

Invitation
North Dakota Study Group
Annual Meeting
February 14th – 17th, 2008

Agenda
Courage During the Storm:
Organizing for Community Action and Education
Resurrection Center for Collaborative Education
Woodstock, IL

A Welcome from the Planning Committee:

On behalf of the 2008 Planning Committee, we invite you to attend the 36th meeting of the North Dakota Study Group. The meeting will take place, on President's Day weekend, February 14th-17th, 2008, in Woodstock, Illinois. Please see the enclosed registration form.

At our planning committee meeting this summer, we focused on the vital importance of organizing: organizing for broad social change, organizing to strengthen classroom work, and everything in between. Through these discussions, we came to our theme for this year: "Courage During the Storm: Organizing for Community Action and Education." Our theme comes particularly from the work of the Highlander Center, but also from the many voices of organizing, resistance and creating the new that have infused NDSG from its inception.

Highlander Research and Education Center: In the interest of developing an agenda which supports our work as educators and activists, we will open the 2008 gathering with a presentation from long-time Highlander activists. Since 1932, Highlander has gathered workers, grassroots leaders, community organizers, educators, and researchers to address the most pressing social, environmental and economic problems facing the people of the South. They have had a unique role in the larger social and labor history through much of the last century.

The People's Institute: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) is a national and international collective of anti-racist, multicultural community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social transformation. They engage in anti-racism training and organizing support. They will help us think more deeply about racism and organizing in our schools, communities and work.

Fyre Youth Squad: Those of you who attended in 2007 will recall the powerful presentation from Broderick Webb from New Orleans, who talked about the Fyre Youth Squad. This year, Broderick will be back with Squad members to share with us their experiences and insights about educational organizing in New Orleans. Fyre Youth have brought Bill Cosby to their school, John McDonogh High; held rallies in New Orleans and Baton Rouge; and engaged in the daily organizing necessary for social change.

Teachers Panel: Teachers are central to our work and to the heart of how we create action plans that serve the children in our communities. This year, we will hear from teachers new to the classroom who will share their experience at the intersections of organizing and teaching.

Nebraska has developed a statewide system of assessments that is fundamentally unlike the state tests that control schooling in every other state. A Nebraska panel will explore the development and impact of the Nebraska STARS program. Assessment Director Pat Roschewski, researcher and author of *Reclaiming Assessment* Chris Gallagher, and Jan Hoegh, former principal and now Department staffer will share the Nebraska experience with us.

Each year, we have a reading to discuss. This year, we ask people to read *The Long Haul*, Myles Horton's autobiography and the Highlander story. The book is "a testament to power of people to triumph over injustice and inequality." If you do not already have it, please purchase it from Highlander directly, allowing them to make a little extra on each one, at www.highlandercenter.org, click on Resources and then the book catalogue for 2006-2007. It can also be ordered from Amazon.com.

As is our tradition, there will be Works in Progress (WIP) sessions, Home Groups, and Affinity Groups. If you would like to share your ongoing work with our colleagues in a small WIP session, send a description to Helen Featherstone (feather1@msu.edu) and Jay Featherstone (josfe@msu.edu). Please include your proposed format and whether it will be a one hour or two hour session.

In an effort to maintain the diversity of our membership, we have created a financial aid fund. If you would like to request financial aid, please address a request, before December 1, to Mary Harris (mary.harris@unt.edu). Preference will be given to requests received before that date. If you would like to contribute to the financial aid fund, please include it with your registration.

We look forward to the collective sharing of wisdom, the good fellowship, the mix of the political and the poetical, the give and take of a group of people who are diverse and enjoy a lively sharing of theory and practice. We appreciate the unrushed time frame that allows for the development of our thinking and a lasting commitment to creative consideration of the possibilities for change.

Please join us. Note that we mostly arrive Thursday evening so we can get started right away on Friday morning. On Sunday, we conclude early enough for people to make early afternoon flights home.

Committee Members:

Co-Chairs: Carol Foresta, Francisco Guajardo, Monty Neill,

Planning Committee: Abdulla Alnouri, Bill Bennett, Joan Bradbury, Phyllis Bretholtz, Rebecca DeCola, Helen Featherstone, Jay Featherstone, Molly Foresta, Richard Gray, Mary Harris, Sid Massey, Greta McHaney-Trice, Carol Montag, Lynne Strieb, and Ann Wiener.