

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: Three routes, originating in Rochester, Ithaca and Utica, and walking through upstate New York, culminating at Fort Drum in Watertown, NY

WHEN: May 8-17, 2008

LOCAL KICK OFF EVENT AND PRESS CONFERENCE: May 8, 2008 at 9:30 am, Anti-war Storefront, 658 Monroe Avenue Rochester, NY

OTHER LOCAL STOPS: 12 CORNERS, BRIGHTON

To arrange interviews or for more information, please contact **Kathy Castania** (kcastania@frontiernet.net; 585-820-0340) or **Mike Totten** (mtotten0@naz.edu; 585-520-2851).

Sincerely,

Kathy Castania and Mike Totten

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

ROCHESTER, NY, April 23, 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. Kathy Castania, an organizer with the New York State Direct Action for Peace coalition, described the purpose of the march, commenting, "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."

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 Rochester feeder march will begin at 9:00 am at the Anti-war Storefront, 658 Monroe Ave. The march will unfold over several routes, passing through many towns and cities including Syracuse, and picking up people along the way (see Rochester march route below). People can join the march for one hour, one day, one week or ten days. Organizers are also planning evening events featuring presentations by members of IVAW and Military Families Speak Out, as well as musical performances, community discussions at each stop along the route, where community members will host them. The march will end on May 17 – Armed Forces Day -- at Fort Drum in Watertown, where marchers will join a Northeast convergence of 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. “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.” commented Eli Yewdall, an organizer with New York State Marches for Peace. “We need to listen to our returning soldiers to support their courageous honesty, to facilitate healing, and to strengthen our own resolve to stop this illegal and immoral war.” said Vicki Ross an organizer from Buffalo.

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 the Iraq war,” said Castania, “This is what community is all about. As the work of the march progresses, we are realizing that it is also an emotional journey and an opportunity to create a real partnership between soldiers and the peace and justice community.”

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 ROUTE – ROCHESTER TO FT. DRUM:

Arrival Time At Each Location Along the Route: Between 5:00 AND 6:00 PM

Thursday, May 8:

Depart Rochester 9:30 am – Kick-off Pageant at the **ANTI-WAR STOREFRONT**, 658 Monroe Ave. and walking to Twelve Corners,
Then to Ontario Center, **THE ROOT CELLAR**, 1640 Route 104, Ontario NY 14519

Friday, May 9:

Ontario Center to Sodus, **BLOSSOM VIEW NURSING HOME**, 6884 Maple Ave, Sodus, NY 14551,
Local contact:

Saturday, May 10:

Sodus to Wolcott, **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, 11988 W Main St, Wolcott, NY

Sunday, May 11:

Wolcott to Fair Haven, **TOWN PAVILION**, Church St. Fair Haven, NY 13064

Monday, May 12:

Fair Haven to Oswego, **SUNY OSWEGO**, Sheldon Hall, Sheldon Avenue, Oswego, NY 13126

Tuesday, May 13:

Oswego to Mexico [Where we will join with marchers from Utica]

3297 MAIN STREET, MEXICO, NY and

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 5306 Church Street, Mexico NY

Wednesday, May 14:

Mexico to Pulaski [Where we will join with marchers from Ithaca]

ST. FRANCIS FARM, 136 Wart Road, Lacona NY

Thursday, May 15:

Pulaski to Adams Center, **KRIPALU YOGA CENTER OF NORTHERN NY**, 14029 US Rt 11, PO Box 224
Adams Center, NY 13606

Friday, May 16: Adams Center to Watertown, **DIFFERENT DRUMMER CAFÉ** 12 Paddock Arcade, 1 Public Square

Saturday, May 17: **FORT DRUM SPRING FESTIVAL**, 1:00 – 7:00 pm, Black Water River Park, 1605
Huntington St., Watertown, NY