

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence.

The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's schedule at www.tctv.net.

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 90 of our previous interview programs and special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, www.olympiafor.org. Simply click the TV programs link to reach www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch.

Many of our website's TV program listings also include a .pdf document describing the program.

AUGUST 2013

"PEACE FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL"

by GLEN ANDERSON, PRODUCER AND HOST OF THIS TV SERIES

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's August 2013 TV program brings together three interesting guests who explore a variety of aspects related to peace all the way from the neighborhood level to the global level. **Rozanne Rants, Holly Gwinn Graham, and Larry Kerschner** are warm, wise and engaging.

Rozanne Rants has long, deep roots in our community. An amazingly diverse range of people enjoy Rozanne's friendship. I've enjoyed working with her on a variety of issues and activities, including several through the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation. She always brings warmth and wisdom to whatever she does, and I'm delighted that she is a guest on this program.

Holly Gwinn Graham grew up in Florida and established strong reputations in England, the U.S. and elsewhere for her musical and dramatic creativity and for her technical expertise on issues such as nuclear power, nuclear weapons, the militarization of space, and other environmental and social issues. Holly deftly combines serious knowledge with creative expression, and she is a lot of fun to interact with.

Larry Kerschner served in the army during the Vietnam war, and he has volunteered vigorously in the peace movement ever since then, including Veterans for Peace and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Larry is willing and able to grapple seriously with the biggest and toughest political issues. He has traveled on peace delegations to Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Korea. He combines spiritual depth with personal courage and relentless persistence.

Rozanne starts our TV conversation by telling what happened when a young man in her NE Olympia neighborhood was carrying an umbrella and wearing dark clothing for the winter weather this past March 12th. A young woman in our fearful post-911 America called the police and reported a sinister looking man carrying a gun. Several police agencies responded, a helicopter flew overhead, and a nearby elementary school locked down. In a fearful society, a person's eyes can see an umbrella, but her brain can change the image and "see" a gun.

What happens when our society lives in fear? We allow ourselves to be spied on by police and drones. We allow restrictions to be placed upon us. We are trained to fear each other – especially people who look different from us – rather than recognize our common humanity.

Parents teach kids, "Don't talk to strangers." But this leaves us unable to interact with other people, especially those who are different from us. One of the Olympia FOR's peace vigil signs says, "Talk with strangers."

Rozanne also shared a true story about humane, inclusive and collaborative interactions she observed on a local bus. This is more like what we want our society to be like – at the local, national and global levels.

Even within neighborhoods, people often do not know the people who live just a few houses away. Rozanne urges people to start a “Front Yard Sunday” one Sunday each month during spring and summer. She urges people to hang out in front porches and in front yards, reading or gardening or whatever, and also to walk around and visit other neighbors who will be visible and accessible for pleasant conversations and new friendships.

Glen told a true story that he had read in the 1970s in an issue of the national FOR’s *Fellowship* Magazine. An urban neighborhood in a big, old eastern city had a lot of crime, and people were afraid to go outside, especially at night. One teenager there knew that his mother had always wanted a piano but they were too poor to be able to buy one, so early one evening he and a few friends walked to a nearby music store and stole one. While they were wheeling it down the street to his house, the police came and took the teenagers away, but left the piano. As the evening progressed, a neighbor came out and started playing it. Then a few more neighbors came out and started singing along. And more neighbors came out with other musical instruments and more singing voices. Hours later, the police returned and took the piano away. But while the impromptu jam session occurred, a great many neighbors met each other for the first time, and some long-time neighbors re-established friendships. The next day people discovered that the police department reported absolutely no crime in the neighborhood that evening – except for the theft of one piano. Ordinary people in a fearful, crime-ridden neighborhood had created a sense of community and safety that evening, and all it took was one piano.

Glen also reported that several years ago a public opinion survey had asked people several questions on what they thought about gay and lesbian people. One of the final questions asked the survey’s participants whether they actually knew any gays or lesbians. Participants who had expressed much negativity about them said they did not know any gays or lesbians. From this study, Glen figured that either people were negative toward what they did not understand, or that these people’s friends and relatives who actually were gay or lesbian felt it was not safe to “come out” to these people. This incident seemed congruent with this TV interview’s emphasis on actually getting to know people, including those who are different from us.

We discussed some remedies for the problems we’ve been discussing. These included resisting stereotypes, thinking for ourselves, and encouraging our educational system to teach students how to think independently and critically rather than merely memorize facts.

We also noted that mainstream media are owned by giant corporations and reflect the biases of giant corporations in favor of big business, against labor, for the US empire, against the peace movement and others who challenge US empire, etc.

Larry mentioned the recent case in which the “Transform Now” Plowshares (pacifists in Tennessee who nonviolently trespassed at a nuclear weapons facility) were actually peacemakers, but the government and media labeled them as terrorists, even though these peace folks thoroughly oppose violence.

Pervasive modern communication technology also seems to be part of the problem. Whenever possible we should bypass it and interact face-to-face.

Holly, who often teaches school, said, “Teachable moments occur all the time.” We have many opportunities to help people of all ages learn. Let’s be alert to those opportunities and make the most of them.

Some of the realities that we discussed at the local level also have nationwide and global implications. We can learn local lessons and apply them as solutions to the national and global levels as well.

Fear, labeling, and greed for power often lead to nasty results, whether locally or nationally or globally.

Larry especially expressed concern for where our nation is heading. He reported that Johan Galtung, the Norwegian sociologist and peace educator, had accurately predicted when the Soviet Union would collapse, and Galtung is predicting the fall of the US empire too. After George W. Bush’s recklessly violent response to the

9-11-2001 attacks, Galtung moved his prediction for the collapse of the US empire to an earlier time, just a few years away from now.

At appropriate points during the TV program, Rozanne read two relevant and brief poems she had written, including one about people discovering a sense of community on a local bus.

Also, Holly sang two songs she had written that were relevant to our topics, including “Love Will Lead Me Over,” which talks about crossing the line at the Trident nuclear submarine’s base, at which point a person becomes subject to arrest. She wrote that in support of nonviolent activists at the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action near the Trident base.

Holly was especially enthusiastic about recognizing emphasized the power of truth and love, and applying them to problems at hand. Truth and love are powerful. Children especially need to hear the truth respected, so they will come to appreciate it.

The national level’s Fellowship of Reconciliation’s Statement of Purpose explicitly recognizes “the essential unity of all creation” and commits ourselves to exploring “the power of love and truth for resolving human conflict.” Glen affirmed that these values have been powerful guides for his efforts since discovering that message in 1972.

Holly expressed appreciation for the wisdom of Amit Goswami, a quantum physicist, who also emphasizes our own mental and spiritual power to shift reality. His TV program “The Quantum Activist” aired on PBS and is very inspiring. He says we all have the power to shift reality. He promotes “doing and then being.”

We need to get unstuck, to become free from what Holly called “the stuff we’re in.” The power of love is a great resource, and it is a great guide for moving us ahead on substantive issues.

In light of all we’ve said, we can envision the peaceful world that we want.

One aspect of peace would be to convert from our current war-based economy to a peace economy. We should spend on creating things instead of destroying things. This would create more jobs and would make life better for people. Glen researched that extensively starting in 1976. Larry told about converting the US Army’s Fort Ord to better civilian uses.

The peace movement consists of many groups that would be more effective if they collaborated more.

Larry reported that recently General Rios Montt, the former dictator of Guatemala, whom the U.S. government had supported, was convicted of genocide because he had ordered the slaughter of enormous numbers of indigenous Mayan people in Guatemala. This is the first time in the history of the world that a nation’s top leader has been convicted of genocide that occurred in the country that he was running.

During this hour we discussed the current state of our neighborhoods, our nation, and our world.

We recognized problems rooted in fear, stereotyping and labeling.

We recognized problems rooted in greed for money and power.

We also played with solutions open-mindedly and creatively.

We proposed a variety of solutions that are positive and humane.

Perhaps while watching this program you will think of additional solutions.

Perhaps you will think of how to help your neighborhood or the larger society in which we all live.

Part of our intention is to stimulate **your** creative solutions.

We warmly invite you to talk with friends about problems and solutions.

And – as we recommended early in this program – we also invite you to “talk with strangers” about problems and solutions.

That’s an important step toward peace.