $100). For more info, contact Charlie Wiles at charlie@centerforinterfaithcooperation.org or 318-5304.
- [Nashville] *Weekly Peace Vigil on the theme "War Is Not the Answer!"* will begin at 6:00 pm at the Brown County Courthouse, Main and Van Buren Streets, sponsored by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Brown County Branch). For more info, contact Tom Hougham at 878-4210 or annntom@hotmail.com.
- [Indianapolis] *"A Free Concert for Peace & Justice"* An artistic celebration of peace & justice featuring music, poetry and visual art starting at 7:00 pm, at First Friends Meeting, 3030 Kessler Boulevard East Drive. Free admission for all, Presented by Indy Artists' Peace Project. For more info e-mail indyartists@aol.com, or call (317)872-2155

**Sunday, September 18**

- [Indianapolis] *SNAP, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests,* will meet at 1:30 pm at Crestwood Village Community Room, E. 91 at the Monon Trail. For more info, phone Cecilia Shelpey at 844-2993
- [Indianapolis] *"Just for Kids! Storytelling, Music, and Instruments of the Middle East," Yuval Ron* will share stories, instruments, and a musical performance with children at 2:30 pm in the Learning Curve green screen theatre at the Central Library, 40 E. St. Clair, which is sponsoring this free event. Parking is available (for a fee) in the Central Library parking garage off of Pennsylvania. For more info, visit yuvalronmusic.com or phone 275-4099.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## On-Campus

**September 28, 2011**

- *Continuum Brown Bag Professional Development Series*

  12:00PM – 1:00PM in the Student Center, Room #306

## Off-Campus

**September 27, 2011**

- [Indianapolis] *Hal Culbertson on "The Quest for Global Healing: Educating Strategic Peacebuilders"*

  Sponsored by The Spiritual Life Center & the Spiritual Oneness Group— 7:30 PM at Robertson Chapel (St. Luke's United Methodist Church 100 W. 86th St.). Today's conflicts represent a number of complex challenges for peacebuilders. Should atrocities committed during war be prosecuted or forgiven? How do highly contentious groups learn to live together? How do we rebuild economic, political, and social institutions that have been fractured by violence, corruption, and injustice?

  Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies prepares students to address challenges such as these through a holistic approach called "strategic peacebuilding." Mr. Culbertson will identify the key elements of strategic peacebuilding and describe how faculty, alumni, and others are applying this approach in conflicts around the world. For more information, call 317-846-3404 or visit www.stlukesumc.com.

DISCLAIMER: The events described in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies.

If you would like for your events to be included in this newsletter, please contact Lacey Lord at lglord@bsu.edu.