

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead



Grandmothers for Peace International

Barbara Wiedner, Founder, 1928 - 2001

Lorraine Krofchok, Director

February 2002

Founded 1982

Our Beloved Founder, Barbara Wiedner 1928 — 2001



On December 2nd, Sunday evening, Founder and Director of Grandmothers for Peace Barbara Wiedner left this earth. We mourn her death, but rejoice in the legacy she has left for all of us.

Barbara was working on, but never finished, a farewell message to her beloved organization. She was most concerned that the group would continue. It will continue — with help from those that wear the GFP shirt, you reading this, our supporters, and future members.

There will always be a Grandmothers for Peace, because it is now beyond an organization. It is a movement. While we still long for a peaceful world, Barbara is truly a Grandmother *at* Peace.

With Love and Sadness, Lorraine Krofchok



*From Jan Provost
Barbara's sister*

Dear Friends,

As many of you already know, our founder-director Barbara Wiedner lost her battle with pancreatic cancer on December 2, 2001. Words cannot describe the great loss to the peace community and to Barbara's family.

On my last trip to California to visit Barbara three weeks before she died, I assured her again that the Northland Chapter of GFP will continue to work to eliminate nuclear weapons and to spread her message of peace and justice for years to come.

Barbara's passing was mentioned in many newspapers across the country including the *LA Times* in which actor/activist Martin Sheen was quoted as saying, "Barbara was my personal hero." He and Barbara protested together many times at the School of the Americas.

Three weeks before she died, Barbara and I attended our very first protest together in Sacramento. I will cherish that memory forever.

GFP member Lorraine Krofchok of Elk Grove, CA, will take over as Director and she will do a fantastic job. She was also a personal friend of Barbara. Thank you Lorraine from the bottom of our hearts. We will support you 100%.

Please check out the web site for more information and read the wonderful tribute to Barbara written by Peg McIntire.

I, and the rest of Barbara's family, thank everyone who sent cards of condolence and memorials in Barbara's memory.

Pax, Jan

(Editor's note: Peg's tribute is enclosed.)



From left to right: Tess Koenig, Lil Corrigan, JoAnne Lingle, Peg McIntire, Barbara Wiedner, Bernice Kring, Lorraine Krofchok, Kathy Anderson. Seated: Father Bill Bichsel, unknown. School of the Americas demonstration, Fort Benning, Georgia. November 1996.

Grandmothers for Peace lead the way at Cassini protest, Cape Canaveral Air Station, Florida, October 1997.



Arrestees Barbara and Martin Sheen at a Nevada (nuclear) Test Site demonstration.



Barbara with Raisa Gorbachev



"She (Raisa) asked to see me, and said, 'We're two grandmothers, you know. Thank you for all your work on behalf of children all over the world.'" Moscow 1987



Bill Addington, far left; holding the banner: left, Manuela Limon, Barbara, Maria Mendez, and Gloria Guerra Addington lead the march protesting the establishment of a radioactive waste dump in Sierra Blanca, Texas, 1998.

Barbara was working on, but never finished, her farewell letter to this beloved organization. When she asked me to consider continuing Grandmothers I thought about it, but knew my answer would be yes. I am deeply honored to take care of the movement that Barbara Wiedner founded.

I joined Grandmothers in Sacramento about ten years ago during the Gulf War. Shortly after, because of my husband's job transfer, we moved to Georgia and I became very involved with the School of the Americas issue. I attended several protests at the gates of Ft. Benning and did hands on activism with the local SOA Watch Atlanta. We had a conference at the Carter Center concerning SOA and I also toured the infamous School, a trip arranged by a local Pax Christi group.

It was sobering to walk through that building and realize the horror that some of its graduates had unleashed in Latin America. It was shocking to stand on the firing range and see the silhouettes of a man, woman, and child that were used for "target practice training." When the tour was over I expected to feel great anger, but all I could feel was pity and sorrow. I also had the privilege of attending Fr. Roy Bourgeois' "coming home party" after he was released from prison for civil disobedience.

At the same time, Newt Gingrich was creating havoc in the country and a NewtWatch was formed in the Atlanta area. The solidarity of the organization with activists groups from all over Atlanta, helped to remove Newt from office (along with his own shortcomings!). During this time I asked Barbara about starting a GFP Southeast Chapter and she said, "Go for it!" Grannies joined in many of the protests against Newt, were at the gates of Ft. Benning, and some of us also marched with Barbara at the Cassini protest in 1997. Almost three years ago we returned to Sacramento, CA, the "birthplace" of Grandmothers for Peace.

As we go on, many people believe 9-11 was the defining moment for the people of the United States. The horror of that day will live in the minds of many of us. However, those of us in any peace movement know there has been horror all over the world for untold years. Peace people are very well informed and know their issues. We have a sense of responsibility to "do something"

about an injustice, a lie, a transgression, a blatant mistake or outright lie by a person or government no matter how uncomfortable the reality and truth becomes. Some will turn their heads, but in order to "do something,"

we MUST face the truth. Ghandi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in this world."

The issues have not changed since 9-11, and unfortunately some have been added. The School of the Americas, name change notwithstanding, is still training people who terrorize innocent people in Latin America. Children are still dying in Iraq because of US sanctions and innocent people have been killed in Afghanistan. The Middle

East struggle continues. The ABM Treaty is being "dumped." The madness of nuclear weapons still threatens the earth. The boondoggle of Missile "Defense" is going forward, despite the terror coming from much simpler methods. Nuclear waste looms as a problem for centuries to come.

The already bloated military budget escalates while schools crumble and teachers leave their profession in frustration. Health care is not available to everyone. Fear threatens *The Bill of Rights*. Some say, "I have nothing to hide. Who cares if my phone is tapped, my e-mail read, or my mail tampered with?"

Ben Franklin said: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has sent a donation in memory of Barbara, the many cards and letters of sympathy to the family and organization, and the new members who have joined because of articles they have read about Barbara's passing. Barbara wanted Grandmothers to continue and grow. We cherish the idea of peace for the entire world. It will come. It will be a struggle. And we may never see the results in our lifetime. But what else is there?

We must work together and speak out for the injustices that go on around us. We must protect those who cannot speak for themselves, and defend the liberties that are a part of freedom. Please continue the work you are doing, remember the legacy of Barbara, and "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Pax, Lorraine



Lorraine Krofchok and Barbara Wiedner Sacramento, CA, September 2001.

PLACES TO GO & THINGS TO KNOW IN 2002

Berkeley, California, USA

May 10-12, 2002

Global Network:

No Star Wars:

International Space

Organizing

Conference & Protest



Join GN as they celebrate their 10th anniversary and strengthen their commitment to preventing a new arms race in space. Keynote speakers: Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), the only person in Congress to vote against the call for war in Central Asia, and Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), who has introduced legislation to ban weapons in space.

Included will be a protest at Lockheed Martin (Sunnyvale) where work is underway on the space-based laser, airborne laser, Theatre Missile Defense (TMD), and new satellites for space war fighting. Registration is a sliding scale of \$15-\$60. **Contact:** Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, PO Box 90083, Gainesville, FL, 32607, (352) 337-9274, www.space4peace.org

The World

October 4-11, 2002

Keep Space for Peace Week:

International Days of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space

Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space is calling for a week of peace events in 2002. Last year, the number of local actions doubled — 115 actions in 19 countries.

In addition to local protests at key space installations, groups are urged to organize events throughout the week that would include visits to political leaders, community teach-ins, meetings of religious leaders, visits to local schools, media work, and public displays. Help build this vital global movement to stop the nuclearization and weaponization of space. See previous event for information.

Oak Ridge, Tennessee

April 13-14, 2002

Action for Peace

Join the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance at the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN. It is the last, full-scale, operating nuclear weapons production plant in the U.S. The DOE wants to spend 4 billion dollars to rebuild it. Saturday is Nonviolence Workshops. Sunday is Rally, March, Direct Action. **Contact:** Bob Poeschl, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, PO Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831, (865) 483-8202, www.stopthebombs.org

New Bill to Close the SOA

Send your member of Congress a message: co-sponsor **HR 1810** to Close the School of the Americas (renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

To find out whether your member is already a co-sponsor, and other actions for this bill, please go to **website**:

<http://www.soaw.org/legalert.html#3>

Write or call: SOA Watch, P.O. Box 4566, Washington DC 20017. Phone: (202) 234-3440.

Out-Of-Print Book Alert

"American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War" by Carole Gallagher is a photojournalism report examining above ground nuclear weapons testing in Utah/Nevada, and its effects on workers and the people living downwind. Please consider finding this book and donating it to your local library. Even though it is out of print, copies are available at on-line booksellers and used bookstores.

Carole is interviewing Gulf War Veterans for a new book. If you have a son, daughter, or grandchild who came home sick after service to their country and would be willing to be speak out, **contact** Carol Gallagher: clgallagher@igc.org

Notice

Scholarship Program Changing

The Dorothy Vandercook Memorial Peace Scholarship program will be changed to the **Barbara Wiedner and Dorothy Vandercook Memorial Scholarship Foundation**. You will receive the details in a future mailing. Scholarships will be awarded this year and applications are due March 1, 2002.

GFP Shirts & Totes Available

To order Grandmothers for Peace sweat-shirts, T-shirts, or totes, **contact:** Grandmothers for Peace, Hayward Chapter, Corine Thornton, 24417 Margaret Drive, Hayward, CA 94542. Phone: (510) 582-7699.

Help change the world with My GFP Story

Inspire and encourage each other with what you've done or are doing to help heal your planet, your community, or your family.

What brought you to Grandmothers for Peace? Send us *My GFP Story* — we would love to hear from you and share *My GFP Story* in future newsletters. **Mail to:** Grandmothers for Peace International, 9444 Medstead Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758, USA.

Numbers You Need

It is important that President Bush, key people in his Administration, and members of Congress hear from you.

President George W. Bush

Phone: (202) 456-1111 [comment line]

Fax: (202) 456-2461

e-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

First Lady Laura Bush

e-mail: first.lady@whitehouse.gov

Vice-President Dick Cheney

e-mail: vice.president@whitehouse.gov

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell

Fax: (202) 261-8577

e-mail: secretary@state.gov

Secretary of Defense

Donald H. Rumsfeld

Phone: (703) 697-5737 [Dept. of Defense]

Members Of Congress

(Capitol Switchboard)

Senate & House: (202) 224-3121



May 2002

Grandmothers for Peace celebrates 20 years!

For twenty years our organization has been uniting people for the ultimate goal of a "better world for future generations." Now more than ever we need people of peace. In the current climate of "war and revenge," those who seek peace are called unrealistic or naive. Perhaps — but what else is there as a goal? We must speak up against injustice. There must be a sense of tolerance for people who are "different." We are ALL different to someone, somewhere. And, there is NO ONE better than anyone else!

I beg you to remember the words of Pastor Martin Niemoeller, a Nazi victim from WW II:

"They first came for the Communists and I didn't speak up — because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up — because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up — because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up — because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me — and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Please renew your membership so we may continue to inform and educate people around the globe. Yes, Grandmothers for Peace circles the globe! Renew in Barbara Wiedner's memory, for all who perished on 9-11, for all who have died because of war and conflict around the world, and sadly, for those who will continue to die.

When has a war really solved anything? Will we ever have "the last war" without destroying humanity? Yes, evil exists, we must deal with it. There are no easy solutions. We must open our hearts and minds to help people realize war and revenge accomplishes little and brings sorrow and grief — forever.

Pax, Lorraine

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION

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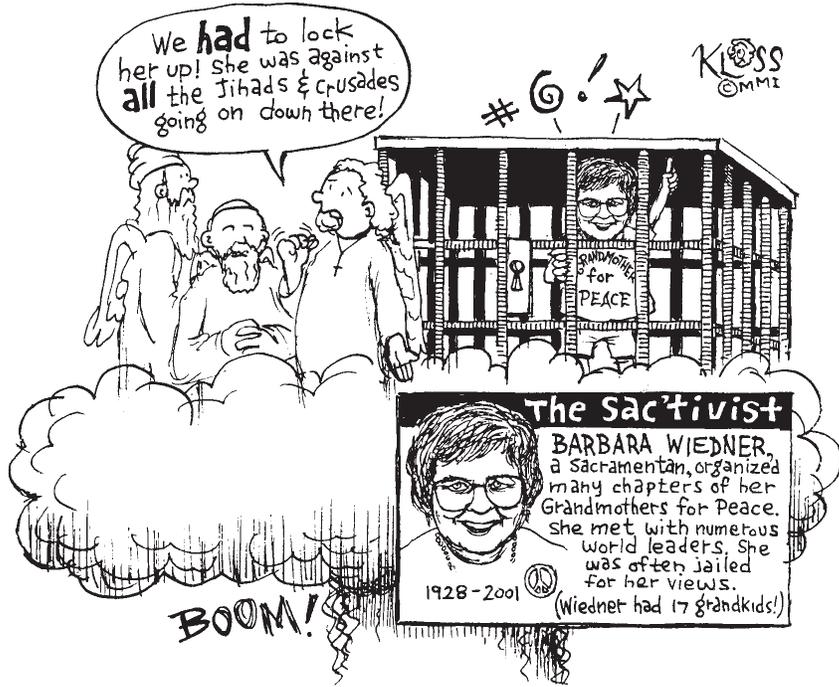
Mail to:

Grandmothers for Peace International

9444 Medstead Way

Elk Grove, CA 95758 USA





Graphic courtesy of Kloss. Appeared in the *Sacramento News & Review*, December 13, 2001.

The Starfish Flinger

As the old man walked down the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun.

"But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish," countered the other. "How can your effort make any difference?" The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves.

"It makes a difference to that one," he said.

Grandmothers for Peace International

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Barbara Wiedner: A Tribute

Peg McIntire wrote this touching recollection several days before Barbara died. Peg has some beautiful thoughts to share.

Barbara has been an inspiration to me for many years. I want to take this opportunity to review my recollections. Unfortunately my memory is not good, and my files are incomplete, but I want to tell you what I know.

She grew up in Superior, Wisconsin, population 3500. From childhood she wrestled with her life's ambitions: to become a nun (or a saint) or to have a dozen babies. She married at 19, had 10 children, has 20 plus grandchildren, and I don't know how many great-grandchildren.

"I wanted nothing more than to be a wife, home-maker and mother. I always saw myself as a grandmother in a rocking chair with a cookie jar nearby for the grandkids. I have never gotten over the excitement and mystery of an infant, and that's where a lot of this comes from ... the concern that these children have a future."

She baked, cleaned house, washed and ironed with relish. Even as she did, she carefully watched the TV accounts of the Vietnam War and, in particular, the student protest marches and sit-ins. The death of her son, shot by a police officer, added to her political awakening.

Barbara Wiedner (pronounced *Weedner*), 72, started her activism as a volunteer with the Catholic Worker. In March of 1982, troubled to learn that nuclear weapons were kept at Mather Air Force Base, she joined with others from Sacramento's religious community in a weekly vigil at the Base entrance. Soon she was carrying a sign, made by her 10-year-old granddaughter, that identified her

as a "Grandmother for Peace."

She balked when the idea of starting a peace group was presented to her. However, her first arrest on Good Friday, April 20, 1982, at Mather Air Force Base, changed her perspective. "As a mother and grandmother, I could no longer remain silent as our world rushes on its collision course with disaster which threatens the lives and futures of all children, everywhere, and the future of this beautiful planet itself," said Barbara.

Seven women were arrested that Good Friday and charged with civil disobedience. On Friday, May 11, they were sentenced to serve 120 hours of community service. (The judge opted for this rather than put the "Sacramento Seven" in jail over Mother's Day.)

"I hope people will not think we are encouraging people to break the law," she said. "But our actions should teach people, and children, to scrutinize laws against human life, and they should be broken to prove a point."

Some years later, the Pentagon announced a change in Air Force policy. The B-52s would assume a variety of new missions carrying conventional, not nuclear, weapons. "We're delighted that the nuclear weapons are going, but we're not delighted they're going someplace else," said Barbara. "It doesn't solve the problem."

In November 1982, Barbara was invited to join 20 other American women on a 15-day peace journey that took them to Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk and Alma Ata. While in the latter, a city near the Chinese border, Barbara was asked to say a few words at a memorial ceremony for Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader who had just died.

Caught by surprise, Barbara spoke extemporaneously after 10 Russians had delivered prepared addresses. "I spoke to their grief," she said. "I offered them my condolences. I cried through the whole thing. I cried a lot in that country. When I looked around at the Russian people, I asked myself, 'This is the face of the enemy? These beautiful children and these wonderful women? And we're planning to

kill each other?' I said that I prayed that their new leadership would work toward peace, and that somehow our two countries could work out something so that we could live in peace together." The next day her talk was printed in *Pravda*. Another time, devout Catholic Barbara knelt in an Orthodox church to join a Russian grandmother in a prayer for peace.

In April 1984, Barbara and eleven others protested at Aerojet General Corp. in Rancho Cordova, California.

Demonstrators strung clotheslines holding "peace pillowcases" designed by children before crossing the white line in front of gate No. 3 and being taken into custody for trespassing by Sacramento sheriff's deputies.



In another protest at Aerojet, on Good Friday, 1985, she was one of 70 who sang, prayed, read scripture passages and, while reciting the 14 "stations" of Christ's death, held a ceremonial walk along the railroad tracks just outside the Rancho Cordova factory. When deputies moved to make their arrests after demonstrators crossed a white boundary line, the protesters did not resist. Fifteen were cited and given stiff sentences.

"We will gladly spend Mother's Day in jail as a statement for peace and life," Barbara said before she was arrested at the Aerojet protest on charges of trespassing and creating a public nuisance. "I'll miss my family, but they're in my heart. I take them everywhere I go, including jail."

The 90-minute demonstration meshed re-enactment portions of Christ's crucifix-



Barbara carrying granddaughter Laurie's sign

ion with the denunciation of nuclear arms. Aerojet-manufactured engines propel the Titan, Minuteman, Polaris, and small ICBMs, among other missiles.

In August 1985, she was a delegate with Sacramento Mayor Anne Rudin to the first World Conference for Mayors for Peace through Inter-City Solidarity, held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombing. The conference discussed the role of local elected officials in working for nuclear disarmament and the effect of the arms race on local and world economies.

By 1986, Barbara was already “a veteran” of hundreds of speaking engagements throughout the western United States, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., Virginia, Massachusetts, Spain, Japan and the Soviet Union. Respected for participating in civil disobedience actions at nuclear bases, weapons production facilities, and the Nevada Test Site, she was welcomed at universities, elementary and high schools, civic clubs, peace and social justice groups, churches, and women’s and seniors’ groups in the U.S. and abroad.

On National Grandparents Day, September 13, 1987, Barbara was among 31 anti-nuclear protestors at the Nevada Test Site. They sat on boards supported by concrete blocks as they sang and told stories about their involvement with the peace movement. “We picked this site as a quiet place ... to pray, to meditate. We did not mean to provoke anybody.” After more than an hour of singing and storytelling near a culvert, the protesters formed a single line along a barbed wire fence that serves as the boundary marker for the 350 square mile site and began walking toward the cattle guard. It took less than 10 minutes for them to be arrested, put on two waiting vans and taken to the main gate where they were cited for trespassing.

In 1987, Barbara participated in The World Congress of Women in Moscow. The delegation received a 45-minute session with President Gorbachev. Then Barbara met his wife, Raisa. “She asked to see me, and said ‘We’re two grandmothers, you know. Thank you for all your work on behalf of children all over the world.’” Barbara says that the fear of nuclear war is international among all the women she has met in her travels.

Fifteen days later, Barbara was awarded the Father Keith Kenny Peace Award by the Social Concerns Commission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento.

In January 1988, this globe-trotting activist was a member of the “Women for Meaningful Summits” delegation at the Reagan/Gorbachev Summit in Moscow. This time she met with both Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev.



*Barbara with Raisa Gorbachev
State of the World Forum
San Francisco, California, 1995.*

On October 4, 1997, at Cape Canaveral, Barbara and I led the protest against the launch of the Cassini, a rocket headed for Saturn, carrying 72.3 pounds of plutonium.

Deeply dimpled, bespectacled and always cheerful, she says she is blessed with her husband Bill, a soul-mate, an avid golfer and a delightful host, who cheerfully for many years has taken over her household chores. Their comfortable California home has one room dedicated to an office, but boxes of buttons, T-shirts and other GFP supplies spill over into closets and hallways.

Officially started after Barbara’s first arrest in 1982, the organization today has Grandmothers for Peace chapters in almost every state in the USA, and in most countries that Barbara has visited — the Soviet Union (and also in Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union), England, Finland, Netherlands, India, Japan, China, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and I may have missed a few.

Membership numbers are hard to define. “There are many roles for peace-makers and membership is not contingent upon paying dues, joining a chapter, or going to jail. What is important is that people who wear our buttons, or people who wear our T-shirts, consider themselves members.” And you don’t have to be a grandmother or even a woman to be a member, for the organization boasts an active Men’s Auxiliary.

Nuclear disarmament and peace in space remain the fundamental goals, but Grandmothers for Peace has also taken stands on related issues. Though nonpartisan, the group has opposed the US government’s policies in Central America and has been concerned with human rights, with AIDS, with the death penalty, and with women’s issues, because, as Barbara sees it, “There can’t be peace in the world if there isn’t justice.”

Now in its 19th year, the administrative work that Barbara has been handling will be divided among four or five members — public relations, news releases, correspondence, and the scholarship program. (To promote and to reward activism among the younger generation, GFP has for years promoted a Scholarship Program, giving \$250 or even \$500 to 10 to 15 college students each year.)

T-shirts, buttons, GFP stationery and other supplies nestle alongside Barbara’s knitting baskets and trunks (hope chests) filled with afghans, baby blankets, booties and sweaters lovingly made for the numerous grandchildren. Husband Bill has always been of incredible help, as father and grandfather, relieving Barbara of the cooking, toting bulk mailings to the post office, and hosting the many meetings. I’m glad to know that he is being helped now by Hospice.

There will be a tremendous void when Barbara leaves us and tremendous pain in our hearts. The only way to fill the void, and to ease our pain, is to carry on ... to continue her trek for peace, to fulfill our individual roles as “grandmothers (and grandparents) for peace.”

In talking of her role in the peace movement, Barbara likes to quote the anthropologist Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Thank you, Barbara, for your leadership. God bless you on your journey.



Peg McIntire (photo by Walter Coker)