

# Group forms peace team to help Iraqis

Voices In The Wilderness began the Iraq Peace Team to live among Iraqi civilians and provide food and aid

## War hits home

**Aimee Rudin**  
City/State Politics Reporter

During the last several months, many civilians throughout the Western world have voiced their opposition to the war in Iraq.

In the United States, advocates for peace have overtaken the streets in organized marches for peace, sent thousands of letters to senators and representatives asking them to end the war and formed boycotts of products and people directly supporting the Bush administration. Although most major battles in Iraq have been fought, the war has not ended.

Iraqi and coalition forces and civilians of many different nationalities have died in the war. Coalition leaders have maintained that the war is necessary to ensure the safety of the world.

"The safety of the American people depends on ending this direct and growing threat," President George W. Bush said in a press conference at the end of February. "Acting against the danger will also contribute greatly to the long-term safety and stability of our world. The current Iraqi regime has shown the power of tyranny to spread discord and violence in the Middle East."

A handful of organizations have dedicated their efforts to showing the people of Iraq, and the world community, that not everyone believes in or wants the war.

Voices In The Wilderness was established in 1996 as a joint U.S. and U.K. campaign to end the economic sanctions and military warfare

against the people of Iraq. Since its inception, more than 60 VITW delegations have traveled to Iraq in violation of U.S.-opposed sanctions. VITW advocates nonviolence as a means for social change. The group opposes "the development, storage and use by any country of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological, chemical or economic."

In September, VITW initiated the Iraq Peace Team, a group of revolving members who travel to Iraq to live among civilians and join in a stance of solidarity with the Iraqi people. Members of the group bring aid and food to civilians in war torn areas.

Kathy Kelly, co-founder of VITW and a two-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, has been in Iraq with the peace team for the majority of the last four months. She was on the ground when the U.S.-led bombing began in March.

Kelly has been working with other Peace Team members to show solidarity with the Iraqi people. She recently encountered several U.S. soldiers who questioned her and other members' reasons for being in Iraq and explained their own.

"Each of them has assured us they didn't want to kill anyone," Kelly said. "One young man said he was desperate for financial aid to care for his wife and young child while struggling to complete college studies and work full-time. He felt he could gain some respect in this world and also help his family by joining the Marines."

The soldier told Kelly he hadn't shot anyone, but he saw a U.S. soldier shoot at a civilian car carrying two adults and a child. Both adults were killed immediately. The child survived.

"They could have shot the tires," the soldier said. "Some just want to kill."

Kelly said the majority of the soldiers have been respectful toward the Iraqi civilians and the Peace

Team. She said many are already tired of the war and ready for the fighting to be over.

"Looting and burning continue, here in Baghdad," Kelly said in an e-mailed letter back to VITW headquarters in Chicago. "I'm sick of war — disgusted to the point of nausea. I think all of us at this intersection, residents of Al Fanar, journalists in the Palestine Hotel next door and soldiers on patrol, share the same queasy ill feeling. The line 'War is the health of the state' makes no sense whatsoever here."

According to VITW speaking coordinator Laurie Hasbrook, there are still four members, including Kelly, in Iraq.

A few groups have traveled to Iraq with the hope of placing their own bodies between the fighting and buildings like hospitals and food storage facilities. These people, called human shields, operate on the hope that armed forces will see a Western face among a planned target and make the decision not to fire. Iraqi leaders often station the human shields in front of areas that could be considered military targets.

"Our strategy is potentially dangerous, but that is a risk we must take in standing beside our brothers and sisters in Iraq," Organizer of the Human Shield Project Ken Nichols O'Keefe said. "There are literally billions of people around the world who are opposed to this war, yet our so-called 'democracies' in the U.S. and Britain are plunging us into it. We can, and we must, stop this war, and all we need to achieve this is a few thousand volunteers to migrate to Iraq."

Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth said the use of human shields by either side of the war was a criminal act.

"If Iraq uses people as human shields, that is a war crime," he said. "If the United States attacks targets that are shielded by civilians with-



Andrew Cutraro St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Human shield Yukiko Muragishi of Japan passes a plate of food to U.S. Marines at a water treatment project in northern Baghdad on April 12. Seven human shields have been working to protect the plant from destruction.

out demonstrating an overwhelming military necessity to do so, that would be a war crime, too."

Military forces have already killed several civilians acting as human shields. Many of the shields have been asked to leave the country, or have been deported to Jordan and other surrounding countries.

Peter Bergel, executive director of Oregon PeaceWorks, said aid groups such as VITW are very different from the human shield movement, but

both are forms of civil disobedience.

"People are beginning to see that if they can risk their lives as soldiers than they can also risk their lives as peace advocates," Bergel said. "We are primarily saying we want a different way of dealing with conflict."

For more information on aid groups, visit the Voices In The Wilderness Web site at [www.vitw.org](http://www.vitw.org).

Contact the senior reporter at [aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com](mailto:aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com).

## Review

continued from page 1

ject matter. Ranging from bright, excited activity to serene landscapes, three photographs in particular stand out. "SamulNori" captures a man spinning in midair while playing a percussion instrument. The long white ribbon on his hat looks like a kite tail gracefully snapping with the motion of his body.

"Jwibul nore" shows a curious

night scene, which illustrates a traditional folk game where field embankments are set on fire. Players twirl sticks like batons, creating large orange circles of fire that sparkle in the night. Other photographs showcase bold masks and dance performances that signify the harvests and customs of a once agrarian society.

The most notable photograph is simply called "Landscape," a view near the Seonunsa Temple in Gochang, which is in the Jeollabuk-do

Province. Photographed from behind, a hooded walker retreats down a path lined with old trees enshrouded in fog.

The scene conjures this philosophical passage from "On the Road," a travelogue by writer Joo-young Kim: "While on the road, I discovered that the things with the most global appeal were those that are the most Korean in nature. I also discovered that underlying the traditional ways of Korean relations is certain humility based on integrity

and restraint. And because of this, the true beauty of Korea is subtle and free of artifice."

In addition to photographs, "Images of Korea" includes a glass case containing a sample of Korean crafts and traditional costumes. Of special interest are two elegant pipes that are approximately two feet long, a decorative painted screen and a lovely robe. Lastly, an impressive scholar's desk connotes the sort of serious contemplation and careful

writing to which many of us aspire.

Sohn's professionalism, drawing on her expertise as a program officer for the Korean Foundation in Seoul, Korea, shines in the exhibit, with promises of other intriguing Korean arts, film and scholarly lectures to come.

Be sure to check out this exhibition before it leaves on Friday. Visit [www.meetkorea.org](http://www.meetkorea.org) for further details.

Jen Katz-Buonincontro is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

*Andrea Cooper*  
presents

## Kristin's Story

The story of Andrea's daughter, Kristin, who committed suicide after being raped by a "friend" and falling into a deep depression.



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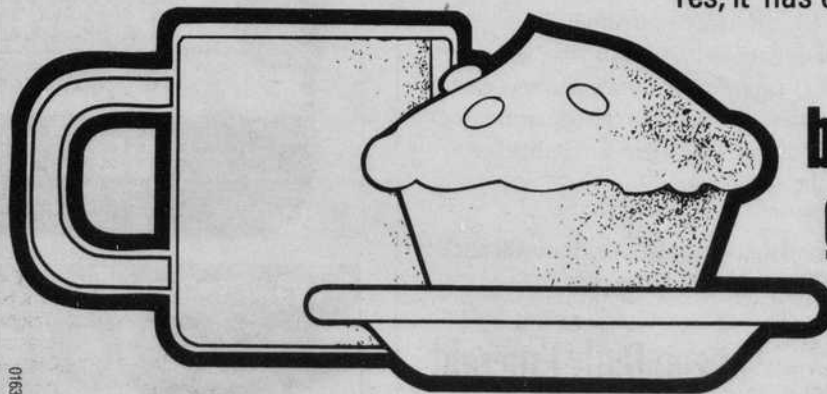
## Oregon Daily Emerald end-of-the-year bakesale

Monday, April 28 - all day, in front of the UO Bookstore

All the homemade delicacies that can fit in one bake sale, held by your friendly Emerald staff members.

We will be selling **cookies, brownies, lemon bars, muffins, donuts, cup cakes** and much more.

All proceeds will go toward Emerald expenses. Yes, it has come to this!



**[Come on by, get some goodies and chat with ODE staff.]**