

# w<sup>o</sup>rldwide wamm

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Women Against Military Madness

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*The two most powerful organizations in the world—one that divides up the resources and the other the enforcer—roam the earth, stealing and killing with impunity. We cannot allow our inaction to make us complicit in their schemes.*

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## The G8 and NATO: The 1 % Threat to the World

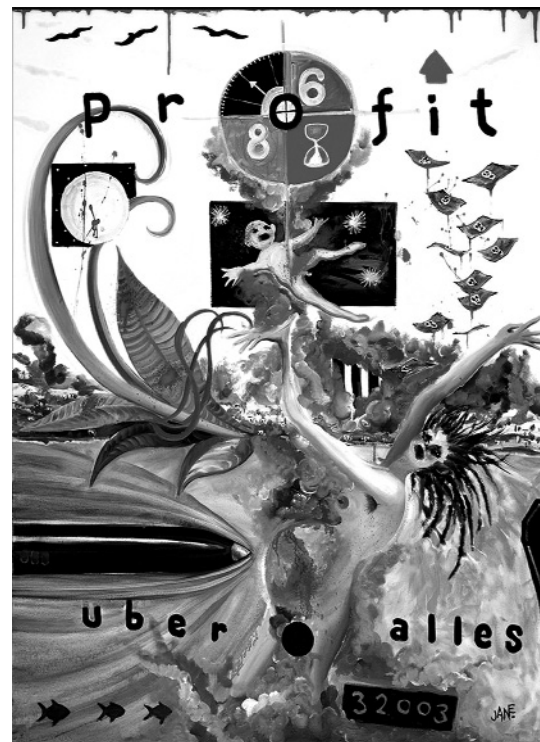
by the Minnesota CANG8 Committee

The two most powerful organizations in the world—one that divides up the resources and the other the enforcer—roam the earth, stealing and killing with impunity. Growing ever larger and more dangerous, blazing new trails of death and destruction, they decide who eats and who doesn't, who lives and who dies. The Group of Eight (G8) holds the economic strings. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provides the military might to ensure that the decisions of the G8 are enforced. Both of these sociopathic entities are spearheaded by the U.S. Profit and power are their gods and anyone and anything, no matter how young or old, new or ancient, fragile or stable, can be mowed down in their path.

The G8 and NATO are not democratic bodies: we cannot call our representative; the proceedings are not on CSPAN. They operate in secret with heavy security to protect their insular agenda.

This year, in May, the G8 had planned to meet with NATO in Chicago. It would have been the first time that the G8 and NATO met together—a natural confluence of world finance and military power in light of NATO's recent Libya campaign. However, a decision was made suddenly to move the G8 meeting to Camp David in Maryland, near Washington, D.C. Perhaps the world powers thought that a combined meeting of the G8 and NATO would make the link between finance capital and military conquest too evident to the public. And, of course, they feared the massive protests that such a meeting would provoke as the only way the public can let its views be known is by protesting in the streets.

Now only NATO will meet in Chicago on May 20. This won't stop the protests. Organizers with the Coalition Against NATO and the G8 (CANG8) have said that people will shout so loud that the sequestered participants will hear the roar of



*"Profit über Alles" from the series, "Patriarchal Carnage" by Jane Evershed [www.evershed.com](http://www.evershed.com)*

outrage all the way to Camp David.

But how did what affects so many lives in the world come to reside in the hands of so few?

### The G8

The G8, or Group of Eight industrialized nations, originated as the G7: France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Japan. This gathering of representatives of the elite from super-rich countries was intended to

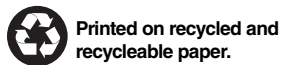
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Women Against Military Madness is a nonviolent, feminist organization that works in solidarity with others to create a system of social equality, self-determination and justice through education, action and the empowerment of women. WAMM's purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism, economic exploitation and global oppression.



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The statements and opinions reflected in this newsletter are the views of the author and not necessarily official positions of WAMM. We encourage a diversity of opinion to represent the range of perspectives that coexist under the banner of WAMM's mission statement.

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Community Shares Minnesota

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MINNESOTA

**The G8 and NATO ...**, continued from page 1

hold an exclusive conversation on economic issues—outside the United Nations. From 1975-1995, the G7 functioned as the steering committee for the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

With the demise of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), the G7 was intent on establishing neoliberal policies throughout the entire world. In 1997, Russia was brought in and the G7 became the G8, intent on bolstering President Boris Yeltsin's efforts to include Russia in the world capitalist system.

The G8 countries represent 14 percent of the world's population, 68 percent of the world's wealth, and 72 percent of global military expenditures. The G8 also works in the broader organization, the G20, in partnership with "emerging nations"—countries it recognizes as developing industrialized economies. The G20 gathers finance and energy ministers together to meet annually. But the G8 is much more exclusive.

**NATO**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is now the largest military alliance the world has ever known, but NATO originated in 1949 as an alliance of capitalist powers with the more limited agenda of restricting further expansion of the Soviet bloc of socialist countries. The original 12 members were: the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. Turkey and Greece were added in 1952. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) joined in 1955. (After years of policy disputes, France left NATO and developed its own nuclear weapons, but with Sarkozy as president, France rejoined in 2009.)

NATO grew exponentially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1991. A sane person might have thought that NATO could be dissolved and the northern/western powers could redirect military spending to supply human needs rather than war readiness.

But the rise of NATO as an aggressive force coincided with the global domination of the G8 with its neoliberal economic policies. (It should be noted, however, that G8 countries are not all always in agreement with, and are sometimes, in fact, opposed to some NATO actions.) A draft of a U.S. Defense Department planning guide, leaked in 1992, asserted the desire for complete U.S. world domination in both political and military terms, convincing potential competitors they need not aspire to a greater role. NATO, with the



"Money God" from the series, "Patriarchal Carnage" by Jane Evershed [www.evershed.com](http://www.evershed.com)

U.S. in a leadership position, was preserved as the vehicle through which much of this would be accomplished.

Though the drafted planning guide, a predecessor to the neocons' Project for a New American Century, was supposedly rejected, a prototype U.S./NATO action was nevertheless created. It was preceded by a skillful propaganda campaign, orchestrated by the politicians and Washington, and promoted by complicit media. Based on distortions, omissions and outright lies, it successfully demonized the Serbs and Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic (who had previously been the president of the Republic of Serbia). At the same time, Germany and the U.S. worked to inflame inter-ethnic and religious differences in Yugoslavia. The myth was developed that Milosevic wanted to create a greater Serbia by eliminating all other ethnic groups through ethnic cleansing. When people tried to escape him and what was believed to be his plan by creating their own independent states, bloodshed ensued. In reality, the Yugoslavian president was trying to hold his country together in the face of the far superior force of Western imperial powers bent on dismembering his country to establish their own hegemony. The U.S. public was duped into accepting the idea that U.S./NATO bombing was necessary and a good thing—the only way to stop Milosevic.

This was the face of "humanitarian intervention." War became desirable and popular once again, and NATO was in business.

Military-industrial contractors and spending continued to increase. NATO countries now number 28, with many of the new members coming from the territory of the former Soviet Union. Russia is surrounded by what have become NATO countries. NATO also has partnerships and agreements with over a third of the nations

continued on page 3



## The G8 and NATO . . . , continued from page 2

on the planet from which to draw for its current military plans—plans which are ranging across the Middle East, north and eastern Africa, Central Asia and beyond to the very borders of China.

When NATO attacked Libya in 2011, the Yugoslavian model was followed, this time opportunistically called an extension of the Arab Spring. NATO intelligence advisors worked to arm and advise an assortment of warlords, ethnic factions and paramilitary mercenaries in order to overthrow the sovereign nation. When the Libyan state military engaged to defend the state, it was accused of being the perpetrator.

Media began to report Western officials and their allies advocating for humanitarian intervention as the only way to stop the killing. The Responsibility to Protect doctrine, established at a 2005 UN World Summit, was called up. The UN Security Council rushed to pass no-fly zones for Libya, and NATO took over to execute thousands of its own air missions, the U.S. providing the 7,700 bombs and missiles that were dropped. Again, we were asked to suspend reason in order to believe how smart the weapons were: The *New York Times* reported on March 28, 2011, that AC-130 gunships flying 15,000 feet above the ground “are so precise that they could operate against Libyan forces in cities . . .”

Nearly a year later, on April 14, 2012, the *Times* reported that, according to a leaked internal NATO assessment, NATO countries had been in a state of disarray over intelligence and targets in Libya. In the same article, Senators McCain and Lieberman are reported advocating for “allied air power to stop the slaughter of civilians in Syria.”

But, in fact, air power causes the slaughter of civilians. The pattern is familiar: external operatives work to incite sectarian tensions and when the state rushes to defend itself against armed intervention, the government is blamed for a brutal crackdown. This is accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign in the West, appealing to people’s emotional instincts to want to do something about stopping the (one-sided) bloodshed. Appeals are heard for humanitarian intervention under the “Responsibility to Protect.” Strategic and military planners call in their partners du jour—aka “a coalition of the willing,” drawn from NATO and affiliated countries, to be able to use the imprimatur of support from “the international community,” as well as share the costs and acts of aggression for which they will get a return in a percentage of the spoils (oil and natural gas, strategic advantages, free market access) from the vanquished country.

Though NATO’s actions are portrayed to the

public as responses to crises, they are planned well in advance. Domination of the world and space are eventual goals. A more immediate goal of the NATO Summit this May, according to various sources including its own web site, is to establish control over Afghanistan beyond 2014. NATO also intends to plan for development of its New Strategic Concept: a Combined Joint Taskforce with the U.S. Strategic Command in the lead to “mount a faster, more flexible military for opportunistic strikes”—*strikes*—meaning *bombing*. A particularly frightening objective of the May conference is to put the “anticipatory action” doctrine, adopted at the NATO Lisbon conference in November 2010, into concrete programs and initiatives, using “a mix of nuclear and conventional weapons”—in other words, planning the use of, among other things, nuclear weapons to prevent other countries from developing as yet, nonexistent nuclear weapons.

This is no time for despair. We cannot allow our inaction to make us complicit in these schemes. The G8 and NATO are monsters that must be stopped before they destroy the whole world. It is crucial that the antiwar movement seize the opportunity of this historic time when these two entities gather and conspire. People in Minnesota cannot tolerate having their tax dollars used to kill people and destroy whole countries on the other side of the world. We cannot tolerate seeing our own families, here, increasingly denied access to quality education, health care, a clean environment, and other human needs. That’s why we will join tens of thousands of others in Chicago on May 20 to demand an end to NATO warfare and G8 enforced poverty. We are the 99 percent.

*Please note: More of artist Jane Evershed’s work, including her new Book of Jane, filled with her art and poetry, can be found at [www.evershed.com](http://www.evershed.com)*

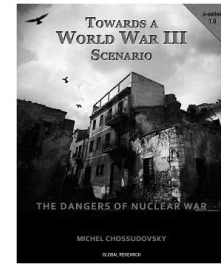
### Coalition Against NATO/G8 War & Poverty Agenda

Coalition of a broad spectrum of organizations plan a peaceful, family-friendly rally and march May 20 during the NATO

Summit in Chicago. Our message: No to the NATO/G8 War and Poverty Agenda! [canG8.org](http://canG8.org)



## NATO RESOURCES



**Towards a World War III Scenario**  
By Michel Chossudovsky.  
Global Research Publishers, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. 2012  
Find out what U.S.-led NATO is really up to. Examines the new nuclear doctrine of anticipatory action, plans for world domination from the Middle East to China and Russia, what can be done to stop it. 100-page paperback. Also available as a Pdf.  
Order online at [globalresearch.ca](http://globalresearch.ca)

**NATO World Reality for High School and College Students**  
An online Interactive Reader series, The Globalization of War: The “Military Roadmap” to World War III. Designed especially for high school and college students. Covers the period from World War II through the current globalization of war.  
Download free at: [globalresearch.ca](http://globalresearch.ca)

**Stop NATO**  
Up-to-date information tracking and analyzing of NATO  
<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/>

**Kathy Anderson,  
WAMM Founding Member**

Kathy Anderson, one of the founders of WAMM, died this March. For those who did not know Kathy, she played a huge role in defining the goals and actions of WAMM until the late 1980s, when she and her husband moved up to Duluth, where she continued her work for peace and justice. Kathy was a voice of reason on issues including nuclear weapons, the war in Central America, the Cold War, and the economic costs of war. Kathy represented the strength found in all the pioneer WAMM women and she carried the message of WAMM throughout her travels to the former Soviet Union, the former East Germany (German Democratic Republic), and to conferences and actions at home and abroad. She will be remembered and missed.

—Nikki LaSorella

**PM Syria: The Next Move  
on the Chess Board**

by Polly Mann

Although it would seem unlikely that in international affairs the U.S. government would operate with one set strategy, its behavior indicates it does. So while it might appear that the recent conflict in Libya was strictly an internal affair and the U.S./UN, for the best of humanitarian reasons, accomplished regime change and brought peace and security to that nation, Finian Cunningham, Middle East and East Africa correspondent for the Global Research Centre, Canada, is among those who would argue to the contrary. Using the Libyan conflict as a template, he recently dissected the situation in Syria.

While the U.S. public was being fed the tale of a country led by a wicked dictator that for humanitarian reasons it was forced to protest, Wikileaks made public leaked correspondence from the Western private intelligence firm Stratfor, said to be a Pentagon agency, which reported the existence of an ongoing campaign, including guerilla tactics and assassinations, of destabilization against the Syrian government of Bashir Al Assad. The justification given for the campaign is the existence of “brutal state repression against a civilian population.” But the current Syrian internal crackdown is in response to the violence perpetrated by outside forces, namely the Western powers and Western-backed Gulf Arab states led by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, hardly bastions of democracy.

Cunningham agrees that “the Syrian government has a case to answer, not only over recent human rights violations, but also for decades of resistance to political reforms. However, this is a far secondary issue to the immediate concern of criminal aggression by foreign powers. Over the past year the Assad government has consistently maintained that a large measure of the violence assailing the civilian population is emanating from

external forces. That is, the situation in Syria is more akin to a sponsored armed insurrection against the state. . . . Turkey, Israel and Saudi Arabia have emerged as key backers of the self-styled armed opposition, the so-called Syrian Free Army, and most of the weaponry supplied to the opposition is reportedly emanating from Israel.”

The interpretation we get from Western governments and the mainstream media of this situation is that the Syrian state is acting unilaterally, barbarically, and criminally against its own people. Indeed, contrary to reality, the media continues to report that Western governments are opposed to military intervention or supplying arms to “Syrian rebels” (already armed to the teeth by Arab Sunni monarchs).

During the past years, Western governments have been calculating on subverting Syria from within.

Cunningham concludes with what this intervention is really all about: “Syria is a preordained piece on the chessboard that the Western powers want to take out in their grand scheme for bolstering dominance over the oil-rich Middle East—with Iran as the next piece.” You got it? Oil. Oil. Oil.

“The so-called ‘Friends of Syria’ [the U.S. included] . . . begin openly funding the rebels to the tune of millions of dollars. This week we have been watching the inevitable, pre-scripted ‘break down’ in Annan’s UN-brokered ceasefire . . . it’s impossible to expect a cessation in fighting when you are openly arming, training and funding an insurgent proxy army that is hell-bent on toppling the government.”

—James Corbett, *International Forecaster*, April 14

**CLASSIFIED ADS**

**Not a Nursing Home**

Sheridan House provides 24-hour care for five elderly in a home setting. Private rooms, loveable dog, fellowship and community. Licensed. Operated by WAMM member Sally Kundert. Dementia and general care. County funds or private. 612-866-4637.

**Herbs from Basil to Real French Tarragon**

Come to see us for a full line of locally-grown herb plants. Every Saturday, downtown St. Paul Farmers’ Market, 5th and Wall. Melon Patch Herbs, Myrl and Dan Moran. 763-389-5156.

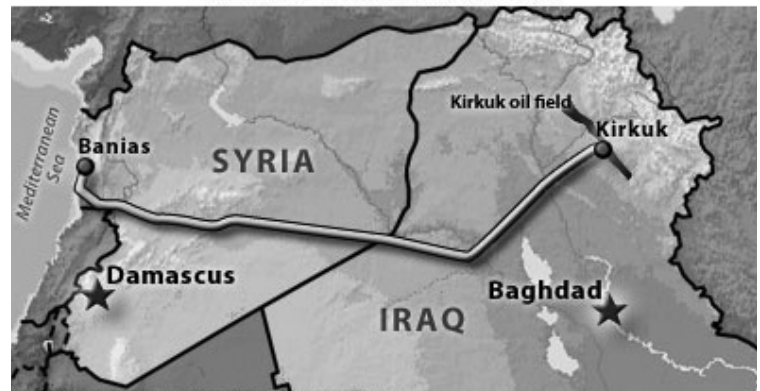
**Pipeline Dreams**

*Map: 2007 Strategic Forecasting Inc. (Stratfor)*

“ . . . Syria’s history as a perennial spoiler and location as a potential energy path cannot have been missed . . . there are feasibility studies underway to add significant additional crude oil pipeline capacity from Iraq through Syria . . . ”

—Ronnie Blewer, “The Oil Road Through Damascus” *Speaking Freely, Asia Times Online* February 15, 2012

**KIRKUK-BANIAS PIPELINE**



walk against weapons flyer --front

walk against weapons flyer --back

# May 2012 WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other group's events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) i.e., charitable purposes.

## Ongoing WAMM Vigils for Peace

### Vigil to End War:

Every Wednesday, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. On the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge spanning the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Paul. FFI: Call 612-522-1861 or WAMM 612-827-5364.

### Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine:

Every Friday, 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. at Summit and Snelling Avenues, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

For information on additional peace vigils in Minnesota and Wisconsin, call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364 or visit [www.worldwidewamm.org](http://www.worldwidewamm.org).

## Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

**Board Meeting:** Third Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m. at the Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

**Book Club:** Second Saturday of each month, 10:00 a.m. FFI and Location: Contact Suzy, 651-451-8627 or [suzykoch@comcast.net](mailto:suzykoch@comcast.net).

**Iraq Committee:** First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. FFI: Call Marie, 612-522-1861.

**Middle East Committee:** Second Monday of each month, 9:30 a.m. at the Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

**Media Committee:** FFI: Email the committee, [wammmedia@gmail.com](mailto:wammmedia@gmail.com).

**St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers:** Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc Church, Parish Center, 4537 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Barbara, 612-722-4444

**Tackling Torture at the Top (T3):** Second Wednesday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at Afro Deli and Coffee, 1939 5th Street South (Riverside and 20th Avenue), Minneapolis.

**WAMM Occupy:** FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

## Ongoing Events

### Committee to Stop FBI Repression.

Every other Thursday, 7:00 p.m. at Walker Church, 304 16th Ave. South, Minneapolis. Stand with the people subpoenaed in a witch hunt, defend civil liberties. Learn what you can do. All who stand up and act for justice and solidarity are welcome. FFI: See [stopfbi.net](http://stopfbi.net) and [mnStopFBI.wordpress.com](http://mnStopFBI.wordpress.com), or call (612) 379-3585.

### People of Faith Peacemakers

**Breakfast:** Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at new location: African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: [www.justviewpoint.org](http://www.justviewpoint.org) or call 763-784-5177

### Grandmothers for Peace:

First Wednesday 12:45 p.m. at Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Program around justice issue that helps us to understand our role in changing unjust systems. FFI: 952-929-1566

### Tea Time Conversational Salons:

Most Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Mad Hatter's Teahouse, 943 West Seventh St., St. Paul. Salons are open to all. Suggested donations \$3-\$5 include tea, treats. FFI: 651-227-2511 or 651-227-3228.

### Third Thursday Global Issues

**Forum:** 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church, Groveland at Lyndale Ave., Minneapolis. FFI: [globalsolutionsmn.org](http://globalsolutionsmn.org)

### Middle East Peace Now:

Usually 2nd or 3rd Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Refreshments, 10:00 a.m. Program. Location may vary. FFI: Call 651-696-1642 or see [www.mepn.org](http://www.mepn.org)

**MN 9/11 Truth:** Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 North Dale Street, St. Paul. Meets to educate and discuss the events of 9/11/2001. FFI: [www.mn911truth.org](http://www.mn911truth.org).

### Active Nonviolence Training:

Interactive session (non-lecture and non-reading) in social change analysis, community-building and project planning to strengthen our group for action. FFI and to register: [www.creatingacultureofpeace.org](http://www.creatingacultureofpeace.org)

## Special Events

### Grand Jury Indictment Emergency Action:

If the Federal Grand Jury indicts Sarah Martin, Ahn Pham or Tracy Molm, or if other activists are re-subpoenaed, there will be an emergency action held at 4:30 p.m. at the U.S. Federal Building, 4th St & 4th Ave, Downtown Minneapolis. Watch for action alerts. FFI: See [stopfbi.net](http://stopfbi.net) and [mnStopFBI.wordpress.com](http://mnStopFBI.wordpress.com), or call (612) 379-3585.

### Protest NATO Summit in Chicago!

**No to War and Poverty!** Sunday, May 20, 12 noon. Legally permitted, family friendly rally at Petrillo Bandshell, corner of Jackson Blvd. & Columbus Drive, Chicago, Ill. March follows rally. NATO, the 28-nation military alliance, led by the U.S, waged war on Afghanistan and Libya, threatens Iran and Syria, makes new nuclear war plans. We want healthcare, schools, the environment, human needs met instead. Sponsored by CANG8. FFI: [cang8.org](http://cang8.org) WAMM and the Antiwar Committee are taking a bus. **For bus tickets:** call April at 612-823-5989 or WAMM office at 612-827-5364.

**WAMM Walk Against Weapons!** Saturday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. Meet at Bakers Square, 928 Prairie Center Drive, Eden Prairie. Participate in the annual WAMM Walk Against Weapons, a three-mile walk from Bakers Square to Alliant Techsystems (ATK) in Eden Prairie. The Walk Against Weapons is a protest and fundraiser for WAMM and is in collaboration with AlliantACTION. Use the pledge form in this newsletter and start raising funds today! Organized by: WAMM. FFI and more pledge forms: Call 612-827-5364 or download at [www.worldwidewamm.org](http://www.worldwidewamm.org)

### Walk with WAMM: Twin Cities

**GLBT Pride Parade** Sunday, June 24, 11:00 a.m. Gather at 3rd Street and Hennepin Avenue, walk to Pride Festival, Loring Park. Join members, volunteers, interns, staff, and walk with WAMM. Wear WAMM T-shirts, visors, buttons. Festival and Parade sponsored by: Twin Cities Pride. FFI: Visit [www.tcpride.org](http://www.tcpride.org). FFI on WAMM's Participation: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

*Additional upcoming events are listed at [www.worldwidewamm.org](http://www.worldwidewamm.org), or you may call the WAMM office for more information: 612-827-5364. Other peace and justice events can be found on Minnesota Alliance for Peacemakers at [www.mapm.org](http://www.mapm.org).*

### WAMM Today

News, views,  
commentary.

Also on Facebook.  
[wammtoday.wordpress.com](http://wammtoday.wordpress.com)



## WATER RESOURCES

### Sacred Water, Sacred Life

Educators, students, environmental organizations and the general public interested in learning more see: "Sacred Water: Water for Life," a solution strategy and call-to-action plan. Provides facts and a spiritual and cultural context about the threats of mercury and other toxicants that contaminate our water. Offers ways to regain health. Available through [www.nawo.org](http://www.nawo.org)

### Mothers of Young Children and Mothers-to-Be

For women who are or want to be pregnant and/or have children under the age of 15: County by county data from the Minnesota Department of Health on mercury and other toxicants in lakes: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/eating/specpoplakes.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/eating/specpoplakes.pdf)

### Special Prairie Island Edition:

On the 30th anniversary of the North American Water Office, a special edition of its newsletter, NAWO News, is dedicated to immediate concerns about the Prairie Island nuclear power plant on the Mississippi River, just south of the Twin Cities. [www.nawo.org](http://www.nawo.org)

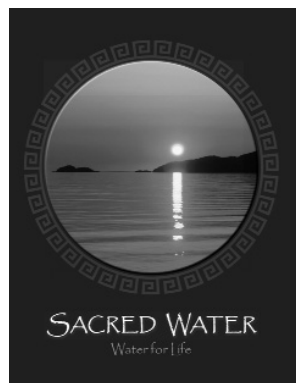
### Leaks In Our Own Backyard

"What's going on at Prairie Island? There's been one screw-up at the plant followed quickly by the next for the past many months . . . At a minimum, we would do well to reflect upon the recent acknowledgement of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda. He said on March 2, 2012 that the government shares the blame for the Fukushima disaster because officials had been blinded by a false belief in the country's technological infallibility. From our perspective, that is just one of several intertwined false beliefs required for continued commercial nuclear operations."

—NAWO News, Spring 2012 edition

# Who Will Save Our Children?

by Lea Foushee



*It's predicted that the next battles in the world will be over water, and indeed in some places they have already begun. We tend to think that scarcity of clean water is more of a problem on other continents. Yet, with 10,000 freshwater lakes in the state of Minnesota,*

*the contamination of our water is well under way. Now is a good time to focus on this: The month of May marks both Mother's Day and the state fishing opener—and there's something fishy going on that mothers need to know about.—Editor's note*

Times are tough and maybe your food budget is a little thin. Maybe this causes you and your family to eat more fish as a less expensive protein source. If so, you should be aware that eating fish even two or three times a week creates a significant health hazard because virtually all fish, whether caught from Minnesota lakes and rivers or tuna from the store, are contaminated with mercury. Even with very small dosages, mercury is extremely destructive once it gets inside the body. It is a powerful neurotoxin that destroys brain tissue and the nervous system.

Women of childbearing age, children under 16—and especially unborn fetuses—are most at risk because brain tissue and nervous systems are most susceptible to mercury poisoning during life's early growth and development phases. This is of extreme importance for indigenous peoples in our Great Lakes region that have relied on fish for protein for countless generations. National Institutes of Health in their landmark study in 2005 documented that indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islands adult women have 17 percent, or a three times higher blood mercury level than other ethnic groups, who were reported at 5.08 percent. Unemployment, the resulting poverty, lack of access to fruits and vegetables, and a diet high in fat, sugar, salt, and carbohydrates are contributing factors. A mother's body burden of mercury can be transferred to her developing fetus as it crosses the placenta; mercury is also excreted in breast milk. The North American Water Office (NAWO) has documented the problem in its pilot nutrition study published in our educational curriculum, "Sacred Water, Water for Life."

Mercury contaminates our environment globally. Elemental mercury is in coal, taconite and metal ores, and oil. When coal is burned, when taconite and other metal ores are smelted, and when oil is refined, the heat involved evaporates the mercury

and spews it into the atmosphere. Over time, the mercury settles out of the atmosphere into the oceans, lakes, and rivers, and on the land. But there is so much of it already in the atmosphere that even if all new contributions stopped today, we would not see reductions of mercury in fish tissue for 20 years.

After mercury settles out of the atmosphere it interacts with methanogenic bacteria, bacteria that produce methane. Such bacteria exist in sediments in waters and in soils all over the planet, and the interaction causes methylation of elemental mercury. Methylation makes mercury biologically active and readily available for incorporation into body tissues. Methyl-mercury from soils washes into waters and concentrates in the water column of lakes and oceans where fish become mercury blotters, absorbing methyl-mercury in the water instantaneously as it passes through the gills, and metabolizing it throughout the body. Then bigger fish eat smaller fish, further concentrating the mercury. This is why predator fish that are most popular in human diets, such as bass, walleye, and northern pike, are also the most contaminated. The bigger the fish, the greater the contamination.

Mercury contamination can also come from several other sources, including agricultural products such as pesticides and fungicides that contain mercury compounds, and consumer products such as pharmaceuticals and beauty creams for skin lightening or freckle creams. Processes such as cremation release elemental mercury from dental fillings. Additional contamination comes from garbage incineration of industrial, medicinal, and household wastes containing mercury products.

Once a given amount of methyl mercury enters the body, half of that mercury will still be in the body 50 to 70 days later. Fifty to 70 days after that, one quarter of the original dose will still be in the body. With this understanding of how long it takes for methyl mercury to get metabolized out of the body, it becomes easy to see why eating even a couple of fish meals a week can add up to unacceptable levels of contamination, particularly for children and pregnant women. In fact, walleye throughout the Minnesota region are so contaminated with mercury that the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) warns women of childbearing age and children under 16 against eating more than one meal a month of walleye from a Minnesota lake that is 20 inches long or smaller. Walleye larger than 20 inches should not be eaten at all. Adult sport fishermen should also be aware of the MDH fish consumption guidelines, but they do not have the same risk factors as people and cultures that rely on fish as a staple in their diet.

*continued on page 9*



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### References for "Who Will Save the Children?":

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## Who Will Save?, continued from page 8

The threat from mercury becomes a greater concern when additional sources and kinds of mercury are compounded in the same child. Every fish meal must be counted—store- purchased and lake- or river-caught fish, including fish sticks and tuna fish. Families that eat fish in excess of the MDH recommendations whether because of cultural preference, ceremonial practice, or economic necessity should take special precautions to eliminate any other mercury exposure from consumer products, specifically dental mercury fillings or pharmaceuticals.

Unfortunately, mercury reduction efforts in Minnesota, throughout the country, and around the world are in disarray. Mercury releases to the Minnesota environment were calculated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to be about 2,626 pounds in 2010, and the MPCA projects a release of 1,948 pounds in 2018, assuming that the mercury emitters comply with the ongoing mercury reduction efforts. Over half is from coal-fired power plants. Seven new permits to release mercury in Minnesota have either been approved since 2010, or are still in the process of being approved by the MPCA. These numbers are truly alarming when one considers that even a small fraction of a gram of mercury is sufficient to contaminate a medium-sized lake to the point where its fish are inedible.

Further, mercury reduction technologies and strategies capable of reducing mercury releases down to levels that would begin reducing the threat some 20 years from now either don't exist or are blocked by industrial managers more concerned with profits and preserving their market share. Meanwhile, the federal Center for Disease Control reports that as of March 2012, 1 in 88 children from 14 states in their study is now affected by autism. Environmental factors have long been downplayed as a cause of autism, but improved diagnosis, genetics, and immune disorders combined cannot account for the exponential increase in autism without adding the environmental component to the list of multiple causes. Autism is a neurological disorder; mercury is an extremely toxic neurologic poison that is pervasive in our waters, our air, our fish, in our mouths, and in our consumer products. Make the link!

**Educators, students, environmental organizations, and the public interested in learning more are urged to see "Sacred Water: Sacred Life," a solution strategy and call-to-action plan, available through [nawo.org](http://nawo.org)**

*Lea Foushee has researched and educated the public on the many aspects of mercury contamination for the last 30 years. She holds a self-designed bachelor of science degree, the Social and Cultural Factors Affecting Human and Natural Resource Management, from the University of Minnesota.*



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Coalition Against NATO, G8,  
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The image is a vertical poster for a protest. At the top is a large black circle containing the text 'Chicago MAY 2012' in white, followed by 'Protest' in a stylized white font with lightning bolts on either side, 'NATO' in large white block letters, '& G8' in large white block letters, and 'CaNG8.org' in white at the bottom. Below the circle, the event details are listed in bold black text: 'SUNDAY, MAY 20<sup>TH</sup>, NOON', 'PETRILLO BANDSHELL', 'CORNER OF COLUMBUS AND JACKSON', and 'CHICAGO IL.'. At the bottom, contact information is provided: 'CaNG8.org | cangate2012@gmail.com' and the full name of the coalition: 'Coalition Against NATO, G8, War and Poverty Agenda'.

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