

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](http://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](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the TV programs link to reach [www.olympiafor.org/tv\\_programs.htm](http://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.

## OCTOBER 2011

# “ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS AND VETERANS WORK FOR PEACE”

by GLEN ANDERSON, PRODUCER AND HOST OF THIS TV SERIES

While the peace movement opposes **wars** and our violent foreign policy, we recognize that the **individuals** who currently serve in the military – or who have served in the military – deserve human rights just like anyone else. When the military establishment hurts them, they need to protect their rights. Also, some active duty troops and veterans find various ways to work for peace – sometimes at great personal risk.

This month's TV program examines these concerns and focuses on Coffee Strong ([www.coffeestrong.org](http://www.coffeestrong.org)), a GI coffee house near Fort Lewis, which is now called Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Coffee Strong describes itself as “pro-soldier, anti-war.”

Both of our guests – Jorge Gonzales and Joseph Carter – are veterans of the war in Iraq. Jorge is Executive Director of Coffee Strong. He is active with the local chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and serves on IVAW's national Board of Directors. Joseph Carter is the president of IVAW's local chapter and has served as Co-Executive Director of Coffee Strong.

When a category of people are being abused, they stand up to assert their human dignity and work actively to protect their rights. Military troops and veterans are like everyone else. Ordinary grassroots people created and empower Coffee Strong, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, and other organizations. They serve their members and our whole society. They deserve our support.

The Olympia FOR's October 2011 TV program begins with the military experiences of Jorge and Joseph and how they evolved into working with Coffee Strong and the veterans-based peace movement. We discuss the realities

of fighting the U.S.'s current wars and the results, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), mental illness, suicide, domestic violence, and so forth – especially at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, which has had a horrible record of these, including eleven suicides thus far in 2011.

In August 2011, Jorge Gonzalez and military widow Ashley Joppa-Hagemann went on Joint Base Lewis-McChord because former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was there to promote his new book. Rumsfeld is most infamous for his part in leading the United States into the bloody wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, so when their turn came to have Rumsfeld sign the book, Jorge showed he was wearing his IVAW t-shirt, and Ashley showed Rumsfeld her late husband's funeral program. She told Rumsfeld that her husband had joined the military because he believed the lies told by Rumsfeld during his tenure with the Bush Administration. She then recounted her husband's painful story of eight deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, his battle with PTSD, and eventual suicide, for which she blamed the military and Rumsfeld himself. A few minutes later Ashley and Jorge were dragged from the Post Exchange by a group of 5 or 6 security agents and military police officers.

Our TV program discusses the activities of Coffee Strong and a number of other groups that work with active duty troops, veterans, and others from peace perspectives. We affirm commonalities among them and the peace movement.