SCOTT RITTER’S WAGING PEACE

I bought the book for its intriguing subtitle: *The Art of War for the Antiwar Movement*. Ritter employs Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, General Carl von Clausewitz’s *On War*, the Marine Corps’ *Warfighting*, and firefighters’ core values as partial foundations for his critique of the peace movement. They are a bizarre combination for a book on peacemaking, but I found the book fascinating, and his text is only 99 pages long.

I say *his* text, because 26 pages reproduce the complete text of the U. S. Constitution (and the entire U.N. Charter is given too). That’s understandable, for the U.S. Constitution is the heart of the book as the repository, he believes, of U.S. core values. Here is a key passage from chapter 2: “I couldn’t think of a better core value for the progressive movement … than the ideals and values that are set forth in the Constitution… this document defines who we are as what we are as a people. Its preamble, beginning as it does with the words, ‘We the People,’ provides both the certificate of ownership of the ideals and values for all Americans and the call for each American citizen to live up to the challenge of government ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people,’ as so eloquently stated by President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address” (24).

In a later chapter, when he applies the warfighting sources listed in my first paragraph, he begins with the Constitution. What is to be our affirmation? The Constitution. The strategy, the operation, and the tactics of war and therefore of peace are or should be designed to defend the Constitution.

But how, more specifically does the Constitution apply to OMNI’s mission to promote world peace and justice? Article VI is our rock: “The Constitution, and the Laws of the United States… and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby…”

All treaties. All judges. All of the treaties via the United Nations signed and ratified by the U.S. are the law, are laws to be obeyed by judges. According to the Constitution, Article VI, the Charter of the United Nations, when it was ratified and signed as a treaty, was incorporated into the supreme law of the land which we are bound to uphold and defend. And what does the peacemaking Charter say? Read, for example, Chapter 1, Article 2, Sections 3 and 4: 3. “All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered. 4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of
force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” Think of this.

I have met a few local peacemakers during the past seven years who have given up. But have we really tried? Have we made national and international peace and justice a high priority in our lives? Is it not the truth, for all of us, that we have barely begun to explore our peacemaking opportunities? The U.S. Constitution offers us a bold way to confront the contradictions of our imperial leaders. The nuclear resisters, the anti-nuclear weapons peacemakers—the Ploughshares Movement and others—have long known this. They have learned first-hand in court rooms how few judges have followed the law. And they have learned how few citizens have stepped forward to their side. To our disgrace, the peace movement has failed to bring to bear its potential force for peace through the Constitution/U.N. Charter, the law of the land. We have hardly begun to make the genuine struggle for peace and justice through the Constitution.

The U.S. Constitution has another profound potentiality for the peace movement. We begin shoulder to shoulder with all other U.S. citizens who revere it. Instead of standing outside the mainstream and trying to communicate and persuade, when we embrace the Constitution we are instantly on the inside. We are lovers of the Constitution first, all one, and our individual ideologies are second. Then we can sit down comfortably even with the Daughters of the Revolution, the famously conservative DAR. In TMN (9-14-08) a description of the aims of the DAR, who are celebrating Constitution Week, presents nothing objectionable: defending the Constitution, studying the Constitution, inalienable right of liberty, self-government by We, the People. With these values foregrounded we are all conservatives, looking to the past for our core values. Conversation, framed by mutual admiration for the Constitution, can begin without preconceived barriers.

By Constitution DAY 2009 I hope we will be prepared to present OMNI’s CONSTITUTION WEEK AND DAY. One significant and very relevant action could be the assessment of the new president of the United States. If Sen. McCain is in office, then we can tally the extent to which and ways by which he has continued Pres. Bush’s behavior. If Sen. Obama then we can likewise tally whether and how he has reversed Pres. Bush’s regime. Will you volunteer to coordinate planning? Such a project is easy when you have a long lead time like this. (See below: Starting a Bibliography.)

In preparation let’s have a Book Forum in January 2009 on the subject of Preventing Wars with Ritter’s book one of the books discussed. Here are two other possible books: Kim Michaels, The Art of Non-War; Kim Michaels, The Art of Non-War; http://www.askrealjesus.com/litecommerce/cart.php?target=product&product_id=263&category_id=60 to order the book directly from the publisher, and Miriam Pemberton, ed., Lessons From Iraq: Avoiding the Next War; available at any book store. Send me other book suggestions, join the panel., and send ideas for OMNI’S CONSTITUTION DAY 2009. A Constitution-loving coordinator would be mighty welcome, to assist OMNI to take back our National DAYS for nonviolence, world peace, economic and social justice, human rights, and the land and species. We, the People for a CULTURE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE.
2008 Event at UofA:

**University of Arkansas Professor to Discuss “Constitution Day”**

Professor Janine Parry, who teaches and researches American politics, state politics and gender and politics, will deliver a public talk entitled “Women, Men and Sex Discrimination in American Constitutionalism” from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2008, in Old Main 325. The lecture is sponsored by the UA department of political science as part of its annual recognition of “Constitution Day.” Cookies and punch will be served.

STARTING A BIBLIOGRAPHY


CONSTITUTION DAY from Google

1. **Constitution Day - Home**
   Resources to help you celebrate Constitution Day – the birthday of your government – featuring over 200 activities, lessons, books, DVDs and more from over...
   constitutioncenter.org/ConstitutionDay/ - 13k - Cached - Similar pages -

2. **Constitution Day September 17th, 2008. Free Pocket Constitution** ...
   Constitution day resources for educators. free pocket constitution books, Constitution IQ Quiz, Constitution Bookstore. Fascinating Facts about the... www.constitutionday.cc/ - 63k - Cached - Similar pages -

3. **Constitution Day (United States) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**
   Constitution Day (or Citizenship Day) is an American federal holiday that recognizes the ratification of the United States Constitution, and also recognizes... en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_Day_(United_States) - 31k - Cached - Similar pages -

4. **NEH / EDSITEment - Constitution Day - September 17, 2007**
   Read our September Feature: Constitution Day to find several lesson plans appropriate for all grade levels, or refer to our Constitution-specific lesson ...
   edsitement.neh.gov/ConstitutionDay/constitution_index2.html - 29k - Cached - Similar pages -

5. **Observing Constitution Day**
   Resources for students and educators from the National Archives.
   www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/ - 13k - Cached - Similar pages -

6. **Constitution Day. Materials and Resources for teachers, lesson** ...
   Free classroom materials from the Constitutional Rights Foundation.
   www.crf-usa.org/constitution_day/constitution_day_home.htm - 16k - Cached - Similar pages -

7. **constitution-day » home**
   Constitution Day recognizes the ratification of the the United States Constitution. It is observed on September 17, the day the U.S. Constitutional...
   constitutionday.wikispaces.com/ - 116k - Cached - Similar pages -

8. **Constitution Day - September 17, 1787**
   On September 17, 1787, the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention held their final meeting. Only one item of business occupied the agenda that day, ...
   usgovinfo.about.com/blconstday.htm - 24k - Cached - Similar pages -
9. **Center for Civic Education Constitution Day**
Collection of downloadable lesson plans and audio files for kindergarten through high school.
www.civiced.org/byrd2006/ - 63k - Cached - Similar pages -

10. **Constitution Day - Federal Courts Educational Outreach**
Since 2005, when schools receiving federal funds were mandated by Congress to observe Constitution Day, the Supreme Court's