

New York State Marches for Peace!

Email: nysmarchesforpeace@yahoo.com

Web: <http://nysmarchesforpeace.org>

Dear Editor:

Below is a Press Release for “New York State Marches for Peace.” This is a ten day march across upstate New York to Ft. Drum in Watertown, NY. The march starts in three different locations – Rochester, Ithaca, and Utica. Participants from many more communities, including Albany, Buffalo, Oneonta, Saratoga Springs, and residents along the route, which includes Syracuse, will be joining in. The purpose of the march is to mobilize public support for our active duty soldiers and Iraq veterans who oppose the ongoing unjust and illegal war in the Middle East. The march will begin on May 8th and end on May 17th – Armed Forces Day -- at Fort Drum in Watertown, NY, where participants will join together with members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and others for a day long community festival in honor of the men and women who serve their country.

This is an event with high photographic and video appeal.

Representatives will be available before, during, and after this event for interviews. We also welcome members of the media to accompany us.

WHAT: New York State Marches for Peace

WHO: New York State Direct Action for Peace (a broad coalition of groups from various upstate New York communities) partnered with Iraq Veterans Against the War, the Different Drummer Café, and Citizen Soldier.

WHERE: Several routes through upstate New York, culminating at Fort Drum in Watertown, NY

WHEN: May 8-17, 2008

To arrange interviews or for more information, please contact Kathy Castania (kcastania@frontiernet.net; 585-271-4796, Rochester, NY), **Lena Posner** (celena.p@gmail.com; 609-576-7638; Ithaca, NY) or Jim Fulmer (jfulmer1@nycap.rr.com; 518-859-5873; Utica, NY)

Sincerely,

Kathy Castania, Lena Posner and Jim Fulmer

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York Residents March across the State to Support Peace, Vets

ITHACA, NY, April 29, 2008 -- As the spring weather sets in, New York residents from a wide variety of communities are preparing to march across upstate New York. The march, which is scheduled to last for ten days and cover [hundreds] of miles, is intended to mobilize public support for active duty soldiers and Iraq veterans who oppose the ongoing war in the Middle East. John Hamilton, an Ithaca organizer with the New York State Direct Action for Peace coalition, described the purpose of the march, commenting, "While public opinion has turned against the ongoing war in Iraq, many in our group feel that it is increasingly important to support the U.S. troops and veterans who are making the difficult decision to publicly oppose, and in many cases actively resist, participating in the war."

According to Mike Totten, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), "The time has come that the American public knows what is really happening to our soldiers and to the people of Iraq in their name. We can no longer rely on the politicians and generals to accurately report. Our voices will reveal the truth." Totten, who served in Iraq from April 2003 through April 2004, is one of many veterans who recently testified at the IVAW-sponsored Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan, held last month in Washington D.C.

The ten-day march, called "New York State Marches for Peace," will begin on Thursday, May 8 from several locations, including Ithaca, Rochester, and Utica. The march will unfold over several routes, passing through many towns and cities including Syracuse, and picking up people along the way (see march routes below). People can join the march for one hour, one day, one week or ten days. Organizers are also planning evening events, from musical performances to community discussions at each stop along the route, where they will be hosted by community members. The march will end on May 17 – Armed Forces Day -- at Fort Drum in Watertown, where marchers will join IVAW members and others for the "Fort Drum Spring Festival" – a day-long, family-oriented event with live music, clowns, puppets, and more. Ft. Drum deploys more soldiers to Iraq than any other U.S. base. Organizers of Different Drummer Café and Citizen Soldier are also working to build this day-long Festival.

"The Fort Drum Spring Festival is an event for veterans, their families, and the people of upstate New York to come together, have a good time, and celebrate the principles of peace and democracy," said Tod Ensign, co-coordinator of A Different Drummer Café, who added, "Supporting our troops means addressing the personal and social damage that was done by this war, and that takes a collective, community effort."

New York State Direct Action for Peace is a coalition of groups from various communities who are working to end the unjust, illegal war in Iraq. Coalition members believe that this regional event reflects the diversity of their growing coalition and the broad sentiment across New York that the war in Iraq is immoral and must end. "This march is a groundbreaking event – an opportunity for the peace community and members of Iraq Veterans Against the War to work in partnership to bring the message to communities along our route that the occupation of Iraq is illegal and that our armed forces should be withdrawn immediately. We hope to hear and learn from soldiers at Ft. Drum as we reach out to share their burden," commented Kathy Castania, an organizer from Rochester for New York State Marches for Peace.

Eli Yewdall, an organizer with Rochester Declaration for Peace added, "Soldiers, veterans, and citizens across New York State are coming together to say that the cost of this war to soldiers and their families and to each of our cities and towns is too high and must end now. This is especially true in the rural communities we will be passing through. They have paid a disproportionate cost for the Iraq war through the service of their young men and women," Yewdall noted that IVAW members will be speaking at the various stops along the march route.

As the organizers gear up for this historic march, many are feeling inspired by the community support they are receiving. "We are really looking forward to working with people of all ages and backgrounds, from all over New York State, to end this war," said Jim Fulmer, a Utica area organizer for New York State Marches for Peace. "This is what community is all about. As we build this march, we are realizing the peaceful world we want to see."

For more information, or to participate in the march, please visit <http://nysmarchesforpeace.org>* or email nysmarchesforpeace@yahoo.com

*The website will be updated with more detailed information regarding the routes, lodging arrangements and evening community events as details are finalized.

March Routes:

	Ithaca	Rochester	Utica
<u>Thurs, May 8:</u>	Ithaca to Dryden	Rochester to Ontario	Utica to Vernon
<u>Fri, May 9:</u>	Dryden to Cortland	Ontario to Sodus	Vernon to Verona Beach
<u>Sat, May 10:</u>	Cortland to Tully	Sodus to Wolcott	Verona Beach to Cleveland
<u>Sun, May 11:</u>	Tully to Nedrow	Wolcott to Fair Haven	Cleveland to Central Square
<u>Mon, May 12:</u>	Nedrow to N. Syracuse	Fair Haven to Oswego	Central Square to Parish
<u>Tues, May 13:</u>	N. Syracuse to Central Square	Oswego to Mexico	Parish to Mexico
<u>Wed, May 14:</u>	Central Square to Pulaski	Mexico to Pulaski	Mexico to Pulaski

Unified March

<u>Thurs, May 15:</u>	Pulaski to Adams Center
<u>Fri, May 16:</u>	Adams Center to Watertown
<u>Sat, May 17:</u>	Fort Drum Spring Festival, Watertown