OMNI Center is an all-volunteer organization without paid staff at this time. All of our many projects and activities are organized and supported by dedicated volunteers like you, who educate and empower people to actively build a non-violent, sustainable, and just world.

Thank You for carrying OMNI’s mission into 2010!

INMOtion interviews OMNI Treasurer Karen Takemoto:

**What does it take to be a peace leader?**

Commitment to the principle of non-violence and looking for ways to build bridges between people with differing points of view, while appreciating and honoring those differences. A peace leader helps people communicate in a way that has people truly listening and communicating in a way that is respectful. I don’t see myself “out there” as a leader—we’re all part of this movement, together.

**How did you become a peace leader?**

Back in college in the 70s I got involved in anti-nuke stuff in Hawaii and the Quakers. Prior to that I used to go hiking with Sierra Club and do service projects, getting high school students to build trails and that sort of stuff. Touching nature is something I grew up with, Hawaiians feel the spirit of the Earth in our veins. Connecting with the environmental movement was very natural. One of the things I appreciate in OMNI is that recognition that the environment, peace, and justice are interconnected issues.

“I’m optimistic.

For a long time we felt like we were shouting to the wind but now we have the wind at our backs giving momentum to the peace movement.”

-Karen Takemoto
MISSION STATEMENT
OMNI Center for Peace, Justice, and Ecology educates and empowers people to actively build a non-violent, sustainable, and just world.

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WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!
During the holidays, we send cards wishing peace for one another in the New Year. We pray for peace, we sing carols about peace. Peace in the Middle East. Peace in Sudan. Peace in our homes and in our hearts. Such a simple concept, yet so difficult to attain. Recently, my daughter’s third-grade class visited third-graders from a neighboring school. The students spent the morning learning about each other. On one side of the gymnasium, scores of children from the American Department of Defense school sat with their legs folded as Okinawan students welcomed them in song. Then the Okinawan children sat as the American children sang "Silent Night," first in English, then in Japanese. Translators helped as children from both sides approached microphones. "What do you like to eat for lunch?" "Why do you go to school on Saturdays?" "Do you like baseball?" The children listened to each other in wonder. They swapped "ID" index cards with each other, bearing their names in English on one side, Kanji on the other. Then they lined up in teams behind orange cones. Each Okinawan student wrapped a band around one of his or her legs, and then secured it around a leg of an American student. An international three-legged race ensued. Initially, the kids were somewhat paralyzed by their inability to communicate. Then they began to gesture and read each other’s eyes. When teams toppled, they pulled themselves up and tried again. "Ichi, ni, san," the Okinawan students chanted, keeping the rhythm of their steps. "One, two, three," the American students chanted. In time, shyness waned. Pairs put their arms around each other’s waists and held each other up. A dark-haired boy touched the hair of his blond counterpart and smiled. In the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee, two very different types of people came together in unity and peace. Couldn't the Secretary-General of the UN learn something here? Perhaps the three-legged race could be implemented in the Assembly Hall? Democrats in Congress could sing carols to the Republicans, and in turn, Republicans could show Democrats their lunch boxes. View the Complete Article at: www.ocregister.com/articles/peace-225636-children-one.html

**UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

OMNI has supported Dennis Kucinich's Department of Peace bill ever since he introduced it in the House. Less known, perhaps, is the United States Institute of Peace. USIP provides a DoP in miniature, a kind of testing ground for the larger Departmental conception. Its new headquarters building in DC will be completed next year. It publishes *PeaceWatch magazine*. The latest no. Fall 2009 is an excellent place to begin to learn about the Institute, for its descriptions of the Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding.—Dick Bennett

The *Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information*, that you may have read about here, has been awarded the very first one of a new peace education prize founded by the Middle East Peace Association (MEPEACE). The prize was awarded for the teacher training series they operate every year to teach peace skills to Israeli and Palestinian educators together. Its intent is to give both sides new tools to improve the chances for peace between their peoples. —Ted Swedenburg

**Did you know?**

OMNI TLC is planning an International Peace Dance!
The Rogers School District has faced an increase in homeless students this year, and the district's director of counseling expects the number to keep increasing. The district makes a special effort to accommodate homeless students, providing clothes and bussing them from other school districts so they can stay in the same school. The number of homeless students, 188 as of August, is likely to increase over the winter, as more previously unidentified homeless families seek shelter and families lose their homes in fires, said Linda Haley, who oversees counseling in the district. Haley said there are probably more homeless students in the district not being counted. The district relies on federal grants and community donations to help homeless students. "I'm just so pleased to be part of such a giving community," Haley said. Homeless students are not necessarily living on the streets. Most of the students the district reported as homeless were sharing other people's housing, a practice known as doubling up, according to figures provided by Haley. The federal McKinney-Vento Act requires public schools to guarantee equal access and opportunity for homeless children. The act defines homeless children and youth as those "who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence." That includes sharing housing with other families, living in shelters and living in motel rooms. That may not sound like homelessness to some people, said Kevin Fitzpatrick, a professor at the University of Arkansas and director of the Community and Family Institute. "My response to them is usually 'go try that, and see how that works for you,'" Fitzpatrick said. Jose Archuleta, a 12-year-old student at Greer Lingle Middle School, did try it. Archuleta's home in Beaver Shores burned Aug. 21 in a case of suspected arson. The home was being repaired from an earlier fire, and the Archuletas were living at a relative's house in Springdale, said Stephanie Archuleta, Jose's mother. Archuleta's neighbor is charged in connection with the fires. Archuleta, her son and her 16-year-old daughter, Leigh-Ann, lived at Stephanie Archuleta's uncle's house from June until November, when Archuleta bought a house in Rogers. "My daughter had to sleep on the couch," Archuleta said, describing the experience. "My son had to sleep on an air mattress. They didn't have a lot of their own stuff." Rogers sent a bus to pick up Archuleta's children so they could keep going to the same schools, she said. Jose Archuleta's grades suffered a little, Stephanie Archuleta said. "It was hard to concentrate doing schoolwork because it all happened," he said. Fitzpatrick said homeless populations have grown at school districts around the region. The recession, combined with a lack of affordable housing, pushed many families who were just barely hanging on into homelessness, Fitzpatrick said. A minimum wage worker would have to work more than 75 hours per week to pay fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, according to "Northwest Arkansas Community Indicators: A Quality-of-Life Assessment," a 2008 report coauthored by Fitzpatrick. Many families of homeless students came to the area because of the relatively low unemployment rates, but had a hard time finding housing, Haley said. "It's kind of like 'The Grapes of Wrath' in reverse," she said. Some homeless students were left behind when their parents were deported, Haley said. Others were kicked out of their house or are waiting to be placed in foster care. Fitzpatrick said he expects the situation will get worse before it gets better. Fitzpatrick said he suspects many of the families affected by the recession have yet to be detected by aid agencies. "It's kind of so close to us, it's right in front of our eyes and we can't see it yet," he said.
There are 2 million farmers and 300 million eaters in the United States. Standing between them is a handful of corporations who control how food gets from one side to the other. Learn more at http://realfoodchallenge.org

Thousands protest global warming.
From Mike Tramill

The Bamboo Bike Studio is run by three men in their late 20s who know a lot about bamboo and a lot about bicycles. On a cool autumn morning, two of them are out on a bamboo harvest — in a dense grove near New Brunswick, N.J. Justin Aguinaldo and Sean Murray carry a small Japanese pull saw and a caliper to find bamboo stems that are 1 1/2 inches thick. When they find stems that are just right, they tap the bamboo to make sure it's not too soft: "If the bamboo's too watery, it's not as dense and it's not as strong," Aguinaldo explains. Back at the bike studio, the bamboo's outer skin is treated with a torch, and the stems are baked in a homemade oven. The brown stems are then fastened into frames by connecting them with a sawdust and resin mixture. The joints are wrapped with a thin, ribbon-like carbon fabric that soaks up epoxy. After the epoxy dries, the bike's joints look like they've been wrapped with black electrical tape. On a recent weekend, Sari Harris — a self-described "tinkerer" — spent close to $1,000 to make her own bamboo bike. For that fee, she got the bamboo frame and all of the components she needed to make a multi-gear or single-speed bike — and a bamboo bike expert to guide her through the assembly process. Engineer Marty Odlin was supervising Harris' work. Odlin estimates that there are now close to 80 bamboo bikes on the road that were built in his Brooklyn studio. "Everyone who leaves the studio says, 'Wow, my bike is my favorite object now.' " Odlin says. "They have such a connection to this thing that came together under their own hands." The Bamboo Bike Studio has drawn amateur bike builders from as far away as California and England. Alexis Mills, a bicycle messenger in Ottawa, and his 61-year-old mother, a doctor, came and made bikes. "The ride itself is really smooth," Mills says. "It eats up a lot of the vibrations of the road. I wondered if it might be too flexible or too mushy, but it's not. It's really nice to ride." Interest in bamboo bikes is growing. Marty Odlin says, "There is a concern that bamboo bikes become a fad. We feel like we're building something with more enduring value than that." The bikes themselves really last; Odlin and his two partners have all ridden thousands of miles on New York City streets on their bamboo frames. And whether it's a fad or not, the bamboo bike-making classes are filled until April.

350.org International Climate Change Video:
http://action.350.org/p/salsa/web/tellafriend/public/?tell_a_friend_KEY=6139

Did you know?
Many OMNI leaders commute by bicycle.
Free Speech TV offers a variety of independent TV news series. Besides showing regularly on our television station, all are available on-demand online after the program airs on our website: www.freespeech.org

GRITtv, with host Laura Flanders, is a progressive news program that runs on FSTV Monday-Thursday. You can watch each entire program or just the segments you find interesting, Democracy Now!, with hosts Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez, is shown on FSTV Monday-Friday and archived for on-demand usage each morning. Another news program is Global Report, an independent weekly show from Asheville, N.C., that is hosted by Eamon Martin and Allie Morris and features national and international stories underreported by mainstream media. One of our most popular news shows is Gay USA, a weekly program that focuses on national LGBT news. Hosted by the informative and often entertaining Ann Northrop and Andy Humm from Brooklyn, N.Y. Gay USA offers, news, sharp opinions and updates on gay issues around the world.

Happy Holidays,
Leland Rucker

**AMY GOODMAN, DEMOCRACY NOW ON YOUR COMPUTER**

All you need do any time of the day is use the following url to watch Democracy Now on your computer.

http://www.democracynow.org/

then click "real video"  - Dick Bennett

This is a special reminder to those of you who participated in the **First Fayetteville Goddess Festival: Goddesses, Angels, and Amazons**. Please visit our website at www.goddessfestival.com for submission forms for the **2010 Goddess Festival: The Journey Continues**. The deadline for performance submissions is January 31st. We would love to have you included in this year’s program, so let us hear from you. Our 2010 Goddess Festival will be held throughout the month of March, on the Fayetteville Downtown Square, on the main floor of the East Plaza Building. It is a beautiful venue, three times the size of last year’s space, and we are delighted with the potential of this year’s event.

Many blessings to you in the New Year,
Vick Kelley, for the Goddess Festival

**JOB OPENINGS AT OMNI CENTER**

Newsletter Editor for OMNI INMOTION. No past experience required. Training provided. Interest in editing & page layout is a plus. Published electronically each month. Time Commitment: 1-2 hours per week.

Interviewer for Peace Leadership Column. Duties include interviewing one current OMNI leader each month for the newsletter and typing the column. Time Commitment: 1 hour per month.

Salary includes peace of mind, a sense of community and accomplishment, and TimeBanking hours!

INTERESTED? Contact Amanda Bancroft, current editor: amandabancroft@gmail.com
The new calendar includes events for CAT, and is open to additions at any time! Click the link in the newsletter email you just received, or copy & paste the link below.

Send all events to Amanda: amandabancroft@gmail.com

http://www.google.com/calendar/embedsrc=v0mu7v7bhseaeaguj0hhr3lv8%
40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago