

Voices

Women have sacrificed their lives for peace. They have challenged militarism and urged reconciliation over retribution.

They have opposed the development, testing, and proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the small arms trade.

They have contributed to peacebuilding as activists, as community leaders, as survivors of the most cataclysmic horrors of war. They have transformed peace processes on every continent by organizing across political, religious and ethnic affiliations. But their efforts are rarely supported or rewarded.

Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building, by Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf



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for women and girls.

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Inside Story



Women and peace . . .

In October 2002, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made this remark to the Security Council, *“For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls.”*

As we put this newsletter together, the US is on the brink of war with Iraq. It appears that a peaceful solution to this conflict is impossible. Thoughts here at Nokomis turn to women . . . And how they’ll be affected by a war — Iraqi women, women serving in the US military, women who are active in the peace process.

Swanee Hunt, activist, philanthropist, academic and founder of Women Wage Peace, explains that *“Women are often the most powerful voices for moderation in times of conflict. While most men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room and battlefield, women usually arrive straight out of civilization and—take a deep breath—family care. The idea of women as peacemakers is not political correctness run amok. Social science research supports the stereotype of women as generally more collaborative than men and thus more inclined toward consensus and compromise. . . Given their roles as family nurturers, women have a huge investment in the stability of their communities. And since women know their communities, they can predict the acceptance of peace initiatives, as well as broker agreements in their own neighborhoods.”*

This issue of **Voices** is designed to bring you information about women and peace — and women in conflict. May you be inspired to raise your own voice — to be part of a peaceful solution!

I hope you’ll find our **loose change** technical assistance insert helpful. This issue includes information about technology. Be sure to visit the **loose change** page on the Nokomis website. You’ll be able to find useful information on a variety of technical assistance topics, plus great links and resources.

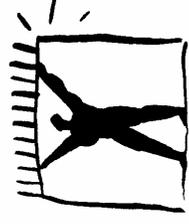
Kym Mulhern, President/CEO

Celebrate!

Nokomis has been named a double award winner for excellence in communications by the 2003 Wilmer Shields Rich Awards Program. Sponsored by the Council on Foundations and the Communications Network, the awards program recognizes effective communications efforts to increase public awareness of foundations and corporate giving programs. Nokomis won a gold award in the annual report category for *Gifts for Women & Girls*, and a bronze award in the special reports category for the Prostitution Round Table report, *We Can Do Better*.

Twink Frey and Kym Mulhern have been honored by the Women’s Funding Network to receive the *Changing the Face of Philanthropy Award* at WFN’s annual conference.

The award honors individual women, funds and foundations who have taken leadership in the women and girls’ funding movement, and who inspire others to become a part of social change philanthropy. The Women’s Funding Network is a partnership of women’s and girls’ foundations, donors, and allies around the world who are committed to social justice.



Project Update

New Voices Initiative

Building on the foundation laid by the Prostitution Round Table, the Nokomis Foundation will study the programming and service needs of women in the Kent County Jail for the next phase of the New Voices Initiative. Watch future issues of **Voices** for further updates as the project takes shape.

You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.

—Jeannette Rankin

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Herstory

Jeannette Rankin, American pacifist, politician, social activist (1880-1973)

Jeannette Rankin, a native of Missoula, Montana, worked throughout her life for two main causes: women's rights and peace. Rankin led the campaign to give women the right to vote in Montana in 1914 — 6 years before that right was granted by the federal government. In 1916, Rankin ran for the U.S. House of Representatives and won — becoming the first woman ever elected to either the House or Senate. Once in Washington, Rankin helped draft the constitutional amendment granting the vote to women nationwide.

In Congress, Rankin spoke passionately against the entry of the US into World War I — and she, consequently, lost her bid for re-election. Remaining in Washington, Rankin put her social work background to work lobbying for women's and pacifist causes until 1940, when she was elected to Congress again — with the U.S. on the brink of World War II. Rankin cast the only “no” vote as the Congress voted to enter the war. Future President John F. Kennedy would say of Rankin, “Few members of Congress have ever stood more alone while being true to a higher honor and loyalty.” Jeannette Rankin left Congress in 1943, but remained a peace activist for the rest of her life. In 1968, at age 87, Rankin led 5,000 women in a march on Washington against the Vietnam War.

Find out more about Jeannette Rankin at http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/whm/bio/rankin.htm.

taking flight

Emma Heemskerck joins us as the Nokomis **taking flight** intern for 2003. Emma joined us in January, and looks forward to managing the **taking flight** grant program. Emma is a student at Aquinas College where she is studying sociology, gender studies, and studio art. Some of her other interests include homebirth and midwifery, feminist literature, and mental illness. Before Aquinas, Emma attended Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. Emma hopes to make the most of her opportunity at the Nokomis Foundation by learning everything about grant making, meeting all sorts of new people, and helping in any way she can.

You can reach Emma by email at info@nokomisfoundation.org.



Point to Ponder

“In the 1990s, at least \$200 billion was spent by the international community on seven major interventions: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Rwanda and Somalia. The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict estimates that a preventive approach would have saved the world \$130 billion...”

Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building, by Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Available online at www.unifem.undp.org/resources/assessment/

Did You Know. . .

The Financial Cost of War

- Experts, including Senator Joseph Biden, Chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, indicate that the war on Iraq may cost as much as \$80-\$100 billion.
- Different experts weighing in on the cost of reconstruction efforts following the war on Iraq estimate the cost of rebuilding to be at least \$50 billion.
- The United States citizens would have to pay for the vast majority of the war. The U.S. had much international support during the Gulf War, with allies picking up almost 90% of its cost. The current war on Iraq, however, lacks this international support.
- The estimated cost to Michigan for the war on Iraq is \$2,949,000,000 — an estimate based on the state's portion of income taxes and assuming the U.S. will bear the entire cost of a \$100 billion war.

How Much is \$100 Billion?

- Three times what the federal government spends on K-12 education.
- Enough to provide health care to all uninsured children in the U.S. for 5 years.
- More than four times the total international affairs budget.

Information provided by *The National Priorities Project* at www.nationalpriorities.org.

Women, War and Peace

Excerpt from *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* by Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Women are victims of unbelievably horrific atrocities and injustices in conflict situations; this is indisputable. As refugees, internally displaced persons, combatants, heads of household and community leaders, as activists and peace-builders, women and men experience conflict differently. Women rarely have the same resources, political rights, authority or control over their environment and needs that men do. In addition, their caretaking responsibilities limit their mobility and ability to protect themselves.

While an estimated one hundred million people died in war over the last century, men and women often died different deaths and were tortured and abused in different ways – sometimes for biological reasons, sometimes psychological or social. While more men are killed in war, women often experience violence, forced pregnancy, abduction and sexual abuse and slavery. Their bodies, deliberately infected with HIV/AIDS or carrying a child conceived in rape, have been used as envelopes to send messages to the perceived 'enemy.' The harm, silence and shame women experience in war is pervasive; their redress, almost non-existent. The situation of women in armed conflict has been systematically neglected.

Contemporary conflicts have caused economic upheaval – and they have been created by it. The exploitation of natural resources has created 'economies of war' where armed groups and other power brokers thrive on the instability of conflict in order to gain control of valuable resources and land. Along with the deepening violence women experience during war, the long-term effects of conflict and militarization create a culture of violence that renders women especially vulnerable after war. Institutions of governance and law are weakened and social fragmentation is pronounced. Until the state's security and legal infrastructure are rebuilt, women's security is threatened inside and outside of the home, where they are subject to the rule of aggression rather than the rule of law. Under constant threat of attack by family members, rogue elements, ex-combatants, criminals, women spend their days searching for water, food and firewood and caring for children, the sick, the elderly and their extended families. Even though women provide these unpaid services in times of peace, their burden is intensified during conflict since the peacetime infrastructure is often destroyed: Wells may have been poisoned, trees for firewood destroyed, fields burnt and clinics vandalized.

Mourning Violence: Women in Black

By Emma Heemskerk, Nokomis Taking Flight Intern

"War may be hell, but it is a particular kind of hell for women. Rape is the most obvious abuse, but there is so much more. Women assume increased family responsibilities when men are at war. Their health and nutrition are at risk. Pregnant and nursing women are particularly vulnerable." —Shaunna Bennett

In 1988 Israeli women gathered to resist the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. They dressed fully in black and stood in silence with signs reading, "Stop the Occupation." Italian women supporters transformed the idea into "Women in Black", gathering for vigils in many cities in Italy. Each area used the inspiration of the original, Israeli Women in Black to confront their local conflicts. Since then the silent protests have gone global. It is now an expansive loose-network, non-'organization', and simple formula for action.

Their name is literal. Women covered in black mobilize for silent vigils as a sign of their sorrow for victims of violence. They protest war, rape as a tool of war, genocide, violence against women, and human rights abuses all over the world. Women in Black focus on mourning the lives violated or lost through conflict.

A local, Grand Rapids Women in Black group has sprung up in response to the situation with Iraq. It began in February and now has over 50 women involved with ages ranging from 17-70. Erica Freshour, Grand Rapids contact for Grand Rapids Women in Black says, "One of the most powerful aspects of the Vigils is that they are completely silent. Our silence ensures that we are not part of the hatred or violence, and it gives us time for reflection." As of late many of the Women in Black's global participants have changed their attention to demonstrating for peace with Iraq.

To get involved, contact Erica at gr_womeninblack@hotmail.com. Local vigils are held every first Friday of the month at noon & every third Friday of the month at 4:30pm at various locations around the city. For more on Women in Black globally visit www.womeninblack.net.

Lysistrata

“Ever since Lysistrata and her sisters refused sex to their warmongering husbands in ancient Greece, women have had a special role to play in brokering peace.”

—Jill Jolliffe, *Women Put Peace in its Place*
www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/10/04/1033538773264.html

Lysistrata: In the last war we were too modest to object. . . .

Magistrate: *Quite right too, by Zeus.*

Lysistrata: Right? That we should not be allowed to make the least suggestion to you, no matter how much you mismanage the City’s affairs? . . . That’s why we women got together and decided we were going to save Greece. . . .

Magistrate: *But the international situation at present is in a hopeless muddle. How do you propose to unravel it?*

Lysistrata: Well, take a tangled skein of wool, for example. We take it so, put it to the spindle, unwind it this way, now that way. That’s how we’ll unravel this war, if you let us. . . .

Magistrate: *Are you such idiots as to think that you can solve serious problems with spindles and bits of wool?*

Lysistrata: As a matter of fact, it might not be so idiotic as you think to run the whole city entirely on the model of the way we deal with wool. . . . The first thing you do with wool is wash the grease out of it; you can do the same with the City. Then you stretch out the citizen body on a bench and pick out the burrs – that is, the parasites. After that you prise apart the club-members who form themselves into knots and clots to get into power, and when you’ve separated them, pick them out one by one. Then you’re ready for the carding: they can all go into the basket of civic goodwill. . . . Not only that, Athens has many colonies. At the moment these are lying around all over the place, like stray bits and pieces of fleece. You should pick them up and bring them here, put them all together, and then out of all this make an enormous great ball of wool – and from that you can make the People a coat.

--From ‘Lysistrata’ by Aristophanes (c. 447 BC – c. 285 B.C.)



The glaring gaps in women’s protection expose the systematic failures of the humanitarian community to reach women. Although women have benefited from humanitarian assistance more generally, their specific needs are largely neglected, particularly in relation to physical and psychosocial care, economic security, HIV/AIDS and displacement. Women continue to have the least access to protection and assistance provided by the state or international organizations.

It goes without saying that the first step in removing obstacles to women’s protection is identifying what they are. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has noted that women are likely to suffer from a range of discriminatory practices in conflict situations, from receiving smaller food rations to legal wrangles over custody, inheritance and property. Not only do women carry the emotional and physical burden of caring for the whole family under difficult conditions but, in the process, they are more exposed to violence and often become victims of inadequate diets and infectious disease. Ironically, women’s role as caregivers may affect their ability to receive assistance. By standing in a queue to collect food or water, a woman may forfeit the chance to receive medical attention. Girls may be kept out of school to help with domestic chores – a practice that helps to explain the three-to-one ratio of school attendance between refugee boys and girls.

Given the present institutional arrangements for women’s protection, we have concluded that a system-wide recommitment and implementation plan must address the situation of women in conflict. Overhauling humanitarianism costs money. It requires expertise. And it means, according to Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, “not just looking at what have been called ‘women’s issues’ – a ghetto, or a separate sphere that remains on the margins of society – but rather moving women from the margins to the center by questioning the most fundamental concepts of social, [legal and political] order so that they take better account of women’s lives.”

Full report available on line at www.unifem.unpfd.org/resources/assessment/



Changes

It is not because we think better than men, but we think differently. It's not women against men, but women and men. It's not that the world would have been a better place if women had run it, but that the world will be a better place when we as women, who bring our perspectives, share in running it.

—Betty Bumpers
(Founder, Peacelinks USA)

We have mixed feelings here at Nokomis as we announce the retirement of our office assistant, Yvonne Rothwell. Yvonne has been with us at Nokomis for nearly ten years — since the days when we shared one computer, one telephone, and one adding machine on a little counter tucked away in our corner! For ten years, Yvonne has been a loyal purveyor of feminist philanthropy—quietly keeping things running behind the scenes here at Nokomis. We will miss her! But we also wish Yvonne much happiness as she enters this new—and exciting—chapter of her life!

On behalf of all of us here at Nokomis, we want to formally recognize the contributions Yvonne has made—the welcoming atmosphere she has created, the seamless running of the office—without complaint and with a great sense of humor. We're sad to see her go, and we're honored that she has been a part of the Nokomis Foundation.



What's Happening

Check out the [Calendar](#) on the Nokomis website for up-to-date information on events of interest to women and girls in the Grand Rapids area. You can find the calendar online at www.nokomisfoundation.org/calendar.htm.

If you'd like to recommend an upcoming event of interest to women and/or girls for inclusion on our calendar, email event details to knulhern@nokomisfoundation.org.

The Scent of Peace

By Julia King

I am a woman who wants peace. It was stitched into the fabric of my soul some 400,000 years ago when first we walked the planet. It was written in the stars and in the rolling oceans and in the crickets' song and on the soft, sweet-smelling skin of my daughter's cheek. It's not a whim, this longing, this weight in my bones; it's of design.

Women know these truths, not because we are better or smarter, but because we are different from men, especially men who would launch horror into the lives of mothers and sons, grandfathers and daughters, friends and strangers.

Yes, women have been loud and angry and strong; we have dominated and bullied, we have fought and attacked, but we have not made war. Because we have grown humans in our bodies and labored to help them into the world and then cradled them to our breasts to nourish them, we take personally their orchestrated, surgical destruction.

I know some will shout, "stereotype!" They'll say it's not that simple—and they'll be right: it isn't. "Margaret Thatcher," they'll say. But I won't be convinced. And that's okay—every certainty is an imperfect expression of the human condition.

One can persuade the mind of almost anything. But women have learned to listen just as carefully to a different kind of honesty—to joy, to pain.

Do not misunderstand these words: feeling is not the subjugation of intellect. Women are smart; we are knowledgeable; we deal in fact and information. We simply understand that love, that loss, that death, that anguish is also information—that it is not incidental that the sound of children's laughter warms, or that a husband's touch comforts, or that the frailty of a parent saddens. These are factors to be added to every equation. And only once in a very blue moon do they add up to war.

Web Wise



Browsing the Web with a Gender Lens

Check out these sites for information on peace coalitions:

- Code Pink: Women's Preemptive Strike www.codepink4peace.org
- Win Without War www.winwithoutwarus.org
- United for Peace and Justice www.unitedforpeace.org
- Move On www.moveon.org

Check out these sites for information about women's peace organizations and activities:

- Women in Black www.womeninblack.net
- Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) www.wand.org
- Global Exchange www.globalexchange.org
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom www.wilpf.org
- Women's Environment & Development Organization www.wedo.org
- Sisterhood is Global Institute www.sigi.org
- Peace Women www.peacewomen.org
- Peace Links www.peacelinks.org

Check out these sites for information about social activism for girls and young women:

- Student Taking Action for New Directions (STAND) www.wand.org
- Justice for Girls www.justiceforgirls.org
- Young Women and Leadership www.awid.org/index.pl?section=young



Women know early in life the joy of friendship, the richness of human connectedness. We grasp, as if by magic, the evanescence of life. It is why we worry, why we cry, why we celebrate so fiercely the things, the people we know to be important. There has never been a new mother who didn't lose herself in her baby's eyes . . . and who wasn't also terrified at the prospect of one so small and delicate holding so much in that tiny, beating heart.

"What if . . .?" Mothers have whispered for all these thousands of years, "What if something were to happen. . .?" War ignores all of these things. But they're true. Go look at the stars; watch the ocean; hear the crickets. Smell the soft skin of your son's cheek. Peace is true.

And I am a woman who wants peace. It's not a whim; it's of design.

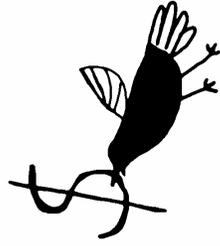
Julia King lives and writes in Goshen, Indiana. "The Scent of Peace" was aired by The Great Lakes Radio Consortium. Julia is a mother, wife, runner, and activist. Her award-winning commentary has also been heard on NPR's Morning Edition, Living on Earth, The Todd Mundt Show and PRI's Marketplace.

Julia recently led a grassroots peace effort of her own — writing and producing a series of anti-war radio ads for play on local pop stations in Northern Indiana. With the support from WAND (Women's Actions for New Directions) of Northern Indiana, Julia came up with the idea, produced the ads in her living room, raised money, and paid for air time. Several other WAND chapters have since replicated Julia's idea.

When will our consciences grow so tender
that we will act to prevent human misery
rather than avenge it?

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Grants



The Nokomis Foundation has recently awarded the following grants:

Capacity Building

Women's Technology Consortium, Grand Rapids, \$75,000 allocated to member organizations for technology needs
WITNESS, Grand Rapids, \$20,000 for fund development and marketing support
American Friends Service Committee, Ann Arbor, Michigan, \$25,000 to increase staffing to support services to women within Michigan prisons

Violence Prevention

Child & Family Resource Council, Grand Rapids, \$25,000 for the *In Touch With Teens* RAVE program

GVSU Women's Center, Allendale, Michigan \$3,200 for *Vagina Monologues 2003*

Health

Grand Rapids REACH, Grand Rapids, \$18,000 for Diabetes Awareness Campaign for African American women

Girls

St. John's Home, Grand Rapids, \$25,000 for the Clancy House for Girls Restorers, Inc., Grand Rapids, \$16,000 for Young Women United

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Habitat for Humanity, Grand Rapids, \$2,000 for Women Build SECOM, Grand Rapids, \$5,000 for Colorful Threads and Crafts

Celebrating Women

Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, \$2,000 for the Tarabain Bedouin Women film project
Community Media Center, Grand Rapids, \$5,000 for the International Women's

Day celebration

Actor's Theatre, Grand Rapids, \$5,000 for *Tongue of a Bird*

Legacy 2003

Every three years, the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council sponsors Legacy -- a tri-annual, month-long observance of Women's History Month (March). Through the Legacy celebration, GGRWHC encourages area women's organizations and community groups to present programs highlighting women and their contributions to the area's history.

The Nokomis Foundation has participated in Legacy 1997, Legacy 2000, and now, Legacy 2003 by providing mini-grants to organizations sponsoring events.

We awarded the following Legacy 2003 grants:

Actor's Theatre, \$1,000, *Soar, Sor Juana* by Paula Brother Fuentes

Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails, \$950, *Chewing Gum Junk Shop and Kate's Pants*

Grand Rapids Education Association, \$1,000, *Learning Women's Legacy*

GVSU Women's Center, \$1,000, *Continuing a Legacy: Women's Tea Party*

Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan, \$750, *FOCUS 2003*

St. Cecelia Music Society, \$1,000, *Eight Piano Concert 2003*

St. Luke AME Zion Church, \$650, *The First Thing I Recollect is My Love for My Mother: Slavery, Black Women and Sisterhood*

West Michigan Academy of Music for Girls, \$1,000, *Seasons of Strength: Women Songs*

WITNESS, \$800, *Celebrating Women in Ministry*

For grant guideline and application information, please call our office (616 451-0267) to request a copy of our annual report or check out our website at www.nokomisfoundation.org.